

Some Observations on The Left Periphery of The Vedic Sentence

Abstract

This article examines aspects of the information structure of the Vedic clause, with particular attention to the organisation of the left periphery, within the Split-CP framework proposed by Rizzi (1997; 2001). The analysis takes into consideration phenomena such as topicalisation, focalisation, and left dislocation, drawing on data from both Vedic prose and poetry, especially from the Atharvaveda and the Ṛgveda.

The article addresses the question of whether the left periphery of Vedic clauses can be analysed as a single discourse-related position or whether it is more appropriately characterised as a structurally articulated domain⁹⁹. In particular, it considers the possibility that more than one constituent may occur in the left periphery, and that in some cases such elements may precede the complementiser. The co-occurrence of topicalised elements, typically associated with pronominal resumption, and focalised elements, generally lacking resumption and sometimes marked by focus particles, is examined in relation to analyses that distinguish separate Topic and Focus positions.

The behaviour of complementisers in subordinate clauses is also taken into account, with a view to assessing whether discourse-related material may appear in the left periphery even when a subordinator is present in the clause, and whether complementisers themselves may occupy different positions within the CP domain¹⁰⁰. Finally, the article considers correlative constructions in Vedic and their potential placement in the left periphery, where they are typically resumed by demonstratives such as *tād*. Overall, the article explores the extent to which a cartographic approach¹⁰¹ may provide a useful framework for the analysis of Vedic clause structure.

1. Left Periphery

The left periphery of the sentence refers to a concept from generative syntax—introduced in particular by Rizzi 1997 through the Split-CP theory—which designates the initial portion of the sentence, that is the area to the left of the verb. This domain can host elements that have been fronted for

⁹⁹ This point will be clarified later in the text, when discussing the different analyses of the left periphery that have been proposed.

¹⁰⁰ See Danckaert (2012, pp. 95-108).

¹⁰¹ See Benincà and Munaro 2010, p. 3: “this research project aims at establishing a systematic matching between morphosyntactic and semantic features and functional projections, in other words at drawing “maps as precise and detailed as possible of syntactic configurations”.

informational or pragmatic reasons. According to the Split-CP hypothesis, the left periphery comprises a finely articulated structure within the Complementiser Phrase (CP), consisting of an ordered set of functional projections (as adapted here from the schema proposed by Benincà [2001] and Benincà, Poletto [2004]):

$$\{\text{Disc [HT]}\} \{\text{Force C}\} \{\text{Topic [LD][LI]}\} \{\text{Focus [contrast. Foc][inform. Foc] / [Interr } wh\text{-]}\} \{\text{FinP C}\}$$

In this work, I examine some phenomena relevant to the cartographic analysis of the left periphery in Vedic, especially topicalisation and focalisation, with particular attention to cases of co-occurrence of topic and focus. From these, I will draw some conclusions about the structure of the Vedic sentence in general.

In order to account for a left periphery consisting of multiple elements with Topic and Focus functions, I will adopt here the analysis proposed by Danckaert (2011; 2012; 2015), which, building on Rizzi (2001), allows for the placement of certain complementisers in different positions within the left periphery.

2. Left dislocation

One of the most widely studied phenomena concerning the left periphery is left dislocation. Left Dislocation (LD) involves a phrase occurring at the beginning of a clause and being connected to it by means of a resumptive element, such as a personal pronoun, a demonstrative, or a clitic, depending on the language in question.

My work originated in the context of the PRIN project on the Atharvaveda as a search for cases of left dislocation in the AV, following the work of Oertel 1926, which was however based on the analysis of the prose of *Brāhmaṇas*. Unlike Oertel, who worked on prose, most of the cases considered here belong to poetic hymns of the Atharvaveda. This led me to also examine the RV, which allowed me to find similar cases here as well.

Cartographic studies on the left periphery have paid much attention to the syntax of dislocated constituents. According to Alexiadou (2006):

The phenomenon referred to as ‘left dislocation’ (LD) ... is characterized by the presence of a phrase in the first position of the clause which is connected with that clause through the intermediary of some anaphoric element referred to as the resumptive element... the resumptive element can be either a regular personal pronoun as in English, or a demonstrative pronoun as in Dutch or a clitic pronoun as in languages such as Italian, Romanian, Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek.

The dislocated element and the resumptive pronoun can have the same case; otherwise, the dislocated element can be in the nominative case and the resumptive pronoun can appear in any case:

in the latter example we speak of a *Hanging Topic*, which corresponds to the classic *Nominativus pendens*.

Oertel 1926 deals with case syntax in *Brāhmaṇa* prose. In particular, his attention is drawn to the disjunct use of certain cases, i.e. “Prolepsis with Resumption by a Demonstrative Pronoun”.

According to Alexiadou (2006, p. 1), In LD constructions, the clause is considered to be ‘about’ the left dislocated element. This is often referred to as the *aboutness requirement*.

In this study, the term Topic is used in a broad discourse-oriented sense. Following Benincà & Poletto (2004, pp. 66-67), the left periphery is assumed to host not only argumental topics expressing aboutness or topic continuity, but also Scene-Setting constituents, which establish a temporal, spatial, modal, or situational frame for the interpretation of the clause. Although Scene Settings do not encode aboutness in the narrow sense, they are treated here as part of the topical domain of the left periphery.

3. Some of Oertel’s Examples from Brāhmaṇa Prose

The following examples, drawn from the prose of the Brāhmaṇas and discussed by Oertel (1926), are commonly cited as early evidence for clause-initial dislocation in Vedic. They involve groups of nominal expressions placed at the left edge of the clause and resumed by a pronoun:

1) TS 2.4.1.1

[*devā manuṣyāḥ pitāras*]_i *tè*_i 'nyāta āsann [*ásurā rákṣāmsi piśācās*] *tè* 'nyātaḥ

‘Gods, men, Fathers,- they were on one side; Asuras, Raksases, Piśacas,- they (were) on the other Side’ (Oertel 1926, p. 2).

2) ŚB 1.1.1.16

[*devān ha vai yajñéna yájamānāms*]_i *tān*_i *asurarakṣasāni rarakṣur*

The gods, while sacrificing with the sacrifice, them the Asuras and Rakṣasas impeded. (Oertel 1926, p. 79).

Other cases reported by Oertel consist of a group of words in the nominative case, resumed by a demonstrative pronoun in any case and therefore corresponding to the structure of a *nominativus pendens*:

3) KS 21.2 (p. 38, l. 14)

[*devā vai svargaṃ lokam yantas*]_i *teṣāṃ*_i *yāni cchandāṃsy aniruktāni svargyāṇy āsan / tais saha svargaṃ lokam āyan*

The gods going to the heavenly world, - what their unexpressed heavenly metres were, with them they went to the heavenly world”.

4) ŚB 4.4.5.1

[át^haitac c^hárīram]; tásmin; na rásó 'sti

‘Now this body, there is no sap in it.’ (Oertel 1926, p. 36)

4. Left dislocation in AV poetry

It is worth noting that, in addition to the cases identified by Oertel in the prose of the Brāhmaṇas, comparable instances of left dislocation can also be found in the Atharvaveda Śaunakīya, and in particular in its poetic hymns. What in Oertel’s study appeared to be a characteristic feature of Vedic prose thus also emerges in Atharvavedic poetry. The following examples were identified during the examination of the Atharvaveda Śaunakīya conducted within the framework of the PRIN 2022 project. These examples are not intended to be exhaustive, but they are sufficient to show that left dislocation is not restricted to *Brāhmaṇa* prose:

5) AVŚ 3.1.3

[amitrasenāṃ maghavannn

asmāṃ chatrūyatīm abhī];

yuvāṃ tān; indra vṛtrahann

agnís ca dahatam práti

The army of the unallied, O Liberal one, those who engage in hostilities against us — you two, O Indra Vr̥tra-killer, and Agni, burn them.

6) AVŚ_2.12.7

[saptá prāñān aṣṭáu majjñás];

tāṃs; te vṛścāmi bráhmanā |

áyā yamásya sádanam

agnídūto áramkṛtaḥ

“Seven breaths, eight marrows: I cut them for you with my spell; you will go to the seat of Yama, sent by Agni, made satisfactory”

7) AVŚ_2.12.1

[dyāvāpṛthiví urv àntárikṣam

kṣétrasya pátny urugāyó 'dbhutaḥ |

utāntárikṣam urú vátagopam];

tá; ihá tapyantāṃ máyi tapyámāne

Heaven and earth, the wide atmosphere, the lady of the field, the marvellous wide-striding one, and the wide atmosphere sheltered from the wind, let these be kindled here while I am inflamed.

This latter example could also be interpreted as a case of *Nominativus Pendens*. So far, in the AV I have not found clear cases of *Nominativus Pendens* of the type reported by Oertel in prose¹⁰².

5. Focalised resumptive pronouns

In all these examples, the phrases resumed by *tád* have the informational function of Topic.

Moreover, in some cases the resumptive pronoun *tád* is followed by certain focus particles, as in Oertel's examples *evá*¹⁰³:

8) KS 31.5.12t

[*prānaṃ vyānaṃ apānaṃ*]_i *tān*_i *eva yajamāne dadhāti*

“In-breathing, through-breathing, out-breathing,- *right* these he places into the sacrificer”. (Oertel 1926, p. 75)

Note that in this case *tān* also appears to be dislocated from the unmarked OV position (with O adjacent to the verb).

9) TS 2.6.9.3

[*yajñāya yajamānāyātmāne*]_i *téb^hya*_i *evá* *āśīṣam ā śāsté*

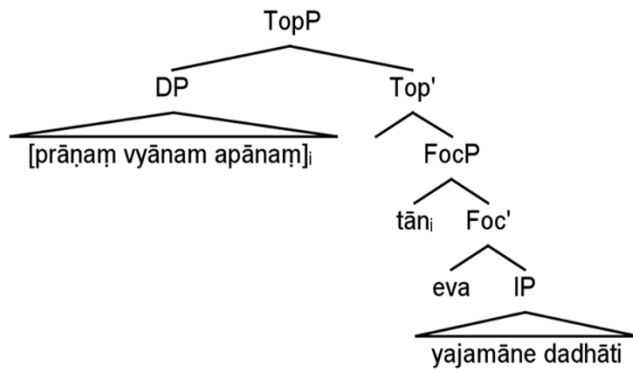
“For the sacrifice, for the sacrificer, for himself,- *just* for them he asks a blessing”. (Oertel 1926, p. 93)

¹⁰² One possible interpretation, compatible with current cartographic approaches, is that the projection associated with Hanging Topic is structurally more external than that associated with Left Dislocation. If so, the absence of clear Hanging Topic configurations in the poetic corpus, as opposed to their attestation in prose, could reflect differences in the accessibility or activation of more external left-peripheral positions. At the same time, this hypothesis remains tentative, especially in view of the possibility that not all relevant poetic data have yet been examined, and should therefore be tested against a broader and more systematic survey of the corpus.

¹⁰³ Left-dislocation (LD) has traditionally been analysed as a topic-marking construction (Lambrecht 2001, p. 1072), the dislocated constituent being necessarily non-focal and external to the argument structure of the clause, while the aboutness relation is encoded by the resumptive pronominal element within the clause. More recent work has questioned the universality of this functional restriction. Yamaizumi (2011, pp. 82-83), while adopting Lambrecht's structural definition of LD, argues that dislocation primarily serves the (re)activation of a referent, whose pragmatic role (Topic vs. Focus) is determined clause-internally. Building on this view, Westbury (2016, p. 37) proposes that LD may also be used to *announce* a focal relation, without the dislocated constituent itself being focal, in what he terms *focus-announcing left-dislocation*. Importantly, even under these revised accounts, the dislocated element does not constitute the locus of focus marking. This is consistent with the Vedic data discussed here, where the dislocated constituent functions as a Topic or frame-setting expression, while focus is independently marked within the clause by particles such as *íd* or *evá*.

In such cases, the co-occurrence of both topicalised and focalised elements within the same sentence can be observed, as shown in this tree diagram:

10)



In AV as well, we find co-occurrences of topic and focus, e.g.:

11) AVŚ_4,17.8a

[_{TOP} apāmārgá] oṣadhīnām sárvasām [_{FOC} éka íd] vaśí

(AVP 2.26.5 apāmārga oṣadhīnām viśvāsām [eka it] patih)

The apāmārga (*Achyranthes Aspera*) is indeed of all herbs the sole controller/master.

In 11), *apāmārgá* functions as an aboutness topic, *éka íd* is an identificational focus.

12) AVŚ_3,25.6c

[_{TOP} áthainām akratúm kṛtvá] [_{FOC} mámaivá] kṛnutam váse

then, making her powerless, make her [to be] in my own control.

In 12), although the phrase *áthainām akratúm kṛtvá* precedes the main clause, it does not constitute a Scene-Setting topic in the strict sense (e.g. temporal or spatial frame). Rather, it functions as a frame topic, introducing a condition or resulting state that provides the discourse background for the following focalised possessive expression *mámaivá*.

6. Left dislocation with focalised resumptive pronouns in the Rigveda

Cases of left dislocation where the resumptive pronoun is followed by a focus particle are also found in RV:

13) RV 3.5.6

a *ṛbhúś cakra íḍyaṃ cāru nāma*

b *viśvāni devó vayúnāni vidvān*

c [TOP *sasásya cárma ghṛtávat padám vés*]_i

d [*tád_i id*] *agní rakṣaty áprayuchan*

“(He acquired the precious name of Ṛbhu, the god who knows all the ritual patterns).

The lard-rich skin of food, the trail of the bird, all of this, Agni constantly guards.” (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

Note that in this case the resumptive pronoun *tád* is also dislocated from its canonical position (SOV), since it precedes the subject *agní*. Moreover, in this case *tád* is followed by the focus particle *id*.

14) RV 10.91.8

a [*medhākārám vidáthasya prasádhanam*

b *agnim hótāram paribhūtāmatim*]

c [*tám id*] *árbhe havíṣy á* [*samānám it*]

d [*tám in*] *mahé vṛṇate nānyam tvát*

“Creator of wisdom, furtherer of the rite, Agni, the Hotar, best encompassing thought, just him at the small oblation, just the same for the great one—just him they choose—no other than you”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

Also in these cases, since the dislocated phrase [*medhākārám... matim*] functions as a topic while the resumptive pronoun *tám* is followed by the focus particle *id*, we observe that these sentences display the co-occurrences of topic and focus, and the resumptive pronoun *tád* is dislocated from its canonical position.

Another example of topic–focus co-occurrence in the AV (and from RV) may be the following passage:

15) RV 7.41.5 / AVP 4.31.5 / AVŚ 3.16.5

a *bhága evá bhágavāṃ astu devās*

b *téna vayám bhágavantaḥ syāma,*

c [*tám tvā*] [*bhaga*] [*sárva ij*] *johavīti*

d *sá no bhaga puraetā bhavehá*

Let Bhaga himself be possessed of riches O gods. May we be possessed of riches through him. Everyone invokes you constantly, O Bhaga. Therefore, O Bhaga, be our leader here.

In this case we have:

- 16) [*tam tvā*] [*bhaga*] [*sarva ij*] *johavīti*
Topic Voc Foc

In other words, *tam tvā* is the object of the sentence and precedes the focalised subject *sarvah*; consequently, the object has been moved to, or is otherwise located in, a peripheral position, plausibly as a Topic, while the subject is focalised by the particle *id*. This analysis is supported by the fact that *tam tvā* satisfies the aboutness requirement, since the clause expresses something about an already established discourse referent. We thus observe the co-occurrence of Topic and Focus.

The following example likewise illustrates that, after an initial topic constituent, elements other than a resumptive pronoun may be focused:

- 17) RV 3.2.15
a [_{TOP} *mandrām hótāram śucim advayāvinam*
b *dāmūnasam ukthyam viśvacarṣanim*
c *rātham nā citrām vāpuṣāya darśatām*
d *mānurhitam*] [_{FOC} *sadam id*] *rāyā īmahe*

“The delighting Hotar, the blazing one free of duplicity, the lord of the household, worthy of hymns and belonging to all lands, like the shimmering chariot [=the sun?], lovely to see for his beautiful form, the one placed by Manu, do we ever beseech for wealth”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

The passage has a clear Topic–Focus structure. The long noun phrase at the beginning (*mandrām hótāram ... mānurhitam*) refers to Agni, who is already known in the discourse, so it functions as an aboutness Topic. The verb phrase (*rāyā īmahe*) is followed by *sadam id*, where *id* marks an emphatic Focus, stressing that the act of beseeching is certain or ongoing, rather than adding new information. The verse therefore shows both Topic and Focus in the same sentence.

- 18) 3.4.7
c [_{TOP} *ṛtām śāmsanta*] [_{FOC} *ṛtām it*] *tā āhur*
d *ānu vratam vratapā dīdhyanāḥ*

“Reciting the truth, they speak just the truth, reflecting upon their commandments as the protectors of commandments”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

In this verse, *ṛtām śámsanta* does not function as an aboutness Topic, but rather establishes a ritual and modal frame within which the proposition is asserted, while *ṛtām* it is focalised. This supports the inclusion of *Scene Settings* among the discourse-related constituents of the Vedic left periphery.

19) RV 3.29.15

a *amitrāyúdhō marútām iva prayáḥ*

b [TOP *prathamajā bráhmaṇo*] [FOC *vísvam íd*] *viduḥ*

“Fighting their enemies like the advance troops of Maruts, those first-born of the formulation [=the Kuśikas] know everything”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

20) RV 1.155.4

c *yáḥ* [TOP *páṛthivāni*] [FOC *tribhír íd*] *vígāmbhir*

d *urú krámiṣtorugāyāya jīváse*

“who strode widely across the earthly (regions) with just three paces, for the wide-ranging to live”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

21) 5.77.4

d [TOP *ánūrdhvabhāsaḥ*] [FOC *sádam ít*] *tuturyāt*

“He would ever pass beyond those who do not raise their radiance on high.” (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

The three passages show the same information-structure pattern, with a preposed Topic followed by a Focus marked by *íd*. In each case, the Topic refers to an already known or easily identifiable element (*prathamajā bráhmaṇo*, *páṛthivāni*, *ánūrdhvabhāsaḥ*), which the clause is about. The Focus, marked by *íd*, does not introduce new information but adds emphasis: *vísvam íd* stresses total knowledge, *tribhír íd* highlights the small number of steps, and *sádam ít* emphasizes continuity or certainty. These examples therefore illustrate the regular co-occurrence of an aboutness Topic with an emphatic, non-presentational Focus.

7. Different analyses of the Vedic left periphery

Up to this point, the data discussed here are compatible with Rizzi’s (1997) proposal that the left periphery of the clause is internally articulated and contains distinct positions for Topic and Focus. The question, however, is whether the Vedic evidence actually requires such a structural differentiation, or whether it can be explained by assuming a single discourse-related position to the left of the clause.

A different view has been put forward by Keydana (2011; 2018). On the basis of Vedic evidence, Keydana (2018, p. 2200) argues that Proto-Indo-European featured a single left-peripheral position for discourse-prominent elements, typically occupied by a single word, although cases with larger constituents in the left periphery are also acknowledged. In this approach, this position could host either Topics or Foci, but not separate structural slots for each. It is therefore analysed as a general Discourse-Functional (DF) position, in contrast to Kiparsky’s (1995) proposal of two distinct discourse-related positions.

The issue, then, is whether the Vedic data discussed here can be reduced to such a single discourse slot.

The examples examined in this study suggest that this reduction is problematic.

As shown above, there is a clear difference between aboutness topics, often resumed by a pronoun (*tád*), and focalised elements marked by particles such as *íd*. Topics are resumed and function as elements about which the clause makes a statement. Foci are not resumed and typically carry identificational or emphatic force. When Topic and Focus co-occur, the order Topic > Focus is regularly attested. This pattern is found not only with aboutness topics, but also with preposed constituents that establish the background or situational setting of the clause (cf. ex. 18). The recurrence of the same ordering pattern in both types of cases suggests that Topic and Focus are not simply two interpretations of the same structural position.

Evidence for a left-peripheral domain located below an overt complementiser can be found in subordinate clauses introduced by *yád* or *yádī*. By “below” I refer to a structurally lower position within the CP domain, not simply to linear order. The following examples suggest that even within subordinate clauses, discourse-related constituents may occupy positions distinct from the complementiser itself:

22) RV 1.63.1

c yád dha te víśvā giráyaś cid ábhvā
d bhivyá dṛḷhásah kiráṇā naijan

when all the monsters, even the solid mountains, moved like dust particles for fear of you.

23) RV 1.168.8

c áva smayanta vidyútaḥ pṛthivyāṃ
d yádī ghr̥tám marútaḥ pruṣṇuvánti

“The lightning-flashes smile down on the earth, when the Maruts sprinkle ghee upon her”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

RV 1.63.1 and RV 1.168.8 show that, after *yád* or *yádī*, constituents may appear in an order that deviates from the expected SOV pattern. In RV 1.63.1, the sequence *vīśvā giráyaś cid* includes a focalised element marked by *cid*. In RV 1.168.8, the order *ghṛtám marútaḥ* likewise departs from canonical SOV expectations. These configurations are difficult to explain as simple variation in word order and instead point to the existence of a syntactic space within the subordinate clause in which discourse-related elements are positioned below C, in line with Rizzi’s (1997) analysis.

However, there are some cases in which the complementiser is also preceded by one or more elements. Consider the following:

24) RV 1.55.4

c *vīśā chándur bhavati haryató vīśā*

d *kṣémeṇa dhénām maghávā yád invati*

“The bull becomes pleasing, the bull delightful, when, as bounteous one, he impels the nourishing stream (of speech) in peace”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

In this example, the complementiser *yád* appears linearly after three words: *kṣémeṇa* ‘in peace’, *dhénām* ‘speech’, and *maghávā* ‘bountiful’. Although such configurations may in principle be compatible with analyses that allow for non-canonical word order within the subordinate clause, they show that the subordinator does not necessarily occupy the leftmost position in the clause. The example therefore raises questions about how preposed material is structurally accommodated, both in Rizzi’s (1997) articulated CP framework and in Keydana’s (2011, pp. 111-112) model, which assumes a single Discourse-Functional position to the left of C.

A similar issue arises in:

25) RV 2.10.1

a *johútro agníḥ prathamáḥ pitéva-*

b *-ilás padé mánuṣā yát sámiddhaḥ*

“Agni is the first to be called out loudly, when he is kindled by Manu in the footprint of refreshment”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

In RV 2.10.1b, the locative *ilás padé* plausibly functions as a frame-setting constituent. The instrumental *mánuṣā*, however, is an argument of the subordinate clause and would be expected to follow the complementiser in its base position. Its occurrence to the left of *yát* indicates that it occupies a position in the left-peripheral domain of the subordinate clause. If both *ilás padé* and

mānuṣā are located in this pre-complementiser field, a single discourse-functional position above C would not seem sufficient.

For cases such as these, we can refer to the analysis proposed by Rizzi (2001: 290), which distinguishes the position of subordinators from that of clause-typing heads. In Rizzi (1997), the complementiser is assumed to occupy the highest position of the left periphery, namely Force^o. In that model, the complementiser systematically precedes embedded Topics and Foci. In other words, it is located above the Topic and Focus projections.

As Danckaert (2011, p. 116; 2015, p. 267) observes, later developments of the cartographic framework allow for a different structural possibility. In Roussou (2000), Rizzi (2001), and Krapova (2010), subordinating conjunctions are not necessarily located in Force^o. Instead, they may occupy a lower position within the CP field. This means that the head expressing clause type (Force^o) is distinct from the head hosting the subordinator. As a result, material belonging to the left periphery may occur both hierarchically above¹⁰⁴ and below the overt subordinator, without forcing all such elements into a single structural position.

Danckaert summarises the earlier view as follows:

“In Rizzi (1997), it is proposed that [...] *that* complementizer systematically precedes embedded topics and foci [...] *John says [ForceP that [TopP [this book] [TP he likes]]] /*John says [this book [that he likes]]* [...] it seems to be the case that a subordinating conjunction can be merged below ForceP. A point in case is Italian *se* ‘if, whether’, which can be preceded by a clitic left-dislocated topic:

non so [_{ForceP} *Op*¹⁰⁵ [_{TopP} [a Gianni] [_{IntP} *se* [_{TP} gli ha detto la verità]]]]”

Here the topic *a Gianni* precedes the subordinator *se*. This shows that *se* does not occupy the highest position in the left periphery: it is assumed that a subordinating conjunction may occupy a position lower than ForceP.

Therefore, different complementisers may occupy different structural positions within the left periphery. Some may be located in Force^o, while others may appear in a lower projection, such as

¹⁰⁴ This hypothesis also appears to be compatible with an observation made by Krisch (2017, p. 133), who argues that verb-second and verb-initial structures are structurally identical, the verb being moved to C in both cases. The crucial difference lies in the occupation of the discourse-functional position: in verb-initial clauses the Df-slot remains empty, whereas in verb-second it is filled. Krisch further notes that verb-third orders are possible when the verb is moved into C and more than one XP position in front of it is filled. Although formulated in a different theoretical framework, this observation lends independent support to the idea that the left periphery in Vedic may host more than one constituent even when the verb occupies the C-domain.

¹⁰⁵ According to Danckaert (2011, p. 116; 2012:, p. 107), following Rizzi (2001), the embedded clause is typed as interrogative by a null operator in SpecForceP. The complementiser *se* itself does not function as the clause-typer, but occupies a lower functional projection (IntP); the presence of a null operator in ForceP ensures that the interrogative type of the embedded clause is locally accessible to the selecting predicate.

Fin° (cf. Krapova 2010; Roussou 2020; Moscati and Rizzi 2021). If this is correct, the overt block material from occurring before it.

Modern Greek provides a comparable example:

- 26) Νομίζω (τα μήλα) ότι (τα μήλα) δεν θα τα φάει ο Πέτρος
I-think (the apples) that (the apples) NEG FUT them eats the Peter
“I think that Peter won’t eat the apples”.

In such cases, the complementiser *óti* does not prevent topicalised material from appearing in the left periphery of the embedded clause. This again suggests that the complementiser is not necessarily located in the highest CP position.

For Latin and other ancient Indo-European languages, Danckaert (2012, pp. 107-108) proposes that subordinators may occupy a position lower than ForceP, for example FinP, the lowest projection of the split CP. He illustrates this with examples such as:

- 27) Cic. Att. 9.15.1
[*Eum*_i [*cum* t_i *uidero*]], *Arpinum pergam*.
“When I have seen him, I’ll move on to Arpinum”.

In this example, the temporal subordinator *cum* does not appear to occupy the highest position of the left periphery.

In the same way, we may hypothesise that in Vedic certain occurrences of *yád* are located in a lower C-related head rather than in Force°. This would make it possible for left-peripheral material to precede the overt subordinator.

Thus, in RV 1.55.4 we may tentatively analyse:

- 28) RV 1.55.4
d [_{TOP} *kṣémeṇa* [_{FOC} *dhénām* [_{TOP?} *maghávā* [_{FinP} *yád* [*invati*]]]]]]
“when, as bounteous one, he impels the nourishing stream (of speech) in peace”.

In RV 1.55.4, more than one constituent precedes the subordinator. Regardless of their precise discourse interpretation, their co-occurrence shows that the pre-complementiser field can host multiple elements. This configuration is difficult to reconcile with an analysis that assumes only a single available position above C for preposed material.

8. Left periphery and correlatives

There is another structure, very common in the Rigveda, in which *tád* functions as a resumptive pronoun. According to Cinque (2020, p. 128, but also previous works), correlative RCs are DPs rather

than CPs. Under Cinque’s analysis all relative constructions (‘free’ relatives included) are double headed (i.e. they have both an external and an internal head in the underlying structure). So, taking into account simple correlatives e.g. in modern Indo-Aryan languages, the following sentence:

- 29) *jo laṛkī kharī hai, vo (laṛkī) lambī hai*
 which girl is standing, she/that (girl) is tall.

in Cinque’s terms can be analysed as:

- 30) [_{DP} VO *LARKĪ* [_{CP} *jo laṛkī kharī hai*]], *vo laṛkī lambī hai*

where *VO LARKĪ* is a silent external head¹⁰⁶. Cinque notes, however, that this structure, which corresponds to the underlying structure, was judged acceptable—albeit only marginally—by some informants.

In Vedic, this type of correlative construction is the so-called *diptyque normal*, as identified by Minard (1936), i.e., a type of relative clause in which the correlative clause precedes the main clause, e.g.:

- 31) RV 1.41.5
 a [*yám yajñám náyathā naraḥ-*
 b *ádityā ṛjúnā pathā*]_i
 c *prá vaḥ sá; dhītáye naśat*

“The sacrifice that you lead along the straight path, o superior men, Ādityas, that will reach you for insight”. (Jamison and Brereton 2014)

In this case, the preposed correlative [*yám... pathā*] is left dislocated and resumed by the demonstrative pronoun *sá*.

Several scholars have sought to determine the structural level within the main clause where the correlative is adjoined. (cf. Ram-Prasad 2022, p. 39). According to Hock (1989), Sanskrit correlative structures consist of two adjoined CPs (as in other ancient Indo-European languages), since the relative clause and the main clause share the same structural properties, including the presence of sentence-oriented particles. However, Hock (1989) also observes that in Sanskrit relative-correlative constructions the relative pronoun does not occupy COMP, but rather occurs in positions that he characterizes as discourse-related, such as TOPIC or preverbal FOCUS. This observation can be taken

¹⁰⁶ See also Ram-Prasad (2022, pp. 37-38) for a cartographic representation.

as consistent with approaches that locate correlative elements in the left periphery, independently of assumptions about their overall syntactic status.

In some cases, the theory that posits a left periphery articulated into multiple projections allows for a more precise placement of the correlative clause within the previous CP projection, e.g.:

32) RV 10.154.1.cd

c yébhyo mádhu pradhāvati
d táṃś cid evāpi gachatāt

Those for whom honey flows forth—right to them let him go now.

where *cid* is a focus particle (Lühr 2017).

And also:

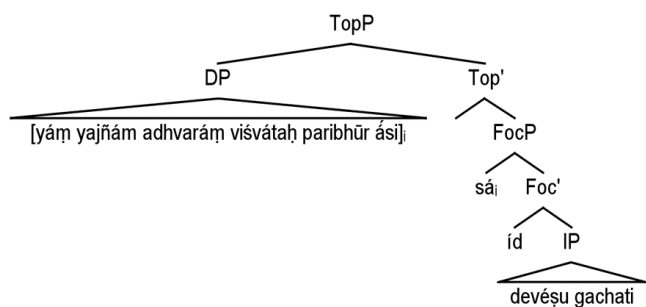
33) RV 1.1.4

a *ágne yám yajñám adhvarám*
b *viśvátaḥ paribhūr ási*
c *sá id devéṣu gachati*

‘O Agni, the sacrifice and rite that you surround on every side— it alone goes among the gods’.

For this sentence, I propose the following tree diagram, which adopts Cinque’s (2020) analysis of correlatives as DPs¹⁰⁷.

30)



Assuming Cinque’s (2020) analysis of correlative clauses as DP constituents, the preposed correlative *yám yajñám adhvarám ... ási* in RV 1.1.4 can be analyzed as a topical DP in the left

¹⁰⁷ This scheme is analogous to that published in Vai (2024, p. 195), but has been modified to take into account Cinque’s (2020) interpretation of correlatives.

periphery. The resumptive pronoun *sá*, reinforced by the focal particle *íd*, functions as identificational focus in the matrix clause.

The advantage of this analysis is not primarily interpretive, since the exclusivity conveyed by *sá* *íd* is already reflected in traditional translations (see e.g. J-B 2014, I, p. 89). Rather, treating the correlative as a DP allows it to be integrated into the general pattern of left dislocation discussed above. It behaves structurally like other topical DPs resumed by a demonstrative, and the focalisation of the resumptive pronoun follows the same pattern observed elsewhere in the Vedic left periphery. The DP-analysis therefore strengthens the structural parallelism between correlatives and other cases of left dislocation.

9. Conclusions

On the basis of the data examined here, the structure of the Vedic clause may be amenable to description within the framework of Rizzi's theory of the left periphery (1997; 2001), which has been applied to a range of other ancient Indo-European languages. This study has focused on aspects of the information structure of the Vedic clause, with particular attention to the organisation of the left periphery. The data suggest that the Vedic left periphery is unlikely to be adequately captured by a single discourse-functional position to the left of C; rather, they point to the possibility that more than one constituent may occur in this domain, in some cases even preceding the complementiser.

Several examples show that topicalized elements, usually resumed by a pronoun, and focalized elements, which are not resumed and are often marked by focus particles, can co-occur within the same clause. These patterns are compatible with an analysis that distinguishes separate positions for Topic and Focus, broadly in line with Rizzi's Split-CP framework.

The behavior of complementizers in subordinate clauses further suggests that discourse-related material may appear in the left periphery even when a subordinator is present, and that subordinators themselves may occupy different positions within the CP domain. Finally, correlative constructions in the Rigveda appear to occupy a Topic position in the left periphery and are resumed by *tád*, supporting a DP-based analysis of correlatives. Overall, a cartographic approach offers a useful framework for the study of Vedic clause structure, while further research is clearly needed.

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