

Twenty years of relational preverbs: A grammaticalization account

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1. Introduction

The principal goal of this paper is to present a new analysis of puzzling facts of Homeric Greek, by recasting them into the same type of analysis that, twenty years ago, resolved equally puzzling facts of Rama, an Amerindian language. The analysis will consist of the identification of a similar category of “relational preverbs” in both languages and in presenting it in a grammaticalization perspective. “Relational preverbs” were defined by Craig & Hale (1988) as a category of verbal prefixes grammaticalized from postpositions. They are characterized by their being linked to an argument of the verb, while exhibiting different degrees of grammaticalization and lexicalization in their relation to this verb. As such, they may be defined as being morphologically prefixal but functionally adpositional.

2. Relational preverbs twenty years ago: the case of Rama

2.1. Problematic data in Rama

At the origin of the discussion of so-called “relational preverbs” was some problematic data for the analysis of a yet undescribed (and very endangered) language, the Rama language of the Chibchan family of languages, spoken in Nicaragua. Consultation in the field with Ken Hale, who was working at the same time on another language of the same region, resulted in a joint paper, “Relational preverbs in some languages of the Americas: Typological and historical perspectives” published in *Language* (Craig & Hale, 1988)¹. Basing ourselves on data for a number of languages of the Americas, we first argued for the existence of a category of “relational preverbs”, identifying further the need to establish their different degrees of relation to postpositions as well as different degrees of grammaticalization and lexicalization. All examples used here can be found in Craig and Hale (1988) or in Craig (1991).

The main points of the analysis of the Rama case are summarized below: section 2 presents the argumentation of their clear postpositional origin, section 3 their reanalysis as verbal affixes, and section 4 their different statuses, even within the same language, some being simple discourse clitics, while others are syntactically incorporated and others are yet totally lexicalized.

2.2. Postpositions vs. Relational Preverbs in Rama

The text excerpt in (1) shows the existence of two types of instrumental marking in Rama, one with a postposition (PSP) *u* as in (1c), and one with a relational preverb (RP) *yu-* as in (1b):

¹ Colette Grinevald was known as, and published under the name of Colette Craig from the University of Oregon until 1996.

(1) About the instrument ‘kiskis’ (kitchen tongs)²

- a. nainguku kiskis nsu-kuaakar-i
 so tongs 1PL-have-PRESENT
 ‘That’s why we have the kiskis’
- b. ung-i yaadar tkua **yu**-nsu-uung-kama
 pot-PSP/in thing hot **RP**/with-1PL-make-SUB
 ‘for us to make hot things in the pot with (it)’
- c. nsu-suluk **u** angka nsu-uung-i
 1PL-finger **PSP**/with cannot 1PL-make-TNS
 ‘with our fingers we can’t do it’
- d. nsu-suluk y-auk-baing-uting
 1PL-finger 3-burn-too much-TNS
 ‘we would burn our fingers too much’

As it happened, the relationship between postpositions and relational preverbs was obvious enough in Rama, considering their morphological and semantic similarities, to allow for the establishment of the following inventories. To be noted is the constraint on which postpositions have corresponding relational preverbs:

(2) Inventories of Rama relational preverbs and their source postpositions

Postpositions	Relational preverbs
ba(ng)# goal, target	ba-
u# comitative, instrumental	yu- ³
ka(ng)# ablative, source	k(a)-
su# locative	su-
aa(k)# object	yaa-
ki# locative	
kama# beneficiary	
ki(ng)# beneficiary	
aing# genitive	

2.3. Arguments for the reanalysis of postpositions into verbal prefixes

The reanalysis of postpositions into verbal prefixes needed to be demonstrated in view of the verb final Rama word order [SOXV], with a very common contiguous order of postpositional phrase and verb, as in [S O PP V]. Three types of arguments were presented to support this reanalysis.

² One of the first texts collected from the first and for a while only speaker available, Nora Rigby, who was very unconscious of the existence of such relational preverbs.

³ The alternation *u / yu* is a low level phonological variation widespread in the language. The longer forms of the postpositions are found with clause final postpositional phrases.

2.3.1. Constituent structure argument

The first argument consisted in showing that a number of elements could be found intervening between the relational verbal affix and the NP it is linked to, showing that the elements of the adpositional phrase [NP # PSP] no longer formed a simple syntactic constituent. The examples below present various types of intervening element ‘X’: adverb in (3a), *wh*-word in (3b) and negation in (3c):

(3) ARG X [RP-V]

a. X=ADVERB

sut neli *uwaik* **ba**-altanaang-i
 1PL Nelly *long time* **RP/for**-wait-PRESENT
 ‘We wait for Nelly for a long time’

b. X=WH-WORD

tiiskama *taa* **yu**-taak-u
 child *who* **RP/with**-come-PRESENT
 ‘Who carried the child?’

c. X=NEGATION

tiiskama nah *aa* **ba**-tang-i
 child 1 *NEG* **RP/for**-want-PRESENT
 ‘The child does not want me’

2.3.2. Semantic bleaching argument

The second argument was semantic in nature. It pointed to the fact that, for certain combinations of RP and verb, the semantics of the RP had evolved from that of its PSP of origin. Such a case of semantic bleaching is illustrated below, where the comitative reading of the postposition in (4a) evolves into that of a Patient/theme with the relational preverb in (4b):

(4) Semantic bleaching from comitative to Patient

<p>a. kohki u an-taak-u kohki PSP they-go-PAST ‘They went with Kohki’</p>	<p>b. kohki yu-an-taak-u kohki RP-they-go-PAST ‘They took/carried Kohki’</p>
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2.3.3. Phonological argument

The last argument was phonological and relied on the fact that, while no nasalization occurs between a postposition and the nasal of a consonant-initial verb form as shown in (5a), a RP can become nasalized when affixed to the nasal of a consonant-initial verb form, as in (5b). The nasal comes from the first person indexation, with the marker *na-* directly prefixed to the verb root:

(5) Absence of nasalisation of PSP vs nasalization of RP

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. [maa- ka] na-ngalbi-u
you- PSP 1-run-PAST
'I ran away from you' | b. [kã -na-ngalbi-u]
RP -1-run-PAST
'I ran away from (him)' |
|--|---|

This is, of course, a type of argument that is only possible to establish with actual speakers of the language, and will not be available on written data from ancient languages!

2.4. Different types of relational preverbs

One of the main points of Craig and Hale (1988) was to demonstrate how establishing a morphological category of “relational preverbs” did not specify the exact relation that the RP could hold to the verb to which it was affixed. In fact, in Rama, RP were found in the three different configurations shown in the examples (6) to (8) below. First, as shown in (6b), they could be simply cliticized, with the same semantics for the PSP/RP, and obligatory absence of the lexical argument the RP is linked to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (6) a. NP + <i>postposition</i>
[maing taata ka] na-ngalbi-u
my father PSP/from I-run-PAST
'I ran away from my father' | b. \emptyset <i>relational preverb</i>
[\emptyset] ka -na-ngalbi-u
(him) RP/from -I-run-PAST
'I ran away from (him)' |
|---|---|

Second, as shown in (7), both constructions can co-exist, but with two characteristics: one is that this time the RP can occur with its lexical argument, and the other is that there is a semantic shift from PSP to corresponding RP:

(7) (Repeated from (4))

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. NP + <i>postposition</i>
[kohki u] an-taak-u
kohki PSP/with they -go-PAST
'They went with Kohki' | b. (NP) <i>relational preverb</i>
([kohki]) yu -an-taak-u
(kohki) RP/with -they-go-PAST
'They took/carried Kohki' |
|--|--|

The third configuration found in the Rama language is illustrated in (8): there the RP can also occur with its lexical argument, but this time only this RP construction exists:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (8) a. *NP + <i>postposition</i>
*[paalpa ba] aa an-alpi-u
manatee PSP/for NEG they-look-PAST
'They did not look for a manatee' | b. (NP) <i>relational preverb</i>
([paalpa]) ba -an-alpi-u
(manatee) RP/for -they-look-PAST
'They looked for (it/a manatee)' |
|---|---|

These three patterns were analyzed in Craig & Hale (1988) as corresponding to the three degrees of relation of the affixed RP to the verb that are discussed below: as cliticized, incorporated and lexicalized RP.

- f. nsu-suluk -u angka nsu-uung-i,
our-finger-PSP/with NEG.MOD 1PL-make-TNS
'with our fingers we can't do it,
- g. nsu-suluk y-auk-baing-uting.
our-finger 3-burn-too much-TNS
'we would burn our fingers too much.'

2.4.2. Incorporated relational preverb

Another type of RP identified in Rama has been labeled the 'incorporated' one. Its formal characteristic is that it can be found in a configuration in which the NP argument may appear overtly before the RP with which it is construed. When compared to cliticized RP, these cases of RP exhibit the following characteristics:

- a) The incorporated RP co-occurs with a full lexical NP.
- b) The incorporated RP are less productive than cliticized RP, as they occur in combinations of specific postpositions with specific verbs. The two main verbs with which incorporation occurs, in fact, are two movement deictic verbs: *taak* 'to go' and *siik* 'to come', with the comitative *-u* 'with'.
- c) The incorporated RP exhibit a semantic drift, from [+control] to [-control], when compared to its PSP of origin. This semantic shift is first illustrated with the same NP 'silkgrass' and two different verbs in (10) below:

(10) PSP (instrumental) vs. incorporated RP (Patient)

- a. PSP
maukala i-park-i seem **ngabang-u**
net 3-make-TNS same **silkgrass-PSP/with**
'He makes nets with (instrumental) silkgrass.'
- b. Incorporated RP
naing taata **ngabang yu-i-siik-i** nguu -ki
my father **silkgrass RP/with-he-come-TNS** house-PSP/in
'My father brings (< come+with) the silkgrass (Patient) in the house'

The examples (11a-c) below illustrate the semantics of [+control] of the PSP of the comitative argument of the deictic verb 'to go (with wilful protagonist)', as in (11a-b), or that of the non movement verb 'to stay (also wilfully)', as in (11c):

(11) [+Control] semantics of PSP -u 'with'

- a. barka aa i-taak-u baaning **anul-u**
but NEG 3-go-TNS DIS **them-PSP/with**
'But she would not have gone with them (who were going too)'

- b. **taa-u** m-taak-u
who-PSP/with you-go-TNS
 ‘With whom did you go (who was going too)?’
- c. namaa y-aakar ngurii-ki yaing **tiiskama u**
 still 3-stay hole-PSP/in 3POSS **child PSP/with**
 ‘She stays still in the hole with her child (who was staying there too)’

However, as shown in (12) below, the reading of the corresponding incorporated RP becomes one of [–control], when found with the same type of deictic verb, here ‘to go’:

- (12) [–Control] semantics of RP *yu-*
- a. ngurii psutki **yaing tiiskama yu-i-taak-u**
 hole inside 3POSS **child RP/with-3-go-TNS**
 ‘Inside the hole she took (< go+with) her child (Patient)’
- b. **tiiskam** taa **yu-taak-u**
child who **RP/with-go-TNS**
 ‘Who took (carried < go+with) the child (Patient)?’

This particular configuration of comitative + deictic verb to express caused movement (as in ‘bring, take, carry’ etc) is actually typologically attested in many languages of the world. It is the closest the Rama language comes to a form of applicative construction.

2.4.3. Lexicalized relational preverb

Finally, the third type of relation that can hold in that language between a RP and a verb is that of a RP that is completely lexicalized into a **frozen combination of [RP-V]**. This is the case of the RP *ba-* (expression of goal) when used with two specific verbs, shown in (13):

- (13) Lexicalized RP
- a. **ba-alp-** ‘to look for’
 b. **ba-ting-** ‘to want’
- (14) Lexicalized RP
- paalpa **ba-an-alpi-u**
 manatee **PV-they-look-ASP**
 ‘They looked for the manatee’

The particular example of (14) was in fact one of the very first sentences ever collected in Rama, in the first narrative text of the first speaker available for its study, Nora Rigby. The presence of this first morpheme *ba-* constituted for months a challenge to the analysis, because of its lexicalization indeed, with an initial hypothesis that it was a rare and strange case of person marker infixation.

2.5. Summary on the RP system of Rama

This discussion of relational preverbs emerged then from a descriptive challenge in a language of Central America and the productive discussions of the problematic data with one of the most knowledgeable linguists of the time, Kenneth Hale. Confrontation with the many

instances of such relational preverbs across languages of the Americas (such as Winnebago and Nadëb, discussed in Craig & Hale (1988)) lead to the sharpened analysis of what relational preverbs in Rama are and are not. As a language specific trait, one of the most common instances of RP in Rama is indeed the surface phenomenon of procliticization of a PSP stranded by virtue of zero anaphora. This phenomenon is very productive, independent of the semantics of the verb, with the proclitic RP retaining the semantics of its postpositional source. Although this situation of clear cliticization appeared to be a rare case in the languages of the world, certainly those of the Americas, it could be and was easily argued for in Rama. Such a configuration was argued to probably represent the first step in a process of grammaticalization of postpositions into preverbs.

While Rama also has instances of more advanced grammaticalization, considered as cases of incorporation of the RP, this configuration deserves two comments. First, that it could be viewed as the closest one could find in Rama to cases of the much more common applicative constructions of other languages of a more syntactic nature. But the lack of morphosyntactic arguments to argue positively for an applicative voice analysis (such as a combination of absence of case marking and absence of other voice, even passive, in the language) would make it simply an uninteresting default analysis, while it is clearly a productive process in many other languages of the Americas. Second, that it is worth noting that it occurs specifically with the combination of comitative and movement verb, which are well-known cases of applicative-like constructions in many languages of the world.

Finally, the third type of RP, that of lexicalization, is admittedly very limited and non-productive in Rama, but it corresponds to a phenomenon easily found in languages of the world. It certainly provides some fuel for arguing that it is probably the result of lexicalization resulting from very high frequency of use, having gone through a discourse process of cliticization. The relational preverbs of Rama, while not being of the most common kind in the Americas, were indeed interesting in sharpening our understanding of the making of grammar and lexicon.

3. Relational preverbs twenty years later: The case of Homeric Greek

This third section presents a new analysis of some problematic data from Homeric Greek⁴ addressed in Imbert (2008b)⁵ in the course of accounting for the expression of the trajectory in such a language. It means to demonstrate how a grammaticalization and typological approach has helped clarify a blind spot in the grammar of this ancient language. The new analysis presented here argues first for the existence of a system of “relational preverbs” in Homeric Greek, of the kind just described for Amerindian languages such as Rama. It then shows the relation of such a system of relational preverbs to the larger system of multiple preverbatation of that language.

3.1. Problematic data: a system of multiple preverbatation

The problematic data to be examined is a system of multiple preverbatation of Path morphemes in Homeric Greek. Some preliminary remarks are essential here about these Path morphemes and about how their multiple affixation to verb stems constitutes a blind spot in the traditional grammars of Ancient Greek.

⁴ Data collected from the entire texts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, through the database of the *Perseus Digital Library* (Crane, 1997).

⁵ In French; publication in English in preparation. Download at <http://www.carolineimbert.com>.

3.1.1. Path morphemes in Homeric Greek

Homeric Greek attests a system of well-described morphemes expressing spatial or non-spatial relations, and functioning either as (a) adverbs, (b) adpositions (prepositions and more rarely postpositions) or (c) preverbs. Table 1 shows an inventory of 17 such morphemes with their spatial meaning, and labeled here “Path morphemes”.

Table 1 – Inventory of Path morphemes in Homeric Greek⁶

Path morphemes	Spatial meaning
<i>amphí</i>	around
<i>aná</i>	up
<i>apó</i>	off
<i>antí</i>	against
<i>diá</i>	through
<i>eis</i>	to
<i>ek</i>	out
<i>en</i>	in
<i>epí</i>	at
<i>hupér</i>	above
<i>hupó</i>	under
<i>katá</i>	down
<i>metá</i>	amid
<i>pará</i>	beside
<i>perí</i>	around
<i>pró</i>	forth
<i>pros</i>	forth (from in front)

The syntactic behavior of these Path morphemes is as follows: (a) when adverbs, they are independent from any particular argument; (b) when adpositions, they are linked to an argument and command its case; and (c) when preverbs, they are satellites of the verb, the concept of “satellite” being understood here as defined by Talmy (1991 : 486)⁷.

These Path morphemes may interact with three different cases affecting the verb argument. It is to be noted that each case can have both an argument-marking function and a Path-coding function. Table 2 shows these three cases along with both functions. The accusative case appears in **bold** because it is the case which will be of particular importance in this paper:

⁶ This inventory, for the sake of relevance and brevity here, excludes a set of “compound Path morphemes”, which are addressed in Imbert (2008b).

⁷ “[...] Satellite is a grammatical category of any constituent other than nominal complement that is in sister relation to the verb root. The satellite, which can be either a bound affix or a free word, is thus intended to encompass all of the following grammatical forms, which traditionally have been largely treated independently of each other : English particles, German separable and inseparable verb prefixes, Latin or Russian verb prefixes, Chinese verb complements, Lahu non head ‘versatile verbs, Caddo incorporated nouns, and Atsugewi polysynthetic affixes round the verb root.”

Table 2 – Three cases and their main functions in Homeric Greek

Case	Main argument-marking function	Main Path-coding function
Accusative	object marking	direction ‘to, toward’
Genitive	noun complement marking	direction ‘from’
Dative	attribution marking	localization ‘in’

Table 3 shows the possible interaction between each of the Path morphemes presented in Table 1 and the three cases presented in Table 2. Two remarks are in order here: first that it is a matter of Path morphemes functioning as adpositions and as such linked to an argument; second that some of these adpositions can command all three cases while others command only one:

Table 3 – Homeric Path morphemes and the cases they command as adpositions

Path morphemes	Spatial meaning	Case(s) commanded as adposition
<i>amphí</i>	around	Acc/Gen/Dat
<i>aná</i>	up	Acc/Gen/Dat
<i>apó</i>	off	Gen
<i>antí</i>	against	Gen
<i>diá</i>	through	Acc/Gen
<i>eis</i>	to	Acc
<i>ek</i>	out	Gen
<i>en</i>	in	Dat
<i>epí</i>	at	Acc/Gen/Dat
<i>hupér</i>	above	Acc/Gen
<i>hupó</i>	under	Acc/Gen/Dat
<i>katá</i>	down	Acc/Gen
<i>metá</i>	amid	Acc/Gen/Dat
<i>pará</i>	beside	Acc/Gen/Dat
<i>perí</i>	around	Acc/Gen/Dat
<i>pró</i>	forth	Gen
<i>prós</i>	forth (from in front)	Acc/Gen/Dat

One last fact needs to be mentioned about these Path morphemes: they may syntactically combine with each other within one sentence. For instance, the Homeric system allows for the combination of a preverb and an adposition. Examples (9a-b) show that the adposition may be simply redundant with the preverb (9a), or differentiated from the preverb (9b). The Path morphemes appear here in **bold** and the verb arguments appear in *italic*:

(15) [Preverb + adposition] combination

- a. Adposition redundant with the preverb (Il. 2.720)
- | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| eretai d' | en | <i>ekastei</i> | penté:konta | em -bébasan |
| rower:NOM.PL | LNK in | <i>each:DAT</i> | fifty | in -walk:PPF.3PL |
- ‘**In** *each (ship)* boarded (stepped **in**) fifty oarsmen’

- b. Adposition differentiated from the preverb (Il. 18.233)
 autàr Akhaiòì aspasío:s Pátroklon [...] **kát**-thesan **en** *lekhéessi*
 LNK Achaean:NOM.PL gladly Patroclus:ACC **down**-lay:AOR.3PL **in** *couch:DAT.PL*
 ‘But the Achaeans with gladness [...] laid Patroclus **down on** a bier’

Although these kinds of syntactic combination are very common in Homeric Greek, one constitutes a blind spot in the traditional grammars of the language.

3.1.2. Multiple preverbatation as a blind spot

Verb prefixation in general is well-known and extensively described in Homeric Greek. However, this is not the case when the verb takes several preverbs, as in the template of (15) below, in which PV is the known preverbatation element and the item marked X is the problematic data under consideration in this paper:

- (16) Template for multiple preverbatation

[**X**- PV- V]

For a better illustration of this template, examples (17a-c) contrast a case of “simple preverbatation” ([PV-V] constructions) in (17b-b’), with one of “multiple preverbatation” ([X-PV-V] constructions) in (17c) – the construction in (17c) being the one involving the problematic X element:

- (17) Verb prefixation in Homeric Greek

- a. Non-prefixed verb
 baíno:
 walk
 ‘To walk’
- b. Simple preverbatation b’. Simple preverbatation
 ana-baíno: eis-baíno:
 PV/up walk PV/to walk
 ‘To walk up’ ‘To walk to’
- c. Multiple preverbatation
eis-ana-baíno:
X/to PV/up walk
 ‘To walk up to’

The **X** element is variously treated in the traditional grammars and by some specialists: if mentioned or taken into account and not altogether ignored, it is generally analyzed either as a semantic intensification of the PV element, or as a typographical choice, mistake or misinterpretation resulting in the attachment of a postposition to the following prefixed verb. Most importantly, it is usually not considered as a significant and coherent system in the language.

3.2. X is not a “typo” but a RP: Arguments for the reanalysis of postpositions into verbal prefixes

A thorough observation of X elements in the Homeric data points to its unclear and ambiguous nature. Thus, the “typo” analysis is based on examples like (18) and (19), where the existence of variant transcriptions in the manuscripts clearly illustrate this ambiguous status of the X element:

(18) Ambiguity of an X element for the same sentence in different manuscripts (Il. 5.763)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>a. [PSP # PV-V] (manuscript used in Magnien, 1930)</p> <p><i>mákhe:s</i> ex apo:-díó:mai
 <i>battle:GEN</i> X/out PV/off drive:SUBJ.PRES.1SG
 ‘I drive him out of the battle’</p> | <p>b. [RP-PV-V] (manuscript used in <i>Perseus</i>)</p> <p><i>mákhe:s</i> ex-apo:-díó:mai
 <i>battle:GEN</i> X/out-PV/off-drive:SUBJ.PRES.1SG
 ‘I drive him out of the battle’</p> |
|--|--|

(19) Ambiguity of an X element in two sentences in one and the same manuscript (Magnien, 1930)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>a. [PSP # PV-V] (Il. 20.212)</p> <p><i>mákhe:s</i> èx apo:-néesthai
 <i>battle:GEN</i> X/out PV/off return:MID.PRES.1SG
 ‘I return from (out of) the battle’</p> | <p>b. [RP-PV-V] (Il. 16.252)</p> <p><i>mákhe:s</i> ex-apo:-néesthai
 <i>battle:GEN</i> X/out-PV/off-return:MID.PRES.1SG
 ‘I return from (out of) the battle’</p> |
|---|--|

These examples are ambiguous as to the postpositional vs. prefixal status of X. This ambiguity based on typography is all the more reinforced by the fact that in the most ancient manuscripts there was no space insertion between words.

Yet, an exhaustive observation of the occurrences of X elements in the Homeric data clearly shows that they are not quantitatively anecdotal and that they exhibit a productive combination of preverbs, as shown in Table 4:

Table 4 – Facts and numbers about multiple preverbatation as a productive system in the examined Homeric data

	Total token frequency	Total type frequency ([X-PV-V] constructions)	Attested combinations of prefixes
Multiple preverbatation	98	47	23

Three empirical arguments are proposed here to reanalyze X as a relational preverb, derived from a postposition through a process of grammaticalization, by (a) demonstrating the prefixal nature of X and (b) arguing for its “relational” nature with a constituent structure argument, a semantic bleaching argument and a morphosyntactic argument. In what follows, the unspecified gloss ‘X’ will be replaced by the specific gloss ‘RP’.

3.2.1. Constituent structure argument

The argument that shows that the RP is prefixal in nature, and not postpositional, is that the elements of the adpositional phrase [NP # PSP] no longer form a syntactic constituent, since the [RP-PV-V] construction may be separated from the verb argument in different ways. Moreover, the verb argument does not necessarily precede the [RP-PV-V] construction: it may follow it or be absent. Table 5 describes the different templates attested in the examined data.

Table 5 – Attested constituent structures for the [RP-PV-V] and the verb argument [ARG] in the examined Homeric data

Template	Constituent structure	Description
1	[ARG_i # RP_i-PV-V]	ARG precedes the [RP-PV-V] construction.
1a	[ARG _i # RP _i -PV-V]	ARG directly precedes the [RP-PV-V] construction.
1b	[ARG _i # y # RP _i -PV-V]	ARG precedes the [RP-PV-V] construction; a discursive element or adverb appears in between the two (y element in the template).
1c	[ARG:N _i # RP _i -PV-V # ARG:Adj _i]	The [RP-PV-V] construction is inserted in ARG, between the noun to the left and the adjective to the right. <i>Non productive.</i>
2	[RP_i-PV-V # ARG_i]	ARG follows the [RP-PV-V] construction.
2a	[RP _i -PV-V # ARG _i]	ARG directly follows the [RP-PV-V] construction.
2b	[RP _i -PV-V # ARG # ARG _i]	ARG follows the [RP-PV-V] construction; one or several syntactic arguments appear in between the two.
3	[Ø # RP-PV-V]	The [RP-PV-V] constructions works without any ARG (zero-anaphora of ARG or transitivity of the construction).

Examples (20) to (22) illustrate these different templates. The verb argument is in *italic* and the RP is in **bold**:

(20) Template 1: ARG precedes the [RP-PV-V] construction

- a. Template 1a [ARG_i # **RP_i-PV-V**] (Il. 8.291)
 τοῖ *homòn lékhos* **eis**-ana-báinoi
 2SG:DAT *same:ACC bed:ACC* **to**-up-walk:OPT.PRES.3SG
 ‘(A woman that) shall go up into thy bed’
- b. Template 1b [ARG_i # y # **RP_i-PV-V**] (Il. 23.683)
 zḗ:ma dè *hoi* **prô:ton** **para**-ká-balen
 girdle:ACC LNK *DEM:DAT* first **beside**-down-throw:AOR.3SG
 ‘A girdle first he cast about him’
- c. Template 1c [ARG:N_i # **RP_i-PV-V** # ARG:Adj_i] (Il. 17.708)
 keínon mèn dè: *ne:usîn* **epi**-pro-ée:ka *thoê:isin* eltheîn eis Akhilê:a
 the.person.there:ACC LNK LNK *ship:DAT.PL* **at**-forth-send:AOR.1SG *swift.DAT.PL* go:INF to Achilles:ACC
 ‘Yon man have I verily sent forth to the swift ships, to go to Achilles’

(21) Template 2: ARG follows the [RP-PV-V] construction

- a. Type 2a [**RP**_i-PV-V # ARG_i] (Od. 16.449)
hê mèn ár' eis-ana-bâs' huperó:ia sigalóenta
 REL:NOM LNK LNK **to**-up-walk:AOR.3SG *upper_chamber:DAT bright:DAT*
 ‘So she went up to her bright upper chamber’
- b. Type 2b [**RP**_i-PV-V # ARG # ARG_i] (Od. 12.306)
ex-ap-ébe:san etaîroi ne:ós
out-off-walk:AOR.3PL comrade:NOM.PL *ship:GEN*
 ‘And my comrades went out from the ship’

(22) Template 3: ARG is absent [\emptyset # **RP**-PV-V] (Od. 14.26)

tòn dè tértarton apo-pro-ée:ke pólin=de
 DEM:ACC LNK fourth:ACC **off**-forth-send:AOR.3SG city=to
 ‘And the fourth he had sent off forth to the city’

Templates 2 and 3 clearly show the impossibility of analyzing RP as a “typo” affecting a postposition. However, Template 1 is the most common (almost 62% of all the occurrences of [RP-PV-V] constructions) and supports the hypothesis of a postpositional origin of RP. Of particular interest is the non productive Template 1c, where one can find the adposition between the noun and the adjective. Outside of multiple preverbatation, this adposition insertion between the noun and the adjective works according to two different templates: a prepositional template (23a) with the noun to the right and a postpositional template (23b) with the noun to the left:

(23) Adpositional insertion

- a. Example of prepositional insertion with *apó* (Il. 16.303-304 ; Luraghi, 2003 : 118)
apò hês alókhoio
from *POSS:3SG.GEN wife:GEN*
 ‘Far **from** his wife’
- b. Example of postpositional insertion with *apó* (Il. 16.45)
neô:n ápo kai klisiáo:n
ship:GEN.PL from and hut:GEN.PL
 ‘Far **from** the ships and huts’

As illustrated in (20c) above, the Template 1c of multiple preverbatation follows the postpositional template, thus reinforcing the hypothesis of a “postpositional” origin of RP.

3.2.2. Semantic bleaching argument

A second argument is that of semantically bleaching in the [RP-PV-V] construction, by which the semantics of the RP cannot be distinguished – or becomes less distinguishable – from the semantics of the whole construction, as illustrated in (24):

(24) (Il. 7.185)

hoì d' ou	gignó:skontes	ape:né:nanto	hékastos
DEM:NOM LNK NEG	know:PART.PRES.NOM	RP/apó -PV/aná-ainanto	
		deny:MID.AOR.3PL	every_one:NOM
		off -up-take:MID.AOR.3PL	

‘But they knew it not, and everyone **denied** (it)’

This semantic argument points to the prefixal nature of RP, which may in the end be morphologically fused with the [PV-V] compound.

3.2.3. Morphosyntactic argument

A third argument consists in showing that, although the RP has a prefixal morphological status, it maintains an adpositional function. While simple preverbatation allows for the use of an adposition on the oblique argument of the verb, the verb argument of a multiple preverbatation construction can never⁸ be introduced by an adposition, arguably because the RP already syntactically introduces that argument. In such multiple preverbatation constructions, the PV functions as a simple verb satellite with no link to a particular argument, while the RP is linked to an argument and commands the case, just as it would if used as an adposition:

(25) Multiple preverbatation: [ARG-CASE # [RP-PV-V]]

a. With a dative case (Od. 11.98)

xíphos	arguróe:lon	kouleô:i	en -kat-épe:x'
sword:ACC	silver-studded:ACC	sheath:DAT	RP/in -PV/down-thrust:AOR.1SG

‘I thrust my silver-studded sword into its sheath’

b. With an accusative case (Il. 8.291)

toi	homòn	lékhos	eis -ana-báinoi
2SG:DAT	same:ACC	bed:ACC	RP/to -PV/up-walk:OPT.PRES.3SG

‘(A woman that) shall go up into thy bed’

c. With a genitive case (Il. 5.763)

mákhe:s	ex -apo-dío:mai
battle:GEN	RP/out -PV/off-drive:SUBJ.PRES.1SG

‘I drive him out of the battle’

This section has therefore demonstrated that the X element is not a typo, but a RP grammaticalized from a PSP, and that it is morphologically a prefix that still functions adpositionally by controlling case marking. As shown next, this newly identified relational

⁸ An adposition will of course be used when a “secondary” oblique argument is added to the verb, for example to introduce a second portion of Path in the spatial situation. Thus in (25b), if one wants to add an argument like “from her own bed”, an adposition (like *ek* ‘out’) will be necessary to introduce this second NP [her own bed], as the verb *eis-ana-báino*: ‘to go up to’ is unable to do so, semantically (it does not contain any Source-coding Path morpheme) and syntactically (its RP *eis*- ‘to’ is already linked to a NP, namely [thy bed])

preverb (RP) category exhibits three different syntactic behaviors, corresponding to different degrees of grammaticalization.

3.3. Different types of RP: both ends of the grammaticalization process

Revisiting these RP constructions in a grammaticalization approach reveals in Homeric Greek the synchronic co-occurrence of both ends of the grammaticalization process from PSP to RP: from cliticized RP to lexicalized RP.

3.3.1. Cliticized relational preverbs

The RP may be simply cliticized. This process is productive and no semantic bleaching occurs: each part of the construction (RP, PV and V) conveys its own meaning. Syntactically, the RP commands the case it would have commanded as an adposition. Cliticized relational preverbs are attested in all constituent structure templates; example (26a-c) illustrates a sample of these templates:

(26) Cliticized RP

a. Template 1a (Il. 13.87)

toì *méga* *teíkhos* **huper**-kat-ebe:san *homílo:i*
 DEM:NOM.PL *great:ACC* *wall:ACC* **RP/over**-PV/down-walk:AOR.3PL *throng:DAT*
 ‘(The Trojans) who had got down over the great wall in their multitude’

b. Template 2a (Od. 16.449)

hê mèn ár’ **eis**-ana-bâs’ *huperó:ia* *sigalóenta*
 REL:NOM LNK LNK **RP/to**-PV/up-walk:AOR.3SG *upper_chamber:ACC* *bright:ACC*
 ‘So she went up to her bright upper chamber’

c. Template 3 (Od. 14.26)

tòn dè *tétarton* **apo**-pro-ée:ke *pólin=de*
 DEM:ACC LNK *fourth:ACC* **RP/off**-PV/forth-send: AOR.3SG *city=to*
 ‘And the fourth he had sent forth away (from X) to the city’

These occurrences of cliticized RP correspond to an early stage of the grammaticalization of the postposition into an RP element. As seen next, a stage of strong lexicalization of the [RP-PV-V] construction is also attested in the Homeric Greek data.

3.3.2. Lexicalized relational preverbs

The RP may also be found lexicalized into the [RP-PV-V] construction. Three observations can be used as evidence to demonstrate this claim: (a) this process is not productive; (b) the RP is semantically bleached, in the sense that the semantics of the RP cannot be distinguished from the semantics of the whole construction anymore – or becomes less distinguishable, its lexicalization being a matter of degree; (c) the syntax of the [RP-PV-V] construction changes. If the construction is intransitive, there is, as expected, no verb argument. However, if the construction is transitive, the verb argument to which the RP is syntactically linked now takes the object-marking case, i.e. the accusative case, even if the involved RP cannot command the accusative case when used as an adposition.

Thus, in examples (27) and (28), the lexicalized construction *apó-aná-ainómai* ‘to deny’ may be intransitive (27) or transitive (28). In (28), the argument linked to the RP is treated as the direct object, and as such takes the accusative case. This occurs although the Path morpheme *apó* ‘off’ is normally used exclusively with the genitive case:

(27) [RP-PV-V] (Il. 7.185)

hoì d’ ou	gignó:skontes	ape:né:nanto	hékastos
		RP/apó-PV/aná-ainanto	
DEM:NOM LNK NEG	know:PART.PRES.NOM	deny:MID.AOR.3PL	every_one:NOM

‘But they knew it not, and everyone denied (it)’

(28) [[RP-PV-V] + OBJ-acc] (Od. 10.297)

éntha sù	me:két’ épeit’	apané:nasthai	theoû	<i>euné:n</i>
		RP/apó-PV/aná-ainasthai		
LNK 2SG.NOM	no_more LNK	deny:MID.AOR.INF	god:GEN	couch:ACC

‘Then do not thou thereafter refuse the couch of the goddess’

It should be noted that examples (27) and (28) illustrate a case of complete lexicalization in which the verb stem does not exist by itself anymore. Here, the verb *apó-aná-ainómai* ‘to deny’ is built on the stem **ainomai* ‘to take away, to rob of’, which is not attested on its own in the data. So the [PV-V] construction *aná-ainómai* is already fully lexicalized, and the [RP-PV-V] construction *apó-aná-ainómai* shows similar evidence of complete lexicalization.

Thus, Homeric Greek clearly attests a grammaticalization process from PSP to RP, supporting the claim made by Craig & Hale (1988) of a postpositional origin of RP systems. It also supports the claim of a possible evolution of the RP leading to lexicalization. But the Homeric data might also provide evidence for an intermediary stage that could be analyzed as a stage of incorporation of the RP.

3.4. Explaining more problematic data: Incorporated RP in Homeric Greek?

Considering multiple preverbalization as involving a system of RP is actually key to explaining even more problematic data, illustrated in examples (29) and (30). These examples may appear on the surface to resemble the above examples (27) and (28), in that the multiprefixed verb is used with a verb argument marked as an object, i.e. with the accusative of object:

(29) (Il. 10.198)

<i>táphron</i> d’	ek-dia-bántes	<i>oruktè:n</i>
<i>ditch:ACC</i> LNK	RP/out-PV/through walk:PART.AOR.3PL	<i>digged:ACC</i>

‘So they walked through and out (from) the digged ditch’

(30) (Il. 24.97)

<i>aktè:n</i> d’	ex-ana-bâsai
shore:ACC LNK	RP/out-PV/up-walk:PART.PRES.3PL

‘And when they had stepped forth upon the beach...’

However, examples (29) and (30) represent a syntactic situation that is problematic for two reasons:

- (a) The verbs *ek-dia-baíno:* and *ek-ana-baino:* are not lexicalized verbs: they are perfectly transparent as to their spatial meaning. The verb *baíno:* means ‘to walk’ and each preverb codes a different portion of Path; thus, this is *not* a case of RP lexicalization.
- (b) One would then expect the use of the genitive case on the verb argument because of the RP *ek-* ‘out of’, which can only be used with the genitive when used as an adposition (as shown in section 3.1.1). But the accusative of object is used here instead; thus, this is *not* a case of RP cliticization either.

One can therefore take examples (29) and (30) as attesting the existence in Homeric Greek of a stage of syntacticization of the RP, corresponding to an intermediate stage between those of cliticization and lexicalization. These examples can be considered as instances of applicative-like constructions, with an RP taken to be incorporated and to function like an applicative marker, such as what can be found in other languages of the world.

Only a few clear examples like the two given in (29) and (30) could be found in the data, but further investigation might reveal more evidence of the existence of incorporated RP in Homeric Greek, and allow for a further study of their syntactic behavior and possible productivity limitations. A preliminary examination of a phenomenon of manuscript variants on such occurrences and of possible switching contexts from cliticization to incorporation is also proposed in Imbert (2008b:221-223).

3.5. Summary on the RP system of Homeric Greek, and about its motivations underneath

Thus, based on the fieldwork and a paper produced by Craig & Hale (1988), this new analysis of Homeric Greek data demonstrated the existence of a system of relational preverbs in that language. This system shares striking similarities with that of Rama and other Amerindian languages, in its grammaticalization processes and syntactic behavior. In return, this analysis arguably offers substantial support for the analyses that have been lead twenty years ago on these Amerindian systems: relational preverbs do result from the cliticization of postpositions, which in time may get syntacticized and lexicalized, through an interesting process of grammaticalization from postposition to preverb. More yet can be said about the Homeric system of relational preverbs described, which could not be addressed here for the sake of brevity. In particular, about a claim (Imbert, 2008a; 2008b) that the emergence and evolution of the Homeric relational preverbs are in fact semantically- and conceptually-driven. This claim relies on two arguments discussed in Imbert (2000b). First, there are clear semantic constraints (cf. Bybee, 1985) on the order of the preverbs that are affixed on the verb stem. These constraints consist of conceptual distinctions between the different portions of Path coded by the different preverbs, drawing a striking parallel with semantic constraints on the order of similar multiple Path morphemes in other languages, such as is the case for the directionals in Jakaltek Popti’ (Mayan family). Second, not all of the RP in Homeric Greek reach the same degree of grammaticalization, from cliticized to lexicalized RP. The variability of their grammaticalization partly relies on a phenomenon of Source vs. Goal asymmetry, that is not mentioned in the reference grammars and that has been recently addressed in the

typological literature⁹. Thus, further investigation carried out in Homeric Greek on the semantic and conceptual motivation for this process may also lead to interesting new investigations in the languages of the Americas.

4. Conclusion

Therefore, this paper has illustrated the benefit of approaching anew well-known data of ancient languages within a functional-typological approach to produce new analyses, in this case by a detour through earlier work done on contemporary oral tradition languages from the American continent. It has first recalled the origins of the notion of a morphosyntactic category of so-called “relational preverbs” used in the analysis of problematic data from the Rama language. The quick survey of the argumentation and description of the phenomenon found in that language has reconsidered the steps in the argumentation of the existence of such a category of RP and the discussion of stages of possible evolution of such RP. In the Rama language, only two stages of evolution of these RP were clearly identified, in particular a very clear and productive discourse-driven cliticization in the context of zeroanaphora of the oblique argument. Otherwise the data showed mostly a more evolved stage of advanced lexicalization, one that had created transitive “preverbed” verbs with direct object arguments, but little proof of a syntacticization process of an applicative-type construction that can be found in other languages.

Drawing a parallel between the Rama data and the Homeric Greek data first allowed the identification of a phenomenon not clearly established yet for Homeric Greek, and therefore little understood. It happens that the same two stages of evolution of RP are found in both languages, those of cliticization and of lexicalization, with limited data to support a syntactic analysis in terms of applicative construction. The analysis of the Homeric Greek data seems therefore to offer interesting support for typological propositions from twenty years ago based on data from languages of another continent and another time. In return, it is hoped that the investigation that followed in Homeric Greek on the semantic and conceptual motivation for this process could now lead the other way around to interesting new investigations in the languages of the Americas.

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⁹ Source vs. Goal asymmetry is one of the research themes of the “Trajectory” Project, and is coordinated by Anetta Kopecka (MPI Nijmegen / University of Lyon 2) and Miyuki Ishibashi (University of Lyon 2).

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