

From Standard Marker to Adaptor: The Case of Vedic *iva*

Erica Biagetti

Università di Pavia, Italia

Abstract In Early Vedic, the particle *iva* primarily functions as a standard marker of similitive constructions; in Middle Vedic, *iva* retains its function of marking comparison of equality but also behaves as an adaptor, i.e. an approximation marker which flags the semantically loose use of a lexical expression. Informed by cross-linguistic evidence in the domain of approximation, this paper traces *iva*'s development from standard marker to adaptor within the oldest layer of Vedic literature, represented by the *R̥gveda*. The analysis is carried out from a grammaticalization perspective, detecting the different steps that led to the emergence of the new function.

Keywords Grammaticalization. Similitive constructions. Approximation. Vedic Sanskrit. *R̥gveda*.

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1 Introduction

In Early Vedic, the language attested in the *Ṛgveda* (ṚV), the particle *iva* primarily functions as a standard marker of similitive constructions, as in example (1); in such constructions, *iva* is found in complementary distribution with *ná* and, more rarely, with *yáthā*. In Middle Vedic, the language of Vedic prose, *iva* retains its function of marking comparison of equality, but also behaves as an adaptor, i.e. an approximation marker which flags the semantically loose use of a lexical expression (Prince et al. 1982), as shown in example (2):

(1) ṚV 1.1.9ab

<i>sá</i>	<i>naḥ</i>	<i>pitá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>sūnáve</i>
as_such	1PL.DAT	father.SG	like	son.DAT
<i>ágne</i>	<i>sūpāyanó</i>	<i>bhava</i>		
agni.VOC	easily_accessible.NOM	be.IMPV.PRS.2SG		

‘Like a father for a son, be of easy approach for us, o Agni!’

* If not differently stated, translations of Ṛigvedic passages are taken from Jamison, Brereton 2014.

(2) ŚB 11.1.6.9

<i>saṣṛjānāya</i>	<i>tama</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>abhūd</i>
create.CVB	darkness(N).NOM	like	be.AOR.3SG

‘Having created (the Asuras), a kind of darkness has come to be’. (Brereton 1982, 444)

Since the approximative function of *iva* can already be seen in some Ṛgvedic passages, there is disagreement in the literature as to which of the two functions, the comparative or the approximative, was the original role of the particle.

This paper aims to make a case for the development of *iva* from a standard marker of similitive constructions into an adaptor, and to trace this development within the ṚV.¹ This direction of change has

1 Due to its complex internal chronology, the ṚV constitutes a diachronic corpus and lends itself to the study of language change. The division of the ṚV into ten books (*maṇḍala*, lit. ‘circle’) in fact reflects its internal chronology. The core of the collection, its oldest part, are books II to VII (the so-called “Family Books”), whereas book X is the most recent. Book VIII and I are for the most part younger than the Family Books. Finally, book IX differs from the others in that it is organised thematically: it is a liturgical collection of hymns to the god Soma Pavamāna (‘self-purifying soma’). Invaluable work on the organisation and history of the ṚV was done by Bergaigne (1886; 1887a) and Oldenberg (1888, 191-270). For a summary and further explanation see Witzel 1995; 1997.

already been suggested by Viti (2002, 71 fn. 16), who, however, does not explore it further. The analysis is carried out from a grammaticalization perspective, tracing the sequential steps that led to the emergence of the new function.

The paper is organised as follows. In section 2, I review the literature on approximation, focusing on the most common sources of adaptors cross-linguistically and on the new functions they lay the groundwork for. In section 3, I introduce Ṛgvedic similative constructions marked by *iva* and by the two other particles, *ná* and *yáthā*; in this section, I also present the most widely accepted hypotheses regarding the origin of the three particles and the developments they underwent in Middle Vedic texts. In section 4.1, I suggest that the different functions performed by *iva* in Vedic prose correspond to those attested cross-linguistically for adaptors; in section 4.2, I describe *iva*'s approximative use as attested in the ṚV. In section 5, I summarise different hypotheses that have been advanced in the literature regarding the original function of *iva* (section 5.1) and reevaluate them based on comparative as well as textual evidence (section 5.2). In section 6, I trace the grammaticalization path that led the standard marker *iva* to acquire an approximative function; this section describes four different contexts that may have led to the emergence of the new function and to its progressive conventionalisation. Section 7 summarises the results.

2 Approximation

In the domain of hedging, Prince et al. (1982) distinguish between approximators and shields. This distinction reflects a fundamental difference as to the linguistic level they operate on: approximators modify the propositional content of an utterance as in (3), whereas shields operate on the pragmatic level by weakening the epistemic force of an utterance, as in the case of plausibility shields (4), or by indicating less reliable types of information sources, as in the case of attribution shields (Prince et al. 1982; Mihatsch 2009, 66):

(3) *His feet were **sort of** blue*

(4) ***I think** his feet were blue*
(Prince et al. 1982, 85)

Despite this distinction, many markers show ambiguous uses, and often approximator functions can arise as implicatures of shields and vice versa (see e.g. Kaltenböck 2010 on the English shield *I think*).

Approximation markers are in turn subdivided into adaptors and rounders: the former trigger loose readings of a lexical expression,

as English *like* or *sort of*, whereas the latter indicate imprecise numerical values, as English *about* (Prince et al. 1982, 93).

Diachronically, rounders and adaptors usually emerge from different sources. While typical sources for rounders are spatial expressions, many adaptors share a source based on the notion of resemblance. The most common sources of adaptors are standard markers of similitive constructions which, implying only a partial resemblance, themselves contain an approximation. This is the case with French *comme* in (5), Portuguese *como*, Spanish *como*, Italian *come*, all going back to the Latin standard marker *quomodo* ‘in which way’; the same holds for Portuguese *quase*, Spanish *casi* and Italian *quasi* ‘almost’, all from Latin *quasi* ‘as if’. English *like*, Swedish *liksom*, and marginally German *wie* also share the same path from qualitative similarity to approximation. Outside of the European language domain, Fleischman (1999) observes equivalent paths in Bislama, Japanese, Lahu, and Hebrew (see also Ziv 1998). As we shall see in detail below, when standard markers lose their syntactic and semantic relationality, they become modifiers of noun phrases, signalling their semantically loose use:

- (5) *on voit **comme** une sorte de gros nid*
‘You can see like a sort of big nest’.
(Mihatsch 2010a, 104)

Less common, but semantically very similar, is the emergence of adaptors from qualitative deictics (see Mihatsch 2010b, 270-1), as in the case of English *such*, *like that*, German *so*, French *comme ça*, *tel*, Portuguese *assim*, *tal*, Spanish *así*, *tal*, and Italian *così*, *tale*. All these items establish a relation of similarity between a comparee and a standard of comparison retrieved by situational deixis, by anaphorical relations to a preceding or following unit, or by reference to knowledge shared by speaker and hearer. The path from deixis to approximation is made clear by example (6), reporting a request by a client in a bakery shop: while in the request we could imagine a pointing gesture and thus interpret *so* deictically, the recorded answer “it’s only available at noon” clearly suggests that an approximative interpretation is needed here, rather than a deictic one.

- (6) A: *Geben Sie mir **so’n** Streuselapfel*
‘Give me **such** a crumbly apple/a crumbly apple **like that**’
B: *Das gibt’s erst mittags, wissen Sie?*
‘It’s only available at noon, you know?’
(Lovik 1990, 122-3; in Mihatsch 2010a, 104)

Finally, a syntactically and semantically different path leads from taxonomic nouns to adaptors, instantiated by English *sort of* and *kind*

of, French *espèce de, genre de, sorte de*, Portuguese *espécie de, tipo de, gênero de*, Spanish *especie de*, Italian *specie di, tipo di* (see Mihatsch 2007 and Voghera 2013 and 2017 for comparative studies; see Mihatsch 2010a, 105 for relevant literature).

In distinction from the examples presented above, some paths are shared by both rounders and adaptors. Take, for instance, the following general extenders, corresponding to English *or something like this* (Overstreet 1999; Cheshire 2007):

- (7) *j'avais euh quatorze ans ou quelque chose comme ça*
'I was fourteen years old or something like that'.
- (8) *habría que construir una especie de cómo le diría yo? como de cobertizo o algo así*
'One should build a kind of how shall I say like a shed or something like that'.
(Mihatsch 2010a, 108)

While rounders usually do not develop other functions, subsequent changes occur often in the case of adaptors. A new function developed from adaptors is the one of signalling figurative speech, which derives from the fact that metaphors are also based on similarity, although across two conceptual domains. Take for instance example (9) from Italian, in which *come* ('like') flags a figurative reading:

- (9) *i francesi hanno voluto come pagare un debito verso il loro poverissimo ciclismo*
'The French wanted to like pay a debt toward their poor cyclism'.
(Mihatsch 2010a, 111)

Another function of adaptors relating to signalling inappropriateness of a word due to semantic deviation is one of flagging changes in register. Furthermore, adaptors may be used as shields for pragmatic mitigation as in French *Y'a comme un problème* 'there is like a problem' (Mihatsch 2009). In some languages such as Spanish and Portuguese, the same adaptors that have developed shield functions are also employed as rounders (cf. Spanish *como*; Mihatsch 2010a, 112). According to Mihatsch (2010a, 113), the transition of the adaptor towards the rounder function comes about precisely through the intermediate employment of the term as a shield, leading to syntactic flexibilization of the term and thus allowing it to occur with quantifying expressions.

In light of these considerations, Mihatsch proposes the following semantic map of approximation, a domain in which unidirectionality is the rule (e.g. from similarity to adaptor to rounder, from shield to rounder) and bidirectionality is the exception (between adaptors and shields):

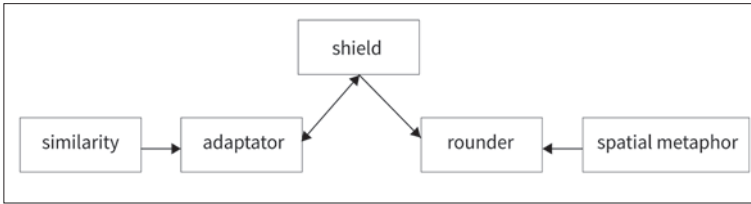


Figure 1 A simplified semantic map of approximation (Mihatsch 2010a, 117)

3 Ṛgvedic Similitive Constructions

Similitive and equative constructions encode similarity between a comparee (CPREE) and a standard (STAND) with respect to some action or property, called a parameter (PAR), and by means of a standard marker (STM; Haspelmath, Buchholz 1998; Treis 2018).² Similitive constructions encode qualitative comparison, or comparison of manner (10a); equative constructions encode quantitative comparison of equality (10b).

(10)

- a. *Peter behaves like a child.*
 CPREE PAR STM STAND
- b. *Peter is as tall as Susan.*
 CPREE PM PAR STM STAND

In the ṚV, constructions introduced by the standard markers *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā* constitute the main strategy for the encoding of comparison of equality. These are characterised by systematic ellipsis of the verb in the standard and by case transparency (Haspelmath, Buchholz 1998, 307), i.e. formal and functional parallelism between comparee and standard (Bergaigne 1887b; Jamison 1982; Pinault 1997a; Kulikov 2021). In such constructions, the standard marker follows the standard of comparison or, when this is a complex phrase, the first element of the standard. Qualitative and quantitative comparison are encoded by the same constructions and are therefore nearly impossible to distinguish (henceforth: similitives). Ṛgvedic similitives occur in different configurations of comparee(s) and standard(s). Single similitives can take an adjectival predicate as parameter or a verbal one, as in (11):

² Some languages and some constructions also feature a parameter maker (PM).

(11) ṚV 10.13.1b

<i>ví ślóka</i>	<i>etu</i>	<i>pathyā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>sūrēḥ</i>
LP signal_call.NOM	go.IMPV.3SG	pathway.NOM	like	patron.GEN
CPREE	PAR	STAND	STM	

‘Let the signal-call of the patron go forth afar like a pathway’.

Double similitives are characterised by the presence of two parallel elements in the comparee and in the standard, and thus have a gapping structure (12). Less often, similitives may be triple, with comparee and standard consisting of three elements each, or the similitive marker can be employed predicatively, as in (13):

(12) ṚV 6.19.3cd

<i>yūthā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>paśvāḥ</i>	<i>paśupā...</i>	<i>asmāṁ</i>	<i>indra</i>
flock.ACC.PL	like	cattle.GEN	herdsman.NOM	1PL.ACC	Indra.VOC
STAND _j -	STM	-STAND _j	STAND _i	CPREE _j	CPREE _i
<i>abhí</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>vavṛtsuva</i>			
LP	LP	turn.IMPV.PF.2SG.MID			
		PAR			

‘Like a herdsman to his flocks of livestock o Indra, turn here to us’.

(13) ṚV 7.33.8a

<i>sūryasya</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vakṣátho</i>	<i>jyótir</i>	<i>eṣāṁ</i>
sun.GEN	like	waxing.NOM	light(N).NOM	3PL.GEN
STAND-	STM	-STAND	CPREE	

‘Their light (is) like the waxing of the sun’.

As shown by *pathyā iva* ‘like a pathway’ in (11), *yūthā iva paśvāḥ paśupā* ‘like a herdsman to (his) flocks of livestock’ in (12), and *sūryasya iva vakṣátho* ‘like the waxing of the sun’ in (13), standards of similitive constructions of this type are virtually always generic. Rather than referring to individual discourse referents, generic standards refer to a class that possesses the property in question to a highly salient degree or which is the prototypical participant of the described event (Haspelmath, Buchholz 1998; cf. “frozen similes” in Gibbs 2007, 699). Thus, we can say that Ṛgvedic similitive constructions of this type specialise for figurative comparison and can be defined as similes in all respects.

From what we have seen so far, we can conclude that Ṛgvedic expressions introduced by *ná*, *iva*, and *yáthā*, constitute a single kind

of coherent construction from the point of view of both syntax and semantics. Syntactically, they have a syntagmatic nature and present clitic standard markers, whose distribution is determined by the ending of the previous word as well as by its morphological category (Pinault 1997a); semantically, such constructions are specialised for figurative comparison and can be defined as similes in all respects.

Despite their common syntactic and semantic features, the three particles employed in equative constructions differ with respect to their origin, their frequency within the ṚV, and in their later developments. The most frequent comparative particle in the ṚV is *ná*. In this text, the particle *ná* is used both as a negative particle and as a standard marker, its polysemy resulting from a semantic shift from negation to comparison. Equative constructions marked by *ná* emerged from the so-called negative parallelism (Pinault 1985) via ellipsis of identical verbs and cliticization of *ná*. In the comparative function, *ná* occurs 1,330 times in the ṚV but its frequency drastically decreases in the *Atharvaveda* (45 occurrences, of which 14 are quotations from the ṚV), and eventually disappears in Middle Vedic, where it is completely replaced by *iva* and *yathā*.

According to the traditional view (KEWAia, EWAia, s.v. *iva*), the comparative particle *iva* derives from the combination of the demonstrative stem **h₁i-* with the PIE disjunctive particle ** $\acute{u}e$* ‘or’, but different hypotheses have been proposed as to its etymology as well as its original function (see section 5.1). In the ṚV, *iva* is attested 1,023 times, of which between 100 and 170 also allow an approximative reading.³ In contrast to *ná*, *iva* is gaining productivity in the ṚV (Pinault 1997a) and becomes the most productive marker of similitive constructions in Middle Vedic as well as in Classical Sanskrit.

The particle *yáthā*, with its unaccented variant *yathā*, is a reflex of the combination of the relative stem with the manner suffix *-thā* ‘in which way’. Syntagmatic comparison introduced by *yáthā/yathā* derives from subordinate clauses of manner via elision of identical verbs and cliticization of the particle. In the ṚV, we find 76 syntagmatic equatives marked by *yáthā* and 87 comparative clauses of manner (Biagetti 2021; but cf. Hettrich 1988, 262-78).⁴ In Middle Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, *yáthā* survives as a standard marker; unlike *iva*, which is limited to syntagmatic similitives, *yáthā* introduces both syntagmatic and clausal comparison.

³ It is hard to provide the exact frequency with which *iva* occurs in this function, since commentaries and translations often differ in the interpretation of the respective passages.

⁴ Note that the difference between clausal and syntagmatic comparison is not limited to the presence vs absence of a verb: while in the former *yáthā* functions as a subordinator and occurs in clause-initial position, in the latter *yáthā/yathā* has a clitic behaviour and follows the standard.

4 The Approximative Function of *iva*

4.1 Approximative *iva* in Vedic Prose

In Vedic studies, the employment of *iva* outside of similitive constructions has been described as having an indefinite function, but the descriptions of the contexts of usage, provided in particular by Brereton (1982) for Vedic prose and by Pinault (2004) for the ṚV, can be assimilated to those described for adaptors in section 2. Just like adaptors, in Vedic prose, *iva* can occur with different lexical classes (cf. example (2) with a noun and (14) with a verb) flagging the semantically loose use of the preceding word. Furthermore, *iva* seems to have developed pragmatic functions often developed by adaptors.

For instance, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (Ch.U.), Uddālaka tells Śvetaketu to examine the inside of a fig and to describe what he sees. The latter's response is provided in (15), where *iva* functions as a moderator ('quite'), i.e. as a scalar modifier which approximates an average range on a scale (Paradis 2000, 149).

(14) ŚB 11.2.7.33

tasmād dakṣiṇam vedyantam adhiṣṛśya iva āsita
therefore souther.ACC altar_border.ACC touch.ABS like seat.OPT.3SG.MID
“Thereupon, after touching in some way the southern border of the altar, he should sit”.
(Brereton 1982, 446)

(15) Ch.U. 6.12.1

aṅvya iva imā dhānā
fine.NOM.PL.F like DEM.NOM.PL.F seed(F).NOM.PL
“The quite fine seeds here”.
(Brereton 1982, 446)

In example (16) from the *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* (GB), a double *iva* signals the markedness of the preceding adjectives, which derives from their being in opposition to each other and to the expected conclusion: though the man is large, and the distance is small, night travel is still frightening. As we have seen above, adaptors often serve to signal marked expressions, such as figurative speech, and stylistic discrepancies.

(16) GB 2.5.1

<i>tasmād dhāpy</i>	<i>etarhi</i>	<i>bhūyān</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>naktam</i>	
therefore	at_present	big.NOM	like	by_night	
<i>sa</i>	<i>yāvan</i>	<i>mātram</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>apakramya</i>	<i>bibheti</i>
3SG.NOM	rider.NOM	short.ACC	like	distance	be_afraid.PRS.3SG

“Therefore, even today, (although) **quite big**, he who travels even a **quite short** distance at night becomes afraid”.

(Brereton 1982, 447)

In another passage from the Ch.U. 6, reported by Brereton (1982), Āruni tries to show his son Śvetaketu that different objects can be explained as combinations of three basic elements: heat, water, and food. Understanding this, the great householders from of old were able to recognise everything that was presented to them. In (17), Āruni summarises the insights of these householders. In the first three sentences, the particle *iva* follows the adjective indicating the colour (*rohitam* ‘red’, *śuklam* ‘white’, *kṛṣṇam* ‘black’), marking it as not necessarily close to the prototype (see the ‘somewhat’ in the translation); eventually, something could be *avijñātam iva* ‘somewhat indistinguishable’, but the householders were nevertheless able to recognise it as the combination of the three elements. Note that the quotative particle *iti* ‘thus, so’ does not only follow the direct speech, but also the expression of the householders’ insight. This suggests that *iva* functions here as an attribution shield, indicating an indirect source of information.⁵

(17) Ch.U. 6.4

yad u rohitam ivābhūd iti tejasas tad rūpam iti tad vidāṃcakruḥ /
yad u śuklam ivābhūd ity apāṃ rūpam iti tad vidāṃcakruḥ /
yad u kṛṣṇam ivābhūd ity annasya rūpam iti tad vidāṃcakruḥ //
yad v avijñātam ivābhūd ity etāsām eva devatānām samāsa iti tad vidāṃcakruḥ /
 [“The red appearance of a fire is, in fact, the appearance of heat, the white, that of water, and the black, that of food”. . . . It was, indeed, this that they knew, those extremely wealthy and immensely learned householders of old. . . .]
 When something was **somewhat red**, they knew: ‘That is the appearance of heat’;
 when something was **somewhat white**, they knew: ‘That is the appearance of water’;
 when something was **somewhat black**, they knew: ‘That is the appearance of food’;
 and when something was **somewhat indistinct**, they knew: ‘That is a combination of these same three deities’”.

(adapted from Olivelle 1998)

⁵ Brereton attributes a slightly different function to *iva* in this passage. According to him, the function of *iva* is to generalise on the basis of the specific examples given before: ‘any red appearance’ is a manifestation of heat, etc.

4.2 Approximative *iva* in the ṚV

As mentioned in section 3, *iva*'s approximative function is attested already in the ṚV, where it is much rarer than it will later become in Vedic prose. Pinault recognises an approximative use in 171 out of 1023 occurrences of *iva* in this text, which he reports in full in his 2004 article. Geldner (1951), as well as Jamison and Brereton (2014) tend to infer missing elements of what they consider to be a similitive construction; Pinault (2004), on the other hand, refrains from supplying a comparee when this is not explicitly expressed and thus interprets *iva* as an adaptor in a higher number of cases. For instance, in example (18), Jamison and Brereton interpret *hradām kulyā iva* 'as brooks (reach) a lake' as the standard of a simile and supply *your resolve* as comparee, suggested to them by the singular *krátum* 'resolve' in *pāda* b. In contrast, Pinault (2004, 291) interprets *kulyā* as the subject of *aśata* and *iva* as an approximator signalling that these streams are not real streams, but praising words that invigorate Indra (the sea).

(18) ṚV 3.45.3cd

<i>prá</i>	<i>sugopā́</i>	<i>yávasam̐</i>	<i>dhenávo</i>	<i>yathā</i>
LP	with_good_herdsman.NOM.PL	pasturage(N).ACC	cow.NOM.PL	like
<i>hradām kulyā́</i>		<i>iva</i>	<i>aśata</i>	
lake.ACC	brook.NOM.PL	like	reach.AOR.3PL.MID	

1. “[Your resolve (*krátum*), deep like pools – you foster it, like cows.] As milk-cows with a good herdsman reach pasturage, as brooks reach a lake, (so your resolves) have reached fulfillment”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. “As milk-cows provided with a good herdsman (reach) the pasture, some kind of streams have reached the sea”. (Pinault 2004, 291)

As in Vedic prose, in the ṚV approximative *iva* occurs in combination with nouns or substantivised adjectives (approx. 60 occurrences according to Pinault 2004), in predicative constructions with or without copula, and with verbs such as ‘appear’ (approx. 40 occurrences), or in combination with adjectives (approx. 30 occurrences). In this function, *iva* occurs more rarely with adverbs and verbs (approx. 20 and 8 occurrences respectively) and only a couple of times with numerals (in which case it functions as a rounder). However, in this text, the particle takes a much smaller range of nuances than those listed in section 2 (based on Mihatsch 2010a) and actually attested in Vedic prose. In most cases in which *iva* accepts an approximative interpretation in the ṚV, usually rendered as ‘as it were’/‘gleichsam’ by translators, the function of the particle is to signal figurative speech, as the following discussion of examples (19) and (20) illustrates.

In (19), following Pinault, interpreting *iva* as an adaptor seems to be the most sensible choice.⁶ Since the verse is addressed to Agni, *iva* seems to have the function of flagging the metaphorical expression of the fireplace as a ‘seat’ or ‘abode’ that men have built for the god.

(19) ṚV 1.67.10b

sádma	iva	dhírāḥ	sammāya	cakruḥ
seat(N).ACC	like	clever.NOM.PL	together_build.ABS	make.PF.3PL

1. “The clever ones made (for Agni) some kind of seat by building together”. (Pinault 2004, 291)

2. ‘Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely’. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

In example (20), *iva* signals the figurative meaning of the participle *jájhhatīr* ‘laughing’/‘giggling’, which is a synesthesia for the lightning flashes following the Maruts.

(20) ṚV 5.52.6cd

ánv	enāṁ	áha	vidyúto
LP	3PL.ACC	PTC	lightning(F).NOM
marúto	jájhhatīr	iva	
Marut.ACC.PL	giggling.NOM.F	like	

1. “After these ones, the Maruts, indeed (comes) the lightning, somehow laughing”. (Pinault 2004, 297)

2. “Following them (came) the lightning flashes – (following) the Maruts like giggling (girls)”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

In (21), Indra’s slaying of Vṛtra is expressed by the clause *sasántam vájreṇā ábodhayaḥ áhim* ‘you awakened the sleeping serpent with the mace’. As suggested by Jamison (2007, 110-12; 2021, *ad loc.*), the fact

⁶ In this example, a comparee for a hypothetical simile can be recovered neither from the linguistic context, nor from the formulaic system, but only by constructing, somewhat forcibly, *sádman-* ‘seat, abode’ and *dhíra-* ‘clever’ both with the standard and with the comparee, as in the translation by Jamison and Brereton. The only simile that could support this interpretation is the one in i), where *rátham* ‘chariot’ could be the counterpart of *sádma* ‘seat’ in ṚV 1.67.10ab: here however, a comparee rendered with ‘them’ in the translation is recoverable from *bráhma* ‘sacred formulations’ in *pāda* a.

i. ṚV 5.29.15cd

vástreva bhadrásúkṛtā vasūyú

rátham ná dhíraḥ suápā atakṣam

“Like garments, lovely and well made, like a clever artisan a chariot have I fashioned them”.

(adapted from Jamison, Brereton 2014)

that the action in this clause is not to be taken literally is signalled by the presence of *iva* in the main clause, which introduces the heroic deed (*vīryām*) depicted in *pāda* b; since in this case *iva* follows the preverb *prá*, it has scope over the whole sentence.

(21) ṚV 1.103.7ab

<i>tád</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>prá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vīryām</i>	<i>cakartha</i>
3SG.ACC.N	Indra.VOC	LP	like	heroic_deed(N).ACC	do.PF.2SG
<i>yát</i>	<i>sasántam</i>	<i>vájreṇā</i>	<i>ábodhayó</i>	<i>áhim</i>	
REL.ACC.N	sleep.PTCP.ACC	mace.INST.SG	awake.IMPF.2SG	serpent.ACC	

1. “You made quite a virile prowess, o Indra, that you wakened the sleeping serpent with your club”. (Pinault 2004, 299)

2. “This heroic deed you carried out, Indra—that/when you “awakened” the sleeping serpent with your mace, as it were”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

When it occurs after a verb, *iva* sometimes functions as a shield for pragmatic mitigation. In example (22), Indra is praised for his help in winning more territory for the devotees, but he seems to be withholding the wealth they expect. The poet’s reproach is, however, mitigated by *iva*, which functions as a speech act hedge.

(22) ṚV 7.37.6ab

<i>vāsáyasi</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vedhásas</i>	<i>tuvám</i>	<i>naḥ</i>
cause_to_wait.2SG	like	adept.ACC.PL	2SG.GEN	1PL.ACC
<i>kadá</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>vácaso</i>	<i>bubodhaḥ</i>
when	1PL.GEN	Indra.VOC	speech.GEN.SG	notice.SUBJ.PF.2SG

“You seem to be causing us, your ritual adepts, to bide our time. When will you take notice of our speech, Indra?” (Jamison, Brereton 2014)*

* This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004) but listed among cases of approximating *iva* occurring with a noun.

Finally, while with adverbs of manner *iva* signals a figurative reading, with adverbs of quantity it can function as a moderator, much like English *quite* or *rather*.⁷ One instance of the latter use is *sánair* ‘*iva* ‘quite softly, softly-like’ in ṚV 8.91.3cd.

In brief, among all the analysed occurrences, in most cases in which *iva* accepts an approximative reading, its function is to signal

⁷ For Vedic prose, Brereton (1982, 446) describes this function of *iva* after adjectives indicating quantity or size, and the same use is recognised by Pinault for combinations of adjectives with *iva* in the ṚV. However, all cases rendered in this way by Pinault also allow a comparative interpretation which I have chosen not to discuss here.

that the preceding term is imprecise, as it expresses the referent in a figurative way. This function is regularly found after nouns (19), adjectives, and participles (20); with verbs and adverbs, along with indicating a figurative reading, *iva* can function as shield for pragmatic mitigation, as in (22), or as a moderator.

5 Varying Hypotheses on *iva*'s Original Function

5.1 Two Hypotheses from the Literature

Before tracing the grammaticalization process that led *iva* to develop its adaptor function, in this section I review different hypotheses regarding the original function of the particle and reevaluate them based on comparative as well as textual evidence; as we will see, two opposite hypotheses advanced in the literature presuppose different etymologies for *iva*.

The fact that *iva*'s approximative use is already attested in the RV led Pinault (1997a, 360-1; 2004) to hypothesise that this was the original function of the particle, which only later developed a comparative function. Pinault suggests that when *iva* had scope on a noun, the difference between approximation and similarity was negligible and the particle could be reinterpreted as marking the standard of comparison. More precisely, the comparative function of *iva* might have developed from indefinite identifications such as (23), as soon as the context provided a term that was understood as the parameter of comparison; cf. examples 23b and 23c.

(23)

- a. *śyená *iva* (*asti*)
eagle.NOM like (be.PRS.3SG)
'He is some kind of eagle/an eagle to some extent'
- b. śyená *iva* *jávasā*
eagle.NOM like swift.NOM
'He is some kind of eagle by his swift', cf. *śyenásya jávasā* "with an eagle's swift" (RV 1.118.11a, 5.78.4c), *śyenó javāsā* "falcon ... with swift" (RV 4.27.1d)
- c. *śyená *iva* *jūtáḥ*
eagle.NOM like impel.PPP.NOM
'He is provided with swift/swift like an eagle', cf. *śyená-jūta* 'eagle-swift' (RV 9.89.2c)

(Pinault 2004, 303)

According to Pinault, the development of formulaic expressions of comparison in the ṚV bleached the distinction between *ná* and *iva*, which became interchangeable in this function; this accounts for the higher frequency of comparative *iva* in the ṚV with respect to the original approximate function.⁸

Turning to etymology, Pinault suggests that *iva*'s first element **(H)i* (related to the anaphoric stem **Hyó-*) expressed anaphora, whereas the second element **-ue* marked opposition, as in the pronoun *tva-* 'the one (as opposed to another)'. Accordingly, he proposes the following reconstruction for the phrase *ásva iva* 'like a horse', where the particle **-ue* adds indefiniteness to the anaphoric reference:

- (24) a. **(H_i)ékwo-s Hyó-s* 'which horse'
b. **(H_i)ékwo-s Hi-ue* 'which horse of some sort, some kind of horse'
(Pinault 2004, 304)

For the development of the particle *iva*, Viti (2002, 70-1) proposes the opposite direction to the one suggested by Pinault, namely from standard marker of similitive constructions to approximation marker. First, Viti suggests that the original function of *iva* should be looked for in the ṚV, and not in the later prose texts, in which comparative *ná* has disappeared. Second, she holds that the meaning attested in the *Brāhmaṇas* can easily derive from comparison of equality which, as a proposition of similarity and not of tautology, always entails a certain degree of approximation: therefore, the passage from 'as' to 'so to speak' would semantically be the most plausible.

Viti's hypothesis, which is accepted in this article, is based on the traditional view of *iva*'s etymology (KEWAia and EWAia s.v. *iva*): as mentioned in section 3, this considers *iva* a reflex of the combination of the demonstrative stem **h_ii-* with the PIE disjunctive particle **ue* 'or'. The former is attested in Vedic and Sanskrit demonstrative pronouns *ay-am*, *iy-am*, *i-d-am*, as well as in Latin *i-s*, *i-d*, among others. For the latter, compare Sanskrit *vā* 'or', AG *é* 'like' from **ēfé*, Latin *-ve* 'or' and *c-eu* 'like'.⁹ Watkins (1973, 202-6) considers the Latin standard marker *ceu* a cognate of Vedic *iva*, and reconstructs it as a

⁸ For two decades, Pinault has studied Ṛgvedic similes providing invaluable insights on the metrical distribution of the two particles *ná* and *iva* (1997a) as well as on the relationship between the comparative and negative use of *ná* (1985; 1997b). On the formulaic nature of Ṛgvedic similes, see especially Pinault 1985, 110-11 on the formula *samudrá- ná/iva* 'like an ocean' and Pinault 1997a, 363-5 on the formula 'like a father to his son'. Other formulaic similes are described in Biagetti 2021, 361-81.

⁹ Since demonstrative pronouns, and especially proximal or person pronouns, make their referents accessible through deixis, Viti (2002, 70-1) considers Mayrhofer's etymology of *iva* as further evidence for the function of individuation that she recognises in the use of *iva* in opposition to *ná*.

combination of the PIE particle $*\acute{k}e-$ ‘this, here’ (Lat *-ce* ‘here’) and $*(h_1)i-ue$ ‘as’ (see also de Vaan 2008, 112).

For the sake of completeness, I shall mention Dunkel’s more recent proposal on the etymology of *iva* (LIPP, 763, 766, with fnn. 19, 21), according to which *iva* is the reflex of a combination of two comparative particles, namely PIE $*h_2i-$ ‘if; as’ (?) (346-8) and $*(s)ua$ ‘like, as’.

5.2 Revisited Hypotheses

Of the two etymologies presented above, considering *iva* as combination of the demonstrative stem $*h_1i-$ with the disjunctive particle $*ue$ ‘or’ finds the greatest support in comparative evidence. Besides being substantiated by the AG and Latin parallels listed above, the development of deictics such as demonstrative pronouns and adjectives into parameter and standard markers is well attested both within and outside the IE domain (König 2017). Vedic deictics have a quite transparent formal make-up, in that the first element expresses the position of the referent with respect to the *origo*, while the second element expresses the relevant ontological dimension: for instance, while *i-yant-* is a degree adjective expressing proximal deixis, *tá-vant-* is likewise a degree adjective but expresses distal deixis. Thus, while it is clear that *i-va* expresses proximal deixis, the ontological dimension remains underspecified and the original value of the particle $*h_1i-ue$ may be rendered either as ‘or this’ or as ‘or so’.

Turning to *iva*’s second element $*ue$ ‘or’, the presence of disjunctive particles within standard marker also finds parallels in other languages: besides AG \acute{e} (Chantraine 1963, 152) and Gothic *pau* (Benveniste 1948, 140), Stassen (1985, 62) reports usages of *weder* as standard marker in some Swiss and Middle High German dialects (Small 1923, 36); similarly, in several East Flemish and West Flemish dialects there is a comparative particle *of* which corresponds to disjunctive *of* in Standard Dutch and Standard Flemish (Bergmans 1982, 78).

In turn, the etymology of *iva* as a reflex of PIE $*h_1i-ue$ ‘or this’/‘or so’ opens up two possible paths in its development while excluding a third one:

1. the comparative function and the approximative one emerged independently from one another, respectively from the anaphoric/cataphoric and recognitional function of the deictic;
2. the approximative function, and more precisely the adaptor function, developed from the standard marker of similitive constructions (regardless of the origin of the latter).

The first hypothesis is suggested by recent studies in the domain of deixis. Mihatsch (2010a, and especially 2010b) has shown that deictics are a common source for adaptors. König (2017) has demonstrat-

ed that the comparative and the approximative functions can emerge from the endophoric employment of deictics, independently from one another and following different grammaticalization paths: the comparative function develops from the anaphoric function of deictics, whereas the approximative function emerges from their recognitional function [fig. 2].

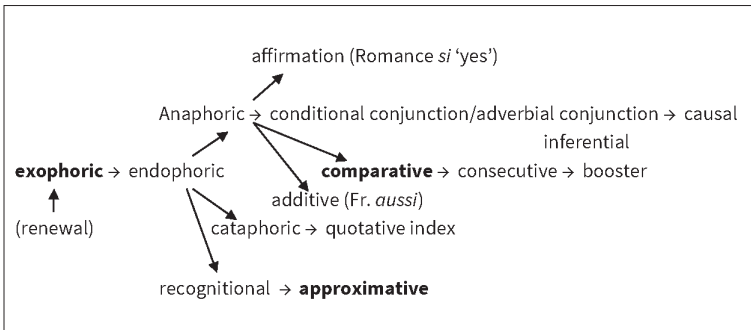


Figura 2 Paths of grammaticalization taking demonstratives of manner and degree as source (König 2017)

The second hypothesis comes from the cross-linguistic observation that standard markers are a common source of adaptors (see section 2).

To date, the opposite direction of change, namely from approximation marker to standard marker, has apparently not been attested. Thus, unless we accept that Vedic constitutes an exception to the unidirectionality of Mihatsch's semantic map of approximation (2010a, fig. 1), Pinault's hypothesis on the development of *iva* (section 5.1) cannot be considered further. Let us now examine hypotheses 1) and 2).

According to König's (2017) semantic map of deixis [fig. 2], *iva*'s approximative functions might have developed from the recognitional function of the deictic. The term 'recognitional', first introduced by Himmelmann (1997, 61), is used for such cases in which a deictic marks a referent that is newly introduced in the discourse but constitutes known information for speaker and addressee. This function is typical of the German all-purpose manner deictic *so* in prenominal position, where it is often fused with an indefinite article (*son/sonne*). In example (25a), *so* is employed by the speaker to remind the hearer of a referent (the *Biergarten*). The semantic dimension expressed by *so* in cases like this is that of quality and the hearer has to find the exact type of referent in his memory. If the addressee is asked to find a suitable referent based on general knowledge rather than from his memory, as in (25b), the deictic takes an approximative function (König 2017).

- (25) a. *Wir haben doch damals so(eine)n Biergarten besucht.*
 ‘You remember this biergarten we went to on that day?’
 b. *Ich möchte son Kleber.*
 ‘I would like this kind of glue’.

The particle *iva* never takes a recognitional function in the ṚV nor in younger texts, and thus the emergence of *iva*’s approximative functions from the recognitional function cannot be accepted, at least based on textual evidence.

Another possibility for the independent development of approximative *iva* is that the particle originally functioned as a general extender. General extenders (GE)¹⁰ are a group of expressions characterised by a syntactic structure [‘and/or’ + non-specific NP] which occur at the end of a list, or after a single phrase, to indicate the existence of additional referents (Overstreet 1999, 3); Mauri and Sansò (2018a; 2018b) list them among syntactic strategies that convey *ad hoc* categorisation. As we have seen in section 2, GEs are a common source of approximators and rounders (cf. examples 7 and 8). Both the formal and, particularly, the semantic make-up of the particle *iva* resembles that of disjunctive GEs like German *oder so*, or Spanish *o algo así*, which also contain a disjunctive marker in correspondence with *-va* < **ue* ‘or’ found in *iva*.¹¹

In one passage from the ṚV, *iva* seems to occur in a generalising GE (Benigni 2018, 113), that is a GE followed by an indefinite generic noun, which is a hyperonym of the elements contained in the list. The list incorporating the three items *kṣatrā-* ‘power’, *śrávas-* ‘glory’, and *iṣṭí-* ‘conquest’ in (26) is indeed followed by the hyperonym *ártha-* ‘or any (other kind of) goal’.¹²

- (26) ṚV 1.113.6

<i>kṣatrā́ya</i>	<i>tvaṃ</i>	<i>śrávase</i>	<i>tvám</i>	<i>mahiyá</i>	
power.DAT	INDF	glory.DAT	INDF	great.DAT	
<i>iṣṭáye</i>	<i>tvaṃ</i>	<i>ártham</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>tvám</i>	<i>ityaí</i>
conquest.DAT	INDF	goal.ACC	like	INDF	go.DAT

¹⁰ There is great terminological variation in the definition of these forms, which are also called *set marking tags* (Dines 1980), *generalised list completers* (Jefferson 1990), *extension particles* (Dubois 1992), *vague category identifiers* (Channell 1994), and *extender tags* (Carroll 2008).

¹¹ GE often undergo grammaticalization processes which involve phonetic reduction, univerbation (cf. Italian *eccetera* < Latin *et cetera*, Dutch *enzovoorts* < *en + zo + voorts*), decategorization, and semantic bleaching, all processes that may explain *iva*’s reduced form (Mauri, Sansò 2018a; 2018b; Benigni 2018; Kim 2020).

¹² In this example, the list is constructed based on the repetition of the indefinite pronoun *tva-* ‘one’, which contributes to the indefinite reading of the passage.

<i>vísadṛśā</i>	<i>jīvitā</i>	<i>abhipracákṣa</i>	
different.ACC.PL	life.ACC.PL	look.DAT	
<i>uṣā</i>	<i>ajīgar</i>	<i>bhúvanāni</i>	<i>víśvā</i>
Dawn.NOM	wake.AOR.3SG	creature.ACC.PL	all.ACC.PL

“Dawn woke all the creatures up, urging this one to power, this one to glory, this one to a great conquest, this one **to go to any (other) kind of goal**, in order to look for the various ways of living”. (Pinault 2004, 292)

Example (26) is, however, the only clear instance of *iva* occurring at the end of a list;¹³ in all other cases listed by Pinault (2004), *iva* occurs after a single phrase, but it never conveys *ad hoc* categorisation. Thus, despite being supported by comparative evidence, the emergence of *iva*'s approximative function from its original deictic function (hypothesis 1) is not confirmed by textual evidence. Although the etymology alone might be enough to evidence this development, accepting this hypothesis is problematic because in other languages, the adaptor use tends to coexist with the recognitional function of the manner deictic or with its use in GE (cf. examples from section 2; cf. also Mihatsch 2010b, 272-6).

Since the hypothesis of the independent emergence of *iva*'s approximative function from the deictic one is not supported by textual evidence, we are left with hypothesis 2), according to which the approximative use developed out of *iva*'s employment in similitive constructions. Section 6 traces the different steps in this development.

6 From Standard Marker to Adaptor

In this section, I test whether there is evidence in the ṚV that the adaptor function developed from the one of standard marker.

An important indicator supporting this direction of change is provided by the very function of *iva* of reporting figurative speech as presented in section 4.2. We have seen with Mihatsch (2010a, 111) that this function usually develops from the semantic approximative use with metaphors; indeed, just like lexical approximation, metaphors are based on similarity, although across two conceptual domains. In section 4.2, we have seen that in most cases in which *iva* accepts an approximative interpretation in the ṚV, the function of the particle is to signal figurative speech; in contrast, other functions associated with adaptors are only marginally attested. Now, taking into account the fact that adaptors often derive from standard markers of

¹³ The only other possible candidate is ṚV 8.3.16ab, but here the interpretation of *iva* as a GE is complicated by syntactic and semantics issues (for a detailed discussion, see Biagetti 2021, 298).

similitive constructions,¹⁴ and also considering that Ṛgvedic similitive constructions are specialised for figurative comparison (section 3), the passage from standard marker of similes to markers of figurative speech seems the most plausible development for *iva*. From there, it is just a small step to move on to a marker signalling the inappropriateness of a term, not only due to semantic deviations, but also due to the need for pragmatic mitigation; only after these steps had occurred did the particle develop into a rounder, a function that is only attested a couple of times in the ṚV.

The proposition above accounts for the semantics of the source construction that gave rise to the implicatures underlying the functional change; now we need to trace the different steps leading to the new function. Ambiguous utterances play a crucial role in the analysis of such processes: drawing from Evans and Wilkins (1998, 5), Heine (2002, 85 f.) calls such ambiguous contexts “bridging contexts”. Bridging contexts trigger an inferential mechanism that leads to replacing the source meaning with another meaning, the target meaning, that offers a more plausible interpretation of a given utterance; in these contexts, the target meaning is the one which is most likely to be inferred, but an interpretation in terms of the source meaning cannot be entirely ruled out.

Since Ṛgvedic similitive constructions are always syntagmatic, the development must have started from combinations of nouns with *iva*, and then have spread to other parts of speech; if combinations of *iva* with verbs and adverbs did indeed develop after those with nouns and (substantivised) adjectives, this progression would also explain why the former display a comparatively more varied range of functions, despite being less frequent.

In similitives, *iva* situates a trajector, the comparee, in relation to a landmark, the standard. The change occurring in the emergence of the approximative function consists in the loss of *iva*'s relational function: the comparee disappears, the standard introduced by *iva* remains, and *iva* becomes a modifier of the latter. At this point, since it no longer makes sense to refer to a standard since there is no comparee, we should speak instead of an NP modified by an adaptor.

As we have seen above, a bridging context should allow both interpretations – the relational as well as the modifying function. As argued by Heine (2002, 85), often more than one possible bridging context can be detected. This is also true in the case of *iva*, for which at least four possible bridges exist:

14 Since similitive comparison expresses qualitative similarity of processes and entities and, unlike equative comparison of quantity, is always approximative, the function of *iva* as a marker of similitive comparison must be the source of the new adaptor function (cf. Mihatsch 2009, 70-1 on Romance adaptors).

1. similitive constructions whose comparee is a referential null argument;
2. mismatches in argument structure of comparee and standard;
3. predicative similitive constructions with or without copula;
4. similitive constructions whose standard is a substantivised adjective or participle.

6.1 Bridging Context 1: Similitive Constructions Whose Comparee Is a Referential Null Argument

In section 4.1, we have seen that while Geldner (1951) and Jamison and Brereton (2014) tend to supply overt comparees in what they consider to be similes, Pinault refrains from such additions and interprets *iva* as an adaptor in all cases in which a comparee is not overtly expressed. In fact, many such cases can be interpreted as bridging contexts of the first type: these are similitive constructions whose comparee is a referential null argument, which may lead to a reinterpretation of the standard as the actual argument of the verb and of *iva* as its modifier.

Vedic is a pro-drop language which allows both null subjects and null objects. While null subjects are at least partially recoverable through verbal morphology, definite referential direct objects can be omitted even if they are not indexed on the verb. The distribution of definite referential null objects in Vedic is described in Keydana (2009) and, with a comparison to the situation found in AG, in Keydana and Luraghi (2014).

In Vedic, null objects occur frequently in coordination. Furthermore, they occur with participles or infinitives embedded into finite sentences, due to argument sharing: take for instance the participle *iyakṣáve* ‘for the one who seeks’ in (27), whose null object (\emptyset) is co-referent with the subject of the main clause *tvám* ‘you’.

(27) ṚV 10.4.1cd

<i>dhánvann</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>pra-pá</i>	<i>asi</i>	<i>tvám_i</i>	<i>agna</i>
desert(N).LOC	like	first-drink(F).NOM	be.2SG	2SG.NOM	Agni.VOC
<i>iyakṣáve</i>		<i>pūráve</i>	\emptyseti	<i>pratna</i>	<i>rājan</i>
seeking_to_gain.DAT	Pūru.NOM		first.VOC	king.VOC	

‘You are like the first drink in a wasteland, o Agni, for Pūru who seeks to attain (you), you age-old-king’.

A further type of referential null objects has no special syntactic constraints and is determined by discourse conditions. In the ṚV, such null objects can be used anaphorically, as in (28), cataphorically, as

in (29), or even refer to participants of the speech act.¹⁵ Referents of null arguments are most often subjects (cf. *tvám* in 27) or objects (cf. *támo* in 29), but can also be other types of arguments and adjuncts (cf. the infinitival dative antecedent *sómapītaye* in 28).

(28) ṚV 1.23.7

<i>marútvantam</i>	<i>havāmahe</i>		
with_Maruts.ACC.SG	call.1PL.MID		
<i>índram</i>	<i>á</i>	<i>sómapītaye_i</i>	
Indra.ACC	here	soma-drinking.DAT	
<i>sajúr</i>	<i>gaṇéna</i>	<i>Ø_i</i>	<i>tṛmpatu</i>
together	band.INST.SG		enjoy.IMPV.3SG

“Indra with the Maruts we call hither for soma drinking. Together with (his) band he shall enjoy [the drinking].”

(Keydana, Luraghi 2014, 126)

(29) ṚV 6.64.3cd

<i>ápa</i>	<i>jate</i>	<i>Ø_i śúro</i>	<i>ástā</i>	<i>iva śátrūn</i>
LP	drive.3SG	champion.NOM	archer.NOM.SG	like enemy.ACC.PL
<i>bádhate</i>	<i>támo_i</i>	<i>ajiró</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>vólhā</i>
repel.3SG.MID	darkness(N).ACC	agile.NOM	like	driver.NOM

“She drives away [the darkness] like a champion archer the enemies. She besieges the darkness like a deft driver”.

(adapted from Keydana, Luraghi 2014, 126)

In order to understand how null objects may have played a role in the reanalysis of *iva* as a modifier of the NP_{STAND}, let us consider example (30). Considering *pādas* d and e in isolation, we are forced to interpret *vrajám gávām* ‘pen of cattle’ as the object of the participle *sísāsann* ‘wishing to win’ and *iva* as a modifier of the object noun phrase: ‘wishing to win the pen of cattle, so to speak’. However, taking the whole sentence into consideration (*pādas* d to g), we find that the null object of *sísāsann* can refer to the object of *ápāvr̥nod*, *íśaḥ* ‘nourishments’, due to argument sharing; since the participle now has a direct object, *vrajám gávām* must be interpreted as the standard of a simile and *iva* as the standard marker.

¹⁵ Due to peculiarities of the textual genre of Ṛgvedic hymns, it is hard to establish which discourse-related conditions determine discourse null-anaphors (see Keydana 2009, 134-5; Dahl 2010); the only thing we can say with certainty is that discourse-conditioned null objects always denote referents which belong to the common ground.

(30) ṚV 1.130.3d-g

vrajám	vajrí	gávām	iva
pen.ACC	mace_possessor.NOM	cow(F).GEN.PL	like
<i>sīśāsann</i>	Ø _i	<i>āṅgiras-tamaḥ</i>	
gain.DES.PTCP.PRS.NOM.SG.M		Aṅgiras-SDG.NOM.SG.M	
<i>ápa</i>	<i>avṛṇod</i>	íṣa_i	<i>índraḥ párvīrtā</i>
LP	(un)cover.IMPF.3SG	nourishment(F).ACC.PL	Indra.NOM enclosed.ACC.PL.F
<i>dvāra</i>	<i>íṣaḥ</i>	<i>párvīrtāḥ</i>	
door(F).ACC.PL	nourishment(F).ACC.PL	enclosed.ACC.PL.F	

1. Source meaning: “[He found the depository of heaven, deposited in hiding, enveloped in the stone like the embryo of a bird (in an egg) – within the boundless stone.] The possessor of the mace, the best Aṅgiras, **seeking to win (them) like a pen of cattle** – Indra uncovered the nourishments that were enclosed – (opened) the doors to the nourishments that were enclosed”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: “The possessor of the mace, the best Aṅgiras, **seeking to win a pen of cattle, as it were** – Indra uncovered the nourishments that were enclosed”.*

* This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004) but listed among cases of approximating *iva* occurring with a noun.

Both analyses are possible from a syntactic and semantic point of view, provided that if the target meaning is chosen, *iva* is interpreted as signalling the figurative meaning of the utterance. The verse narrates the myth of Indra’s liberation of the cows hidden in a cave known as Vala: thus, if we analyse the ‘pen of cattle’ in *pāda* d as the object of the participle, we will have to understand it as standing metaphorically – and somewhat ironically – for the Vala cave.¹⁶ Since the syntactic and semantic context of the verse allows two interpretations – the relational and the modifying function of *iva* – we can consider it to be a bridging context for the emergence of the approximating function from the comparative one.¹⁷

More often, the comparee represents a null argument which anaphorically or cataphorically refers to other mentioned constituents (discourse-related null argument). One example of anaphoric use is provided in (31); other examples are ṚV 1.127.4de, ṚV 4.5.8c, ṚV 9.112.3, among many others. If we consider *pāda* c of example (31) in isolation, we can only interpret *gopá* ‘herdsman’ and *yūthá pasvāḥ*

¹⁶ Note that *íṣ-* (*íṣaḥ* ‘nourishments’) also means ‘milk, milk drink’, and must stand metonymically for the cows providing milk.

¹⁷ In this case, two factors make the target meaning the one which is more likely to be inferred: a) the missing correspondence in number between the singular standard *vrajám gávām* and the plural comparee *íṣaḥ*, and b) the striking logical correspondence between the Vala cave enclosing the cows and a cattle-pen: indeed only interpreting *vrajám gávām* as the object of *sīśāsann* makes Vala and the cattle-pen co-referent, whereas the source meaning would require the cattle-pen to be compared to the nourishments.

‘flocks of livestock’ as the subject and object of *ví unoti* ‘urges’; consequently, *iva* should be interpreted as a modifier of *yūthá*: ‘the herdsman has urged some kind of flocks of livestock’. Taking the whole verse into consideration, it becomes clear that the verb *ví unoti* lacks both subject and object and that their antecedents are *índrah* ‘Indra’ and *ráthāya* ‘for (his) chariot’ in *pāda a*, respectively. Instead, *gopá* ‘herdsman’ and *yūthá pašváḥ* ‘flocks of livestock’ constitute the standard of the simile introduced by the standard marker *iva*.

(31) ṚV 5.31.1ac

<i>índro</i> _i	<i>ráthāya</i> _j	<i>pravátarṁ</i>	<i>kṛṇoti</i> ...		
Indra.NOM	chariot.DAT	slope.ACC	make.3SG		
<i>yūthá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>paśvó</i>	$\emptyset_i \emptyset_j$	<i>ví unoti</i>	<i>gopá</i>
flock.ACC.PL	like	cattle.GEN	LP	urge.PRS.3SG	herdsman.NOM
<i>ářiṣṭo</i>	<i>yāti</i>	<i>prathamáḥ</i>	<i>síṣāsan</i>		
invulnerable.NOM	drive.3SG	first.NOM	win.DES.PTCP.NOM		

1. Source meaning: “Indra makes an easy slope for his chariot [...]. Like a herdsman the flocks of livestock, he (Indra, *índro* in *pāda a*) urges (his chariot, *ráthā-* in *pāda a*).^{*} Invulnerable, he drives as the first to seek winnings”. (Adapted from Jamison, Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: (*pāda c*) “The herdsman urges the flocks of livestock, as it were”.^{**}

^{*} The translation of *pāda c* is by the Author. Jamison, Brereton 2014 have: “Like a herdsman separating the flocks of livestock, he keeps (his chariot) separate (from the others)”.

^{**} This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004) but listed among cases of approximating *iva* occurring with a noun.

Again, while both interpretations are syntactically possible, the latter makes only sense if we interpret *iva* as signalling the figurative meaning of the utterance: in this case, the metaphor maps the herdsman onto Indra and the flocks onto the chariot.¹⁸

In example (32), the target meaning is foregrounded because the only available antecedent for the subject of *aśata.3PL* ‘(they) have reached’, *krátum.SG* ‘resolve’, does not agree in number with the verb: this triggers a reinterpretation of *hradám* ‘lake’ and *kulyá* ‘brooks/ rivers’ respectively as goal and subject of the verb and of *iva* as flagging their figurative meaning:

¹⁸ Considering the wide use of metaphors in the ṚV, neither the interpretation of *pāda c* as a simile nor as a metaphor can be excluded; however, two factors weigh in favour the former interpretation. These are a) the presence of possible antecedents for the null arguments in the preceding *pādas*, and b) the kind of mapping triggered by the metaphorical reading: although metaphors are ubiquitous in the ṚV, the mapping described above is acceptable for a simile, as it represents an image mapping for the act of ‘urging’/‘impelling’ a chariot or a flock, but less acceptable for a metaphor, as the gods are usually represented as herdsmen for their protective function towards men, not in relation to their chariot.

(32) ṚV 3.45.3

<i>gambhīrām</i>	<i>udadhīm̐r</i>	<i>iva</i>	
deep.ACC.PL	pool.ACC.PL	like	
<i>krátum</i>	<i>puṣyasi</i>	<i>gá</i>	<i>iva</i>
resolve.ACC.SG	foster.2SG	cow.ACC.PL	like
<i>prá</i>	<i>sugopá</i>	<i>yávasam̐</i>	<i>dhenávo</i> <i>yathā</i>
LP	with_good_herdsman.NOM.PL	pasturage.(N).ACC	cow.NOM.PL like
<i>hradām</i>	<i>kulyá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>asata</i>
lake.ACC	brook.NOM.PL	like	reach.AOR.3PL.MID

1. Source meaning: “Your resolve, deep like pools—you foster it, like cows. As milk-cows with a good herdsman reach pasturage, **as brooks reach a lake**, (so your resolves) have reached fulfillment”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: (*pādas* cd) “As milk-cows provided with a good herdsman (reach) the pasture, **some kind of streams have reached the sea**”. (Pinault 2004, 291)

Example (33) is an instance of the cataphoric use of null objects within similes. This time, the passage is complicated by several syntactic and semantic difficulties,¹⁹ but the ambiguity regarding the use of *iva* should be clear. As in the examples seen above, *yūthā iva* may either be analysed as the object of the main verb *ā akhyad* ‘(he) has watched over’, or as the standard of a simile; in the latter case, the verb must be interpreted as having a null object which cataphorically refers to the genitive *devānām* ‘of the gods’ in the following *pāda*.²⁰

¹⁹ Two points are relevant here: starting from the main verb, Geldner takes *ā vkhya-* as meaning ‘count’, but Renau points out that this sense is not found earlier than the SB. Jamison (2021, *ad loc.*) points to the parallel passage *sām yó yūthēva jānimāni cāṣṭe* ‘who surveys the tribes (of men), like herds’ (ṚV 7.60.3), where the verb *sām vcaṣ-* ‘look over, observe’ strongly suggests an interpretation as ‘watch over’ also for the verb in (33). That passage also suggests taking *jānima* in b as the object of *ā akhyat* and as counterpart of the standard *yūthā*. See Oldenberg (1907), and Jamison (2021, *ad loc.*) for a detailed discussion.

²⁰ As shown by Keydana (2009) and Keydana and Luraghi (2014), null objects do not necessarily refer to subjects or objects but can also refer to other constituents. Taking the genitive *devānām* ‘of the gods’ as referent of the null object allows preserving the parallelism between the plural standard (*yūthā* ‘flocks’) and the plural comparee. However, the whole phrase *devānām jānima* ‘the generation of the gods’ or even *devānām yáj jānima ānti* ‘the generation of the gods that was nearby’ could be taken as antecedent. Note that in verses 3 and 4 the poet asked Agni to bring only a selection of gods to the sacrifice and the ‘generation of the gods that was nearby’ could refer to the gods that come to the sacrifice.

(33) ṚV 4.2.18ab

<i>á yūthá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>kṣumáti</i>	<i>paśvó</i>	<i>Ø_i akhyad</i>
LP herd(N).ACC.PL	like	cattle_rich.LOC	livestock.GEN	watch.AOR.3SG
<i>devānām</i> , <i>yáj</i>	<i>jánima</i>	<i>ánti</i>	<i>ugra</i>	
god.GEN.PL REL.NOM.N	race(N).ACC	nearby	strong.VOC	

1. Source meaning: “He [=Agni?] watched over them **like (a herdsman) the herds of livestock in a cattle-rich (pasture)** – watched over the race of gods that was nearby, o strong one”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: “He **has considered somehow herds of cattle** at home of a man rich in cattle, when the generations of gods were near (him), o mighty one”. (Pinault 2004, 291)

Now that we have found possible bridging contexts that may have favored the development of *iva*’s approximating function from the comparative one, we should see whether the ṚV contains instances of the so-called switch contexts. Switch contexts are incompatible with some salient property of the source meaning, so that the target meaning provides the only possible interpretation; however, unlike conventional meanings, meanings appearing in switch contexts are confined to such contexts (Heine 2002).

One instance of a possible switch context is provided by example (19), repeated here as (34). As we have seen in section 4.2, if we want to interpret *dhírāḥ* ‘clever (artisans)’ and *sádma* ‘seat’ as making up the standard of a simile, we notice that neither the linguistic context nor the formulaic system provides a suitable antecedent for the null subject and object of the verb *cakruḥ* ‘they fashioned’; thus, we would have to forcibly construct *dhírāḥ* and *sádma* both as the standard and as the comparee, as in the translation by Jamison and Brereton. The lack of available antecedents for the null arguments makes this passage incompatible with the source meaning (i.e. *iva* situating the comparee in relation to the standard), so that the approximative meaning rendered by Pinault’s translation provides the only probable interpretation.

(34) ṚV 1.67.10b

<i>cítir</i>	<i>apām</i>	<i>dame</i>	<i>viśvāyuh</i>	
bright.NOM	water.GEN.PL	house.LOC	whole_life.NOM	
<i>sádma</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>dhírāḥ</i>	<i>sammāya</i>	<i>cakruḥ</i>
seat.ACC	like	clever.NOM.PL	measure.ABS	make.PF.3PL

1. *Source meaning: “(He is) the bright apparition in the house of the waters through his whole lifetime. Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: (*pāda* b) “The clever ones made (for him, Agni) **some kind of seat** by building together”. (Pinault 2004, 291)

6.2 Bridging Context 2: Mismatches in Argument Structure of Comparee and Standard

A second bridging context can be recognised in similes that present mismatches in the argument structure of standard and comparee. *Pāda c* in (35) is a case in point: we can either interpret *vājam iva* as the standard and standard marker of a simile ‘as if to a prize’ or as the goal of the verb *asarat* ‘has flowed’. The former option entails constructing the verb \sqrt{sr} - ‘to flow’ absolutely in the comparee and with a goal argument in the standard; mismatches in argument structure constructions are well attested in Ṛgvedic similes introduced not only by *iva*, but also by *ná* and *yáthā/iyathā* (as comprehensively demonstrated by Jamison 1982), which makes the comparative meaning of *iva* in this example syntactically and semantically possible.²¹ On the other hand, the latter option entails interpreting *vājam* metaphorically as the goal of Soma; this is also a possible reading, for in book IX the mixing of the soma juice with water and then with milk is often presented metaphorically as a racing horse or a chariot running towards a prize.

(35) ṚV 9.37.5

<i>sá</i>	<i>vṛtra-há</i>	<i>vṛṣā</i>	<i>sutó</i>
3SG.NOM	Vṛtra-smasher.NOM	bull.NOM.SG	press.PPP.NOM
<i>varivo-víd</i>		<i>ádābhiyaḥ</i>	
wide_space-finder.NOM		undecivable.NOM	
<i>sómo</i>	<i>vājam</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>asarat</i>
Soma.NOM	prize.ACC	like	flow.AOR.3SG

1. Source meaning: “He, the Vṛtra-smasher, the bull, finding the wide realm when pressed, undecivable – Soma has flowed **as if to a prize**”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: (*pāda c*) “The soma has run **towards some kind of prize**”. (Pinault 2004)

As in the preceding example, in (36) we can analyse *padā* ‘by foot’ as the only element constituting the standard of a simile introduced by *iva*, as in standard translations; alternatively, we can interpret it as an adjunct of the verb *á gáchasi* ‘you come here’, in which case *iva*

²¹ Note that the full simile is found in ṚV 9.62.16; according to Pinault, this is due to the formulaic system and does not necessarily mean that the one in ṚV 9.37.5 is also a simile.

ii. *pávamánaḥ sutó nṛbhiḥ*
sómo vājam ivāsarat
amūṣu śákmanāsádám
 ‘Purifying himself, pressed by men, Soma has flowed, as if to a prize (*vājam iva*), to sit in the cups, through his mastery’.

functions as an adaptor: ‘come here along the slope of your intentions by foot, as it were’. Jamison (2021, *ad loc.*) suggests that ‘along the slope of your intentions’ (*pravātā ... krātūnām*) means that the journey to the sacrifice is an easy one for Indra because it is in accord with his intentions; if this is true, *padā iva* could suggest that the journey is so easy that it can be undertaken on foot. Although both readings of *iva* are syntactically and semantically possible, the whole sentence is metaphoric (cf. ‘along the slope of your intentions’), so reading *iva* as a marker of figurative speech offers a more plausible interpretation of the whole passage.²²

(36) ṚV 4.31.5ab

<i>pravātā</i>	<i>hī</i>	<i>krātūnaam</i>			
slope(F).INST	PTC	intention.GEN.PL			
ā	hā	padā	iva	<i>gāchasi</i>	
LP	PTC	foot(N).INST	like	come.PRS.2SG	
<i>ābhakṣi</i>	<i>sūriye</i>	<i>sācā</i>			
receive.AOR.1SG.MID	sun.LOC	with			

1. Source meaning: “For [through the days] you (Indra) come here along the slope of your intentions, **as if by foot**. I have taken my share in company with the sun(rise)”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014) / “Denn du kommst nach dem Zug deiner Gedanken **als wäre er dein Fuß**. Ich habe meinen Anteil an der aufgehenden Sonne bekommen”. (Geldner 1951)

2. Target meaning: For [through the days] you (Indra) come here along the slope of your intentions **by foot, as it were**. I have taken my share in company with the sun(rise)”.^{**}

* In *pāda* b, Jamison (2021, *ad loc.*) reads *āhā* instead of *ā hā*, and analyses this sequence as *ā* ‘here’ + *āhā*(N). ACC.PL ‘days’. The reason for doing so is that this is one of only two supposed examples of the particle *hā* with long vowel (the other one, ṚV 5.41.7 also follows *ā* and can be analysed in the same way). Jamison argues that the *ā*-final version of *hā* is *ghā* and that, while *hā* occurs only once elsewhere after the preverb *ā* (ṚV 8.9.18 *ā hāyām*), *ghā* is found commonly after *ā* (cf. ṚV 1.30.8, 1.48.5, etc.). Note that, accepting van Nooten and Holland’s (1994) reading of the passage as reported in example (36), ‘through the days’ should be removed from the translation.

** This passage is not translated by Pinault but listed among cases of approximating *iva* occurring with a noun.

²² Jamison (2021, *ad loc.*) also offers an alternative interpretation: after a verse in which the poet calls on Indra to come here (verse 4), the reference to going ‘by foot’ in verse 5 might suggest that Indra is tarrying on his journey and thus constitutes the poet’s mild reproach to the god. If this verse is meant to reproach the god for his delay, interpreting *iva* as an adaptor would be the preferred choice: indeed, as we have seen in example (22), *iva* can take the function of a shield for pragmatic mitigation and be employed to mitigate a reproach.

6.3 Bridging Context 3: Predicative Similative Constructions with or Without Copula

A third bridging context can be recognised in copula constructions of the type NP_{CPREE} *is like* NP_{STAND} that are ambiguous between the two readings. A case in point is the *pāda* in (37), which can be interpreted either as a predicative similative construction of the type CPREE *is like* STAND, or as the approximation of a predicational copula construction (Brook-Rose 1958; Sullivan 2013).²³ In either case, the passage has a figurative meaning in that the ‘place’ or ‘abode of the dawns’ probably refers to a place rich in cattle. Dawn’s radiant beams are indeed described as herds of cattle (cf. ṚV 4.52.2-4) and the goddess Dawn is called the mother of kine (cf. ṚV 4.52.2, 7.77.2). Furthermore, the following *pādas* refer to possessors of livestock (*kṣumántaḥ*) assembled for the praise of the singer and to a prize (*vájāḥ*) that should approach the poet as a reward for his song: note that prizes often consist of cattle in the ṚV. Thus, if *iva* is read as a standard marker, the passage instantiates a broad-scope simile, i.e. a simile that does not specify the attribute or dimension relevant for mapping (Moder 2008); if, instead, *iva* is analysed as an adaptor, the *pāda* instantiates a predicational metaphor and *iva* has the function of signalling figurative speech. Note that the difference between broad-scope similes and predicational metaphors is very subtle and that there is much disagreement in the literature as to its nature (see Moder 2008 and Dancygier, Sweetser 2015, 137-48 for a summary of the debate).

(37) ṚV 10.31.5a

iyám sá bhūyā uśásām iva kṣā
 DEM.NOM.F 3SG.NOM.F earth(F).NOM dawn(F).GEN.PL like abode(F).NOM

1. Source meaning: “Might this earth here be **like (the place) of the dawns**. [When the possessors (*kṣumántaḥ*) of livestock (*vájāḥ*) have assembled here with their strength, desiring to partake of the praise of this singer, let the powerful prizes approach us]”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: “Might this here be **the abode of the dawns, as it were**”. (Author’s translation)*

* This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004), but listed among examples of *iva* occurring within copula constructions.

²³ The term “predicational” in Predicational copula construction is not the same as “predicative” that we employ for similes of the type CPREE *is like* STAND. Predicational copula constructions are a particular kind of copula constructions that predicate a property of the subject, as in *Linda is an excellent teacher*; they differ from Specificational copula constructions, which specify role-value mappings (e.g. *The department chair is Linda*), and from Identificational copula constructions, which express identity between two entities (e.g. *The woman on the balcony is Linda*; Sullivan 2013, 104-10; Dancygier, Sweetser 2014, 136-7).

Recall that Pinault (2004, 303) sees predicational copula constructions like the one above as the starting point for the emergence of the comparative function of *iva* from the approximative one. In his view, this development took place as soon as the context provided a term that was understood as the parameter for comparison: cf. the reconstructed path **śyenā iva (asti)* ‘he is some kind of eagle’ > *śyenā iva jávasā* ‘he is some kind of eagle by his swiftness’ > **śyenā iva jūtāḥ* ‘he is swift like an eagle’ (section 5.1). The fact that the approximative value is not shared by any example of the competing particle *ná* is taken by Pinault as evidence for the hypothesis that *iva*’s approximative function preceded the comparative one.

It must be noted, however, that *ná* does occur in all bridging contexts detected for *iva*, except for predicational copula constructions (see section 6.6). Since predicative similatives lack an explicit parameter of comparison, the absence of *ná* from such constructions may result from its origin in the negative parallelism, in which the parameter is explicitly mentioned (see Pinault 1985).²⁴ Note furthermore that predicational copula constructions marked by *iva* are also quite rare, amounting to only around 20 occurrences.²⁵

Similes can take substantivised adjectives as standards; when these occur in predicational copula constructions, an interpretation of the adjective as a quality of the subject is preferred over a comparison between a standard and a comparee. At this point, *iva* likely loses its relational function and becomes a modifier of the adjectival predicate. In example (38), the adjective *anāśastā* ‘hopeless’ may be interpreted as a substantivised adjective functioning as a standard (cf. Geldner’s *wie Hoffnungslose* ‘like hopeless people’) or as an attribute of the poets. In the latter case, *iva* may be seen as marking the contrast between the adjective and the verb *śamsaya* ‘give hope’, both construed on the root *śams-* ‘wish, hope’; for this function of adaptors, see example (16) in section 4.1. A very similar pattern is found in *ṚV* 2.41.16b-d, where *aprasastā iva* ‘unlauded’ is contrasted with the verbal phrase *prásastim ... nas kṛdhi* ‘make a laud for us’.

²⁴ One instance of *ná* in a predicational copula construction may be recognised in *ṚV* 5.10.5.

²⁵ With the verb *vas-* ‘be’, we find: *ṚV* 1.29.1ab, 1.164.37ab, 2.41.16cd, 6.58.1ab, 8.20.20a (??), 10.4.1cd, and 10.94.10c. With the verb *vbhū-* ‘be, become’: *ṚV* 1.175.6a-c (= 1.176.6), 8.1.13ab, 10.31.5ab, 10.33.3d. Furthermore, Pinault (2004) reports the following cases without copula, although some allow interpretations different from the predicative one: *ṚV* 1.59.4a (?), 1.122.1c, 1.124.7 (?), 1.128.1de.

(38) ṚV 1.29.1ab

<i>yác</i>	<i>cid</i>	<i>dhí</i>	<i>satya</i>	<i>somapā</i>
when	PTC	PTC	true.VOC	soma-drinker.VOC
<i>anāśastá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>smási</i>		
hopeless.NOM.PL	like	be.PRS.1PL		
<i>á</i>	<i>tú</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>indra</i>	<i>śamsaya</i>
LP	PTC	1PL.DAT	Indra.VOC	wish.CAUS.IMPV.2SG
<i>góṣu</i>	<i>ásveṣu</i>	<i>śubhríṣu</i>		
cow(f).LOC.PL	horse.LOC.PL	resplendent.LOC.PL		
<i>sahásreṣu</i>	<i>tuvī-magha</i>			
thousand.LOC.PL.N	powerfully-generous.VOC			

1. Source meaning: “Wenn wir auch **wie Hoffnungslose** sind, du bewährter Somatrinker, so mach uns doch Hoffnung auf tausend schmucke Kühe und Rosse, o freigebiger Indra!” (Geldner 1951)

2. Target meaning: “Even when we are **devoid of hope, as it were**, o you true drinker of soma, give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o powerfully generous Indra”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)*

* This passage is not translated by Pinault (2004), but listed among examples of *iva* occurring within copula constructions.

6.4 Bridging Context 4: Similitive Constructions Whose Standard is a Substantivised Adjective or Participle

Related to the bridging context presented above, a fourth kind of bridge represented by similes whose standard is a substantivised adjective or participle can be found. In example (39), the adjective *vāśrā* ‘bawling’ can be interpreted either as the standard of comparison (‘like a bawling one’, i.e. like a cow), or as a secondary predicate modifying the comparee, in which case *iva* marks the figurative reading of the adjective as referring to the lighting (another case of synesthesia, like *jájhjatīr* ‘laughing’ in example (20)).

(39) ṚV 1.38.8a

<i>vāśrā</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vidyún</i>	<i>mimāti</i>
bawling.NOM	like	lightning.NOM	bellow.PRS.3SG

1. Source meaning: “**Like a bawling (cow)** the lightning bellows”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)

2. Target meaning: “The lightning bellows, **as if bawling**”. (Author’s translation)

Similarly, in example (40), the participial phrase *vidúṣī ... víśvam* ‘knowing all’ can be interpreted either as standard (‘like ones who know all’) or as an attribute of the comparee.

(40) ṚV 5.41.7cd

<i>uṣāśā-náktā</i>	<i>vidúṣī</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>vísvam</i>
dawn-night(F).NOM.DU	know.PTCP.PF.NOM.F	like	all.ACC.N
<i>á</i>	<i>hā</i>	<i>vahato</i>	<i>mártiyāya</i> <i>yajñám</i>
LP	PTC	convey.PRS.2DU	mortal.DAT sacrifice.ACC

1. Source meaning: “Night and Dawn, **like ones who know all**, through the days convey the sacrifice here for the mortal”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: “Dawn and Night, **knowing to some extent everything**, convey the sacrifice for the mortal”. (Pinault 2004, 297)

This last bridging context may have opened the way for adjectives and participles in attributive position and for verbs. Take, for instance, example (41), where the presence of the standard marker *ná* following the standard *paśúm* ‘piece of cattle’ forces an interpretation of *iva* as a modifier of the participle *naṣṭám* in attributive position. In (42), *émi prasphuránn* might be taken as a single predicate modified by *iva*:

(41) ṚV 1.116.23

<i>kṛṣṇiyāya</i> ...	<i>nāsatiyā</i>	<i>śácibhiḥ</i>	
Kṛṣṇiya.DAT	Nāsatyas.VOC.DU	power.INST.PL	
<i>paśúm</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>naṣṭám</i>	<i>iva</i> <i>dárśanāya</i>
animal.ACC	like	lost.ACC	like seing.DAT
<i>viṣṇāpúvam</i>	<i>dadathur</i>	<i>viśvakāya</i>	
Viṣṇāpū.ACC	give.PF.3PL	Viśvaka.DAT	

1. *Source meaning: “To Viśvaka Kṛṣṇiya [...] o Nāsatyas, you gave by your powers Viṣṇāpū to be seen (once more), **like a lost animal**”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: (*pāda* b) “... who has been **somehow lost** like a head of cattle”. (Pinault 2004, 302)

(42) ṚV 7.89.2ab

<i>yád</i>	<i>émi</i>	<i>prasphuránn</i>	<i>iva</i>
if	go.PRS.1SG	tremble.PTCP.NOM	like
<i>dṛtir</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>dhmátó</i>	<i>adrivaḥ</i> <i>mṛṛá</i>
bag.NOM	like	blow.PPP.NOM	with_stone.VOC have_mercy.IMPV.2SG

1. Source meaning: “Wenn ich **wie ein Schlotternder gehe**, wie ein Schlauch aufgebläht...” (Geldner 1951)
2. Target meaning: “If I **go kicking, as it were**, inflated like a water-skin, o master of the pressing stones, be merciful!” (adapted from Jamison, Brereton 2014)

6.5 Interim Summary

Wrapping up, several bridging contexts can be detected in the RV that may have favoured the development of *iva*'s adaptor function from the comparative one. While context-induced inferences may remain confined to bridging contexts (variously described as "contextual meanings" or "pragmatic meanings"), those acquiring switch contexts may develop some greater frequency of use and may no longer be confined to a given context, thus turning into conventionalised meanings (cf. Hopper, Traugott 1993, 73-4; Heine 2002). In the RV, I was able to identify only a single switch context: this is represented by those cases where neither the linguistic context nor the discourse universe provides referents for a null compare, which triggers a reanalysis of the standard as the argument of the verb and of *iva* as its modifier.

To determine which factors may have prompted the switch context to develop greater frequency and eventually led to *iva*'s approximative function becoming conventionalised, we may hypothesise a decline in null arguments in the passage from Early to Middle Vedic. The decline in the use of null anaphora of referential arguments in the history of Latin and AG has been described by Luraghi (2010) and Ponti and Luraghi (2018), and belongs with a series of changes in the direction of configurationality that characterised the passage from ancient IE languages to more recent varieties (on configurationality, see Hale 1983, Austin, Bresnan 1996; on the development from non-configurationality to low-level configurationality in Indo-Aryan, see Reinöhl 2016). Although Reinöhl (2016, 36) reports that null arguments, "in particular null subjects, occur with great frequency in Vedic prose", a quantitative study comparing Early and Middle Vedic has not yet been conducted and might improve our understanding of the conventionalisation of *iva*'s approximative function.²⁶

Whatever the factors that led to an increase in the frequency of the switch context may have been, we can hypothesise that the existence of bridging contexts such as 3 and 4 contributed to the diffusion of the adaptor function to other contexts, namely after non-substantivised adjectives and verbs. Following Mihatsch's (2009) semantic map of approximation, *iva* would later develop shield functions and finally be employed as a rounder after numerals, as also suggested by the rarity of this pattern in the RV.

Although grammaticalization is better described as a *continuum* from source to target meaning, *iva*'s development from a standard

²⁶ Note, however, that determining a change of this type is complicated by the textual genre of the RV. Indeed, a different frequency in the use of null anaphora in Early and Middle Vedic may result from the allegedly greater variety of syntactic patterns allowed by metrical texts as opposed to prose.

marker into adaptor can be conveniently described as a four-stage scenario, as in **table 1** (Heine 2002).

Table 1 Development of the adaptor function as a four-stage scenario (Heine 2002)

Stage	Example	Resulting meaning
I-Initial stage	<i>yūthā_i iva paśvāḥ paśupā_i ... asmā_i indrābhī ā vavṛtsuva_i</i>	Source meaning
	‘Like a herdsman to his flocks of livestock, o Indra, turn here to us’. (RV 6.19.3cd)	
II-Bridging context	<i>īndro_i rāthāya_i pravātam kṛṇoti yām adhyaśthān maghāvā vājayāntam yūthā iva paśvō Ø_i Ø_i vī unoti gopā</i>	Target meaning foregrounded
	‘Like a herdsman the flocks of livestock, he (Indra, <i>īndro</i>) urges (his chariot, <i>rāthāya</i>)’./ ‘The herdsman urges the flocks of livestock, as it were’. (RV 5.31.1a-c)	
III-Switch context	<i>sādma iva dhīrāḥ sammāya cakruḥ</i>	Source meaning backgrounded
	‘The clever ones made (for him, Agni) some kind of seat by building together’./ ‘Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely’. (RV 1.67.10b)	
IV- Conventionalisation	<i>iva</i> following adjectives in attributive position, verbs, adverbs, and eventually numerals (rounder function)	Target meaning

6.6 Approximating *ná*?

One peculiarity of some Ṛgvedic similes should be mentioned as further evidence for the emergence of the adaptor use from the comparative one. Unlike Vedic prose, in which only *iva* is found in the adaptor function, the RV provides examples of bridging contexts in which *ná* is employed as standard marker, instead of *iva*. Take for instance example (43), where both *iva* and *ná* partake in Bridging context 1. Note that in this case, the null object ‘hymn’ of the verbs *úpa ā akaram* ‘I have driven toward’ and *vṛṇīṣvā* ‘choose’ is retrievable from the discourse context: in the closing of a hymn, as in the case of (43), the poet often summarises his homage to the god by renewing the offer of the hymn just concluded.

(43) ṚV 10.127.8

<i>úpa</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>gá</i>	<i>iva</i>	<i>á akaram</i>
LP	2SG.ACC	COW.ACC.PL	like	LP do.AOR.1SG
<i>vṛṇīṣvá</i>	<i>duhitar</i>	<i>divaḥ</i>		
choose.IMPV.2SG.MID	daughter.VOC	sky.GEN		
<i>rátri</i>	<i>stómaṁ</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>jigyúṣe</i>	
Night.VOC	praise_song.ACC	like	victor.DAT	

1. Source meaning: “Right up to you have I driven (this hymn), **like cows** (to their pen). Choose it, o Daughter of Heaven, o Night—**like a praise song for a victor**”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: “Right up to you have I driven **these cows, so to speak**. Choose, o Daughter of Heaven, o Night, **this praise song for a victor, so to speak**”.

In some cases, neither linguistic context nor discourse participants provide an overt comparee for the simile: as we have seen for *iva*, this makes the bridging context into a switch context incompatible with the source meaning. In example (44), we find no available subject for the verb *vivyacuḥ* ‘(they) envelop’ other than *samudrá saḥ* ‘the seas’: thus, we must interpret *ná* as modifying *samudrá saḥ*, probably signalling that it does not refer literally to the seas, but rather figuratively to the waters which are mixed with Soma (cf. Jamison, Brereton 2014’s suggestion that the null subject ‘they’ refers to the water).

(44) ṚV 9.80.1d

<i>samudráso</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>sávanāni</i>	<i>vivyacuḥ</i>
sea.NOM.PL	like	pressing(N).ACC.PL	envelope.PF.3PL

1. *Source meaning: “[It purifies itself—the stream of Soma, who has the gaze of men. With truth he summons the gods from heaven. With the roar of Bṛhaspati he has flashed forth.] **Like seas** they [=the waters?] envelop the pressings”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: “**The seas of some sort** envelop the pressings”. (Author’s translation)

In example (45), *ná* occurs in Bridging context 2. Indeed, the adjective *śivábhīr* ‘kind’ and the participle *smáyamānābhīr* ‘smiling’ can be either read as modifying an understood standard ‘girls’/‘female’, or as an instrumental adjunct of the verb *áḡāt* ‘he has come’. In the latter case, *śivábhīr ... smáyamānābhīr* stands metaphorically for the lighting flashes of the thundercloud (the ‘bull’ in *pāda* b) and *ná* functions as an adaptor flagging the figurative meaning of the expression.²⁷

²⁷ According to Jamison (2021, *ad loc.*), the smiling females of *pāda* c must be the lighting flashes (so also Geldner’s translation); this interpretation is supported by *vidyútaḥ*

(45) ṚV 1.79.2

<i>á</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>suparṇá</i>	<i>aminantaṁ</i>	<i>évaiḥ</i>
LP	2SG.GEN	fine-feather.NOM.PL	change.IMP.F.3PL.MID	way.INST.PL
<i>kṛṣṇó</i>	<i>nonāva</i>	<i>vṛṣabhó</i>	<i>yádi</i>	<i>idám</i>
black.NOM	bellow.INTENS.PF.3SG	bull.NOM	if	DEM.NOM.N
<i>śivābhir</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>smáyamānābhir</i>	<i>ágāt</i>	
kind.INST.PL.F	like	smile.PTCP.PF.INST.PL.F	come.AOR.3SG	
<i>pātanti</i>	<i>míha</i>	<i>stanáyanti</i>	<i>abhrá</i>	
fly.PRS.3PL	mist(F).NOM.PL	thunder.PRS.3PL	cloud(N).NOM.PL	

1. Source meaning: “Your fine-feathered [lightning flashes] zigzagged along their ways. The black bull keeps bellowing. If he is really here, he has come here with his (lightning flashes) **like kindly, smiling (girls)**. The mists fly; the clouds thunder”. (Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: (*pāda c*) “He has come **with his kind, smiling girls, as it were**”. (Author’s translation)

When describing Bridging context 3, consisting of predicative similitive constructions, we have seen that *ná* is not found in this context, but that predicational copula constructions with *iva* are also rare.

Finally, the particle *ná* is found in Bridging context 4, featuring a substantivised adjective or participle as standard. This is the case with the participle *kṛṇvānó* in (46):

(46) ṚV 9.107.26cd

<i>janáyañ</i>	<i>jyótir</i>	<i>mandánā</i>	<i>avīvaśad</i>
beget.PTCP.PRS.NOM	light.ACC	delighting.ACC.PL.F	bellow.AOR.3SG
<i>gáḥ</i>	<i>kṛṇvānó</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>nirñijam</i>
cow(F).ACC.PL	make.PTCP.PRS.NOM.MID	like	adornment.ACC

1. Source meaning: “[Clothing himself in the waters, he (Soma) rushes around the cask, the drop being propelled by the pressers.] Begetting the light, he has made the delighting cows bellow, **as one making the cows into his fresh garment**”. (adapted from Jamison, Brereton 2014)
2. Target meaning: “He has made the delighting cows bellow, **making the cows into his fresh garment, as it were**”. (Author’s translation)

The latter example makes clear how participial standards may have favoured the extension of the adaptor use with verbs: here, the target meaning offers the most suitable interpretation for the passage,

... *jájjhatīr iva* ‘lightning flashes ... like giggling (girls)’ in ṚV 5.52.6. Oldenberg (1897) suggests that these females are the rain showers, while Witzel and Gōto (2007) suggest that perhaps they are the dawns. The subject of *ágāt* is the black bull of *pāda b*, which metaphorically represents the thundercloud.

for it is not clear what the referent of the standard ‘one making the cows into his fresh garment’ could be. In some cases, such as (47), *ná* occurs after a finite verb, thus excluding the source meaning:

(47) ṚV 2.4.7ab

<i>agníḥ</i>	<i>śócísmām̃</i>	<i>atasáni</i>	<i>uṣṇán</i>
Agni.NOM	shining.NOM	shrub.ACC.PL	burn.PTCP.PRS.NOM
<i>kṛṣṇávyathir</i>	<i>asvadayan</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>bhúma</i>
having_black_path.NOM	sweeten.IMPF.3SG	like	ground.ACC

‘Agni, enflamed, scorching the brushwood, with his black wayward course, **has ‘sweetened’, as it were, the ground**’.

The examples above suggest that *ná* could also already have been developing into an adaptor in the ṚV. Besides its absence in Bridging context 3 which, as we have seen above, may be due to its origin and its combinatorial features, the lower incidence of approximating *ná* in the ṚV must be explained by its decreasing productivity;²⁸ this decrease must have caused cases of approximating *ná* to remain isolated in the ṚV and to disappear in Vedic prose, where the particle is only employed as a negation. As for *yáthā*, although it also occurs in some possible bridging contexts,²⁹ its paltry 76 occurrences prevent us from forming hypotheses about its development into an adaptor, at least in the ṚV. However, we know that such development did not take place in Vedic prose either, where *yáthā* is primarily employed as a subordinating conjunction (also for clausal comparison) and secondarily as a standard marker of syntagmatic similes.

²⁸ The factors that led to the decline of comparative *ná* have yet to be precisely determined. Pinault (1997a) suggests that the availability of a standard marker that provides a long syllable (*-Ceva* vs *-Ca ná*) may have played a role in the spread of *iva* at the expense of *ná*, and recognises two main processes that led to the gradual substitution of the former for the latter within the formulaic system. According to Viti (2002), the distribution of *ná* and *iva* in the ṚV is based on the individuation level of the referents denoted by the standard: if the standard is highly individuated, it is followed by *iva*, otherwise by *ná*. Accordingly, Viti (2002, 69) suggests that the expansion of *iva* at the expense of *ná* occurs out of semantic solidarity between nouns that normally take *iva* and others that would normally take *ná*: for instance, as inanimate nouns *híranya-* (n) ‘gold’, *cándra-* (n) ‘id.’, *ghṛṇi-* ‘light, heat’ would normally be marked by *ná*, but are marked by *iva* due to semantic solidarity with nouns naming stars and celestial bodies which often occur with *iva*.

²⁹ Cf. for instance ṚV 1.130.6c-e, where *yáthā* seems to occur in Bridging context 1 with a syntactically determined null object (due to argument sharing). In ṚV 9.32.5, the particle occurs in what looks like Bridging context 2, since it marks an instrumental standard that has no counterpart in the comparee.

7 Summary and conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the grammaticalization process that led the standard marker of similitive constructions *iva* to be reanalysed as an adaptor is already apparent in the language of the ṚV.

First, I suggested that the different functions performed by *iva* in Vedic prose correspond to those identified cross-linguistically for adaptors, i.e. approximation markers that flag the semantically loose use of a lexical expression (section 4.1). The approximative function is already attested in the ṚV, but in this text the particle takes a much smaller range of nuances, its use being primarily one of flagging the figurative reading of the preceding noun or of the whole expression (section 4.2).

In section 5, I reconsidered the main hypotheses on the original function of *iva* in the light of cross-linguistic evidence. Starting from the etymology of *iva* as a reflex of the combination of the demonstrative stem **h₁i-* and of the PIE disjunctive particle **ue* ‘or’, I considered the possibility that the comparative and the approximative functions emerged independently from *iva*’s deictic function. More precisely, I suggested that the adaptor function might have developed from the recognitional function of the deictic or from the employment of the particle as a disjunctive GE with the meaning ‘or (something like) this’, ‘or so’ and argued that neither hypothesis is supported by textual evidence. Indeed, *iva* is never employed as a recognitional deictic and, apart from one occurrence of *iva* within a generalising GE, no example seems to fit the function of GEs of conveying *ad hoc* categorisation.

In section 6, I made a case for the emergence of *iva*’s adaptor function from the comparative one. Semantically, the specialisation of Ṛgvedic similitive constructions for figurative comparison constitutes a crucial indicator of this shift; syntactically, *iva* loses its function of situating the comparee with respect to the standard (source meaning) and becomes a modifier of the latter (target meaning). This development takes place through different bridging contexts, all of which can already be detected in the ṚV; a possible switch context is represented by cases in which neither the linguistic context nor the discourse universe provides referents for a null comparee, which triggers a reanalysis of the standard as the argument of the verb and of *iva* as its modifier. Finally, in support of the tendency of standard markers to develop into adaptors, I have shown that *ná* also appears in the different bridging contexts but that these have remained isolated cases in the ṚV due to the decreasing productivity of comparative *ná* and to its disappearance in Vedic prose.

Abbreviations

ABS	absolute
ACC	accusative
AG	Ancient Greek
AOR	aorist
CH.U.	Chândogya Upaniṣad
CAUS	causative
CPREE	comparee
DAT	dative
DEM	demonstrative
DES	desiderative
DU	dual
F	feminine
GB	Gopatha Brâhmaṇa
GE	general extender
GEN	genitive
IMPV	imperative
IMPF	imperfect
INST	instrumental
INTENS	intensive
LOC	locative
MID	middle
N	neuter
NEG	negation
NOM	nominative
NP	noun phrase
OPT	optative
PAR	parameter
PF	perfect
PL	plural
PM	parameter marker
PPP	past participle passive
PTC	particle
PTCP	participle
REL	relative
ṚV	Ṛgveda
SDG	superlative degree
SG	singular
STAND	standard
STM	standard marker
SUBJ	subjunctive
ŚB	Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa
VOC	vocative

- 1 first person
- 2 second person
- 3 third person

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