

THE SO-CALLED POSTPOSITIONS IN AKAN: A RECONSIDERATION

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One view consistently expressed regarding syntactic categories in Akan is that the language has postpositions rather than prepositions. Even though some writers recognize the noun origins of these forms, their placement in constructions is what underlies their classification as postpositions. The goal of this paper is to show that these forms are better treated as nouns—more specifically, *relator nouns*. This conclusion stems from the morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties they exhibit. We proceed from the premise that a better understanding of the so-called postpositions in Akan is achieved within the framework of grammaticalization—a framework that makes it possible for us to account for the development of new word classes in a language. The behavior of the so-called postpositions demonstrates Hopper’s (1991) principle of “divergence” where lexical words ‘diverge functionally’ even though the form used may be exactly the same in its segments as the lexical item.

Une vue généralement en cours sur les catégories syntactiques en Akan est que la langue recèle des éléments postposés plutôt que préposés. Bien que certains auteurs reconnaissent l’origine nominale de ces formes, c’est leur positionnement dans les constructions qui fait qu’ils soient classifiés comme des éléments postposés. Le but de cet article est de montrer qu’il vaut mieux traiter ces formes comme nominales—plus précisément, comme des *noms relayeurs*. C’est la conclusion qui s’impose à partir du comportement de leurs propriétés morphologiques, syntactiques et sémantiques. Notre hypothèse de base est que la meilleure compréhension des éléments dits postposés en akan se dégage sous l’approche théorique de grammaticalisation—une approche qui nous permet de rendre compte du développement de nouvelles classes des mots dans une langue. Le comportement des éléments dits postposés illustre à merveille le principe de divergence de Hopper (1991) selon lequel les mots lexicaux divergent dans leur fonction bien que les segments qui composent la forme utilisée peuvent rester identiques à celle de l’item lexical.

0. INTRODUCTION

In various works on Akan, a Kwa language spoken in Ghana, morphemes which express spatio-temporal and locative concepts have been classified as postpositions because they are thought to be the counterpart of prepositions in English. In this paper, we argue, based on synchronic evidence from the language, that this term may not be very appropriate for categorizing these forms. For a more accurate categorization, we need to situate the discussion within the framework of grammaticalization. It is our view that the so-called postpositions (hereafter, SCPs) in Akan are better analyzed as *relator nouns*.

1. A BRIEF REVIEW

The history of linguistic research on Akan (and other Ghanaian languages, for example, Ga and Ewe) spans over a century. Early linguistic descriptions of Akan can be found in Christaller (1875) and Balmer and Grant (1929). Similar works on Ga and Ewe include Zimmermann (1858), Wilkie (1930) and Bannerman (1948). One view consistently expressed regarding identifiable categories in these languages is that they display postpositions as a syntactic category (see for example, Duthie (1988) for Ewe; Dakubu (1988) for Ga; Frajzyngier (1974) for Awutu).

For example, in Zimmermann's (1858) grammatical sketch on Ga-Adangme (two closely related languages), he uses the term "preposition" and "postposition" to refer to certain nominal and verbal compounds as "post-posed" (placed after) or "pre-posed" (placed before). He considers all words (nominal or verbal) which are in a modifier slot in a compound as illustrating either of the case. With such an analysis, Zimmermann (1858) establishes the categories "preposition" and "postpositions" as present in Ga, contra evidence from the language itself.

In Christaller's (1875) grammar of Akan, he proceeds from the assumption that "the prepositions of European and other languages are expressed in Tshi [Twi] by a class of auxiliary verbs, which we may call prepositional verbs . . . by postpositions, which are in fact nouns (of place and relation)." (Christaller 1875:74). He (Christaller 1875:74-75) notes that the prepositional verbs are used to code "relations of place," "relations of time," "relations of manner, degree, instrumentality, accompaniment and exclusion" and "relations of cause, concern, aim, intention and purpose."

Regarding the postpositions, Christaller (1875:76) states that:

The postpositions are nouns of place and relation . . . They express the English prepositions (a) by themselves, when the reference of a thing or action to the place of another thing is implied in the verb or in the attributive position of the postposition, or when it is plain from other reasons; (b) together with an auxiliary or prepositional verb, ... when that reference is not included in the principal verb.

Christaller (1875:77) further lists eight words in the language as "chief nouns of place and relations" which are used like prepositions in English. They include **àsé** 'down, under,' **hó** 'side,' **mú** 'inside,' **àní** 'eye,' **àno** 'mouth' **àníń** 'front' **àkyí** 'back' **só** 'top.' Even though Christaller (1875:74) acknowledges that these forms are "in fact nouns," he refers to them as postpositions nonetheless. In other places, however, he calls such forms relational nouns. He states: "we call such a noun of place a postposition or a noun of relation, because it shows the relation of another thing or of its action or state, to the thing to which the postposition is added" (Christaller 1875:77).

Other descriptive grammars on Akan have however steered clear of the term postposition. For example, Balmer and Grant (1929:54) state that:

In Fante there are no prepositions exactly corresponding to those in English. The words used as equivalents of prepositions are either nouns or verbs. . . . it may be said that prepositions are particles that have become worn down from larger words which were once fuller and more concrete in meaning, such as nouns are.

They indicate further that for Fante " . . . the nouns have not become worn down and stripped of their concrete significance. Those which represent prepositions are still nouns, i.e. place-names, following another noun or pronoun in the possessive case." (Blamer and Grant 1929:54) Taking a similar view, Welmers (1946:53) refers to the Fante forms **mu** 'inside', **do** 'top', **ase** 'bottom', **nkyen** 'side' **anyim** 'front' **ekyir** 'back', **ho** 'side, body' as nouns.

Apronti (1972), in reacting to the use of the term postposition to describe certain forms in Ga and Dangme, stresses the influence of translation equivalents in the usage: The word-class POSTPOSITION appears to me to fit uncomfortably into the description of some languages I know of to which it is applied.

It is true that where it is applied, it is meant in some sense to reflect a distant affinity to the more familiar PREPOSITION. But even this affinity may turn out to be a false one, based as it is on translation equivalents rather than on structural evidence (Apronti 1972:1).

In his view, it is more appropriate, as far as Ga and other West African languages are concerned, to classify the forms in question as “bound nouns.” Thus this view intimates a reconsideration of the so-called postpositions in Akan (and other Ghanaian languages).

2. FEATURES OF THE FORMS

2.1 THEIR SOURCE

The Akan forms under discussion are free morphemes which are used to code the space, location or landmark of one entity in relation to another. In some contexts, some of these items are also used to express temporal relations. They are derived from two main sources: body part and object part nouns, as laid out in Table 1. Examples (1a-d) illustrate how they can be used. Unless otherwise indicated, all examples are from the Twi dialects, Asante (As.) and Akuapem (Ak.). Examples from Fante are labeled (Fa.).

- (1) a. **Ama rɛ̀-sí** **ɲnéémá** **wɔ̀** **àsɛ̀ɛ́** **hɔ́**
 Ama PROG-wash things be.at down there
 Ama is washing clothes downstairs.
- b. **Yɛ̀-ɲ-fá** **àní** **ɲ-ní** **àgórɔ́**
 3PLSUBJ-NEG-take eye NEG-eat game
 We don't joke with our eyes (since they are delicate).
- c. **Ó-dzi** **ɛ̀nyííí;** **yé-dzi** **ɛ̀kyíí** (Fa.)
 3SGSUBJ-eat front 2PLSUBJ-eat back
 He is in front; we are behind.
- d. **Ònyànkópɔ́n** **tɛ̀** **sóró** (Fa.)
 God sit up/above
 God lives in above.

Table 1. Relator Nouns in Akan¹

Type	Space/Location	Time	Landmark/ Distance	Gloss
Body Part	hó			'body, side, about'
	àní (ènyíwá)			'eyes'
	tí (tsíf)			'head'
	àpàmpàrn			'crown of the head'
	àyààsé, (àyéradzé)			'lower abdomen'
	ètóó, (tùù)			'buttocks, bottom'
	àno			'lips, mouth'
	ànírn, (ènyírín)	Ànírn		'face, front, outside'
àkyí, (èkyíf)	àkyí, àkyíríkyírí	àkyí, àkyíríkyírí	'back, behind, far, very far'	
Object Part	̀̀kyéń			'side'
	ènú			'inside, inner part, middle'
	̀̀fńńfńńfńń			'middle'
	só, (dó)		èsóró, sórósóró	'top, heaven, higher up,'
	àsé			'under, beneath'
	̀̀táń			'between'
			àgyá	'beyond, over'
			̀̀tèntènsòó	'over'

Abakah (2010) shows that SPCs have the same tonal features as nouns. According to him, SPCs have the same vocalic nominal prefixes and tonal melody as nouns in the Akan language (see also Abakah 2005).

Significantly, these morphemes demonstrate morphosyntactic properties associated with nouns in the language.

2.2 MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES

The most prominent morphological feature of SPCs in Akan is their ability to reduplicate.² Among other things, reduplication may be used to express repetition, intensity, increase in state or multiplicity. Thus, different types of SCPs may express different meanings when they undergo reduplication (2-3). In (2a), we see the use of an object part noun **̀̀kyéń** 'side' to refer to the space or location of one entity (cat) in relation to another (child). What is significant here is that in (2a) the relator noun refers to a single, specific stretch of space/location of the object (cat). However, in (2b-c), when the form is reduplicated it expresses multiplicity of space in the same location. Thus, it would be more appropriate for a speaker to use the reduplicated form

¹ The SPCs in Table 1 are taken from Christaller (1875) for Twi and Balmer and Grant (1929) for Fante (Fa.). The forms in parenthesis are from Fante (Fa.). The Twi (Ak./As.) examples are from Reginald Duah and Afua Blay while Fante (Fa.) examples are provided by Kweku Osam, all of who are native Akan speakers.

² Of course, reduplication is a regular morphophonological process which occurs also in verbs, adjectives and adverbs in the language (see Dolphyne 1988; Ofori 2006).

ńkyénńkyén ‘side’ (2b) where sparse weeds at different spots around the house were cleared by someone (Kofi). Likewise, in (2c), the reduplicated form refers to several (usually messy) spaces or spots on the banks (sides) of a river which if a person was to concentrate too much on he would lose the urge to drink water from that source. Thus, when reduplicated, **ńkyén** ‘side’ may appropriately mean ‘around’. In the same vein, while in (3a) **àkyíré** ‘back’ refers to an unspecified distance which is judged by the speaker to be far, its reduplicated form (3b) expresses a farther distance.³

- (2) a. **Ɔkrá nó dà àbɔ́frá nó ńkyén**
cat DEF lie child DET side
The cat is lying beside the child.
- b. **Kofi dɔ̀-ɔ̀ ɛ́fié nó ńkyénńkyén ɛ̀nóra**
Kofi weed-COMPL⁴ house DET side.RED yesterday
Kofi weeded around the house yesterday.
- c. **Wɔ́ hwé ñsúó ńkyénńkyén a wó-ń-nórn ñsúó dà!**
2SG look river side.RED REL 2SG-NEG-drink water never
If you look at the banks of a river you would never drink water!
- (3) a. **Kwame tè àkyíré**
Kwame lives back
Kwame lives far away
- b. **Kwame firí àkyíríkyírí**
Kwame come.from back.RED
Kwame hails from a very far place.

It must be noted that not all SCPs in the language undergo reduplication. However, for SCPs which can be reduplicated the reduplicated form may express an increased quality, quantity or degree of the notion coded by the stem (see also Ofori 2006:100-106). Of course, as we note in Table 2 below, reduplication of SCPs stems may also derive adverbs.

Table 2: Plural Marking of Relator/Relational Nouns

Stem	Gloss	Reduplicated form	Gloss
àní,	‘eyes, surface’	àníání	‘shallow, face value’
àkyí	‘back, far’	àkyíríkyírí	‘very far’
àsé	‘under, down, below’	àséáséé	‘deep down’
ànó	‘mouth, end, extremity’	ànóánó	‘extremities, ends’
ànírn	‘face, forward’	ànírnánírn	‘immediately’
sóró	‘heaven, above, up’	sórósóró(sóró)	‘high up, very high’
ńkyén	‘side, beside’	ńkyénńkyén	‘around’

³ We thank an anonymous reviewer for drawing our attention to this analysis of the function of reduplication in SCPs in Akan.

⁴ This study takes after the tradition started by Osam (1994, 2004) who shows that the ‘past tense’ is better analyzed as ‘completive aspect’. For the relevant discussion see Osam (1994, 2004).

2.3 SYNTACTIC FEATURES

In Akan, the so-called postpositions (SCPs) display syntactic properties akin to nouns in the language. In fact, as Bruin and Scha (1998) indicate, the so-called postpositions syntactically, are no different from “ordinary” nouns. The noun phrase (NP) in Akan can be said to exhibit the following order of elements in the phrase structure: generally, the head of the NP comes before all modifiers in the phrase. As shown in (4b) and (5b), SCPs can function as the head of a noun phrase as is the case for normal nouns (4a and 5a).⁵

(4) a. *Ñtòmá nó á-yè fí*
 cloth DET PERF-be dirty
 The cloth is dirty.

b. *Áníń nó á-yé fí*
 face DET PERF-do dirty
 The face/front is dirty.

(5) a. *Ádáká nó á-móá*
 box DET PERF-dent
 The box is dented.

b. *Ákyí nó á-móá*
 back DET PERF-dent
 The back is dented.

There are cases where the SCPs can be modified by adjectives.

(6) a. *Ama t̄-ð ñtòmá túntúń nó mà-à ñmòffrá nó*
 Ama buy-COMPL cloth black DET give-COMPL children DET
 Ama bought the black cloth for the children.

b. *Ama kyè-è àsé túntúń nó mà-à ñmòffrá nó*
 Ama share-COMPL under black DET give-COMPL children DET
 Ama shared the blackened under part (eg. of cooked rice) among the children.

The status of these forms as nouns is also strongly supported by their behavior in genitive constructions. In Akan, possessor nouns precede possessed nouns. The examples in (7) are from the Fante dialect.

(7) a. *Kofi né ñpàbòá á-tsèw* (Fa.)
 Kofi 3SG POSS shoe PERF-tear
 Kofi’s shoe is torn.

b. *Dáń nó né ékyìr é-fùw* (Fa.)
 house DEF 3SG POSS back PERF-grow
 The back of the house is overgrown with weeds.

3. RECONSIDERATION—THE GRAMMATICALIZATION ROUTE

The categorical status of these forms as markers of spatio-temporal and locative relations can better be dealt with within the framework of grammaticalization. The

⁵ An anonymous reviewer suggests that (4-5) may be genitive phrases in which the possessor noun is gapped and the possessum noun heads the phrase. Such an analysis is not inconsistent with the general behavior of SCPs in the language; they occur always as possessed NPs.

literature on grammaticalization is enormous and it is not our intention to provide a review of it. Grammaticalization refers to a change in language which involves the development of functional words from existing lexical forms (Hopper and Traugott 2003; Heine et al. 1991; Hopper 1991). The motivation for grammaticalization stems from the fact that across languages, new words are hardly created to denote novel concepts. Rather, speakers employ already existing forms to express new ideas (Heine et al. 1991). As Hopper and Traugott (2003:40) note, “Language is not independent of its speakers neither is it an organism with a life of its own.” So the grammar of a language essentially remains emergent. Thus, as speakers of any language develop new concepts and strive to express these concepts, they bring about language change. The upshot of this process is that across languages, we observe the shifting of certain words (and sometimes constructions) from one syntactic category to another. Such developments in language vitiate the analysis of syntactic categories as consisting of words with discrete membership status. In effect, some lexical items which hitherto were assigned a predetermined class can no longer comfortably be associated with only that class.

Research on the development of lexical items into functional words has provided useful insight into some well observed paths of linguistic change in language. According to Hopper and Traugott (2003:6):

Basic to the work on grammaticalization is the concept of a “cline” From the point of view of change, forms do not shift abruptly from one category to another, but go through a series of small transitions, transitions that tend to be similar across languages. For example, a lexical noun like back that expresses a body part comes to stand for a spatial relationship in in/at the back of, and is susceptible to becoming an adverb, and perhaps eventually a preposition and even a case affix.

Hopper and Traugott (2003:7) present the following as a “cline of grammaticality:”

content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix

Generally, forms move from left to right on a cline in a unidirectional manner. Thus, the more an item shifts to the right of the cline, the more grammatical it becomes.

Even though the framework of grammaticalization enables us to account for the development of new syntactic classes (and or constructions) from existing ones, there is “extensive and robust evidence that only certain lexical classes are likely to become grammaticalized” (Traugott and Heine 1991:7-8). The candidates for grammaticalization are usually forms which have a greater amount of frequency in usage and have semantic components which may be relevant to the expression of other (usually abstract) concepts in language.

A particular type of grammaticalization which has been documented in various languages is the use of body and object part nouns to express spatial, locative and temporal relations. Heine (1986), Nikitina (2008), Heine et al. (1991) and Heine and Reh (1982) have discussed in detail this type of change in African languages and the motivations underlying such changes. Lexical forms undergoing this type of change travel along a typical cline (as deduced from Hopper and Traugott 2003:110):

Noun > Relational Noun > Adposition > Case Affix

The use of body and object part nouns in expressing space and location of entities points to an ongoing grammaticalization process in Akan.

The forms discussed in this paper appear to be at different stages of grammaticalization, some more advanced than others. Hopper (1991) has proposed five principles which characterize the grammaticalization process: *layering*, *divergence*, *specialization*, *persistence* and *de-categorization*. It is our view that the forms we have been considering in this paper instantiate Hopper's principle of *divergence*. Hopper (1991) explains the principle of *divergence* as follows:

Divergence... refers to the fact that when a lexical form undergoes grammaticalization..., the original form may remain as an autonomous lexical element and undergo the same changes as any other lexical items. The Principle of Divergence results in pairs or multiples of forms having a common etymology, but diverging functionally. The grammaticized form may be phonologically identical with the autonomous lexical form (Hopper 1991:24).

This principle can be observed in the case of the so-called postpositions. Consider the following sentences:

- (8) a. **Kofi hónám yé nò yá**
 Kofi skin be 3SG OBJ pain
 Kofi has bodily pains.
- b. **Kofi hó yé nò yá**
 Kofi skin be 3SG OBJ pain
 Kofi has bodily pains.
- c. **Nè hó yè hú**
 3SG POSSself be fear
 He is fearsome.
- d. **Akua hó yé fè**
 Akua self be beautiful
 Akua is beautiful.
- e. **Ɔ-à-twí né dán hó**
 3SG SUBJ-PERF-paint 3SGPOSS house outer.part
 He has painted his house.
- (9) a. **Àsààsé nó yè pápá**
 land DEF be good
 The land is fertile.
- b. **Siká nó dà àkònwá nó ásé**
 money DEF lie/CONT chair DEF under
 The money is under the chair.
- c. **M-à-té àséń nó ásé**
 1SG SUBJ-PERF-hear matter DEF under
 I have understood the matter.

The sentences in (8) and (9) show the use of two forms, **hó** 'self, about' and **ásé** 'under, down' and how they diverge functionally. In (8a), we find the compound **hónám** (literally, 'self meat') used to refer to a concrete object 'skin, muscle, flesh or body'. While **hó** 'self, about' may refer to the body in general (8b), it is used very often to relate spatial and locative concepts such as 'outer surface, exterior and outside' (8c-d). Divergence is further demonstrated between the forms **ásé** 'under,

down’ and **àsààsé** ‘ground, land, earth.’ It is our estimation that the form **àsé** ‘under, down’ developed from **àsààsé** ‘ground, land, earth.’ Once again, the original form is used to code a concrete object as in (9a), while the derived word expresses spatial relations such as ‘under, lower part, end or beginning’ (9b-c).⁶

The functional divergence between the lexical items and the so-called postpositions is motivated by a BODY PART metaphor (Heine 1986). This metaphor is based on creativity where “clearly delineated and/or clearly structured entities are recruited to conceptualize less clearly delineated or structured entities... abstract relations in terms of physical processes or spatial relations” (Heine et al. 1991:29). Thus, in the BODY PART Metaphor, lexical items which have concrete referents such as **hónám** ‘skin, body’ and **àsààsé** ‘earth, land, ground’ serve as source concepts from which more abstract reference like space, location, and time may be derived. It is worth noting, however, that not every semantic component of the source concepts is mapped onto the target concept and, therefore, the resulting semantic content of the word in the target domain may be depleted or lost entirely (compare (8a) and (8e), (9a) and (9b)). On the other hand, words in the target domain may relate a range of concepts which are not in themselves derived from the source concepts (compare (8a) and (8b), (9a) and (9c)).

As stated above, the forms under consideration are at different stages on the grammaticalization cline and, therefore, exhibit various characteristics. The lexical word **mú** ‘inside’ has somehow advanced on the cline. Unlike some of the so-called postpositions, **mú** has maintained all of its phonetic segments. However, there are certain cases, especially in speech, where the form occurs as a clitic on either a verb or a noun (10a-c).

⁶ An anonymous reviewer suggests that **àsé** ‘down, under’ may not be derived from **àsààsé** ‘ground, earth’ as we have claimed. While we agree that an in-depth study is needed to uncover all the details, there is some amount of evidence which shows the conclusion we reached for these forms is not too far-fetched. Consider the following examples.

Example (1a) shows that it is not strange for ‘ground, earth’ to be interpreted as ‘down’. The word **fám** ‘ground, earth’ is polymorphemic involving **fá** ‘dust, earth’ and **mú** ‘in, inside’ which has grammaticalized in meaning to become interpreted as ‘down’ in Fante. However, the grammaticalization of **fám** ‘ground, earth’ to mean ‘down’ seems to be limited to Fante as this interpretation is unacceptable in Asante and Akuapem (1a). On the other hand, Asante and Akuapem prefer **àsé** ‘down’ (1b). Thus, it can be argued that both **àsé** ‘down’ and **fám** ‘down’ are derived from ‘ground, earth’ in the different dialects and that grammaticalization characterized by phonetic attrition of **àsààsé** ‘ground, earth’ results in **àsé** ‘down’ in Asante and Akuapem.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|----|--|
| 1a. | Trá fám (Fa.) | b. | Trá àsé (As./Ak.) |
| | sit ground | | sit down |
| | Sit down | | Sit down |
| | *Sit down (As./Ak.) | | *Sit on the ground (unless the ground is the |
| | Sit on the ground (As./Ak.) | | only available seat) |

- (10) a. **Mè-pè** **mú** **nó** **fitáá**
 1SG SUBJ-want inside DEF white
 I want the interior to be white.
- b. **Ànkáá** **nó** **dà-ń**
 orange DEF lie-inside
 The orange is inside.
- c. **Pàpá nó** **wò** **dáá-ń**
 Man DEF be.at room-inside
 The man is in the room.

As (9a) shows, **mú** may take a determiner much like all nouns do. However, in certain contexts, it cliticises on the verb (10b) and the noun (10c). Even though both the full form (**mú**) and the clitic (**-m**) are used side by side in the language, the latter is evidence that the form is moving to become a spatio-locative affix. This is clearly seen in the loss of its noun morphosyntactic properties when it occurs as a clitic **-m**. Accordingly, while **mu** can be modified by a determiner in (11a), the clitic **-m** does not occur with a determiner (compare 11b-c). In effect, unlike the other spatial and locative morphemes discussed, **-m** cannot head an NP in a clause but functions only a locative suffix.

- (11) a. **Mè-pè** **mú** **nó** **fitáá**
 1SG SUBJ-want inside DEF white
 I want the interior to be white.
- b. **Mè-pè-ń** **fitáá**
 1SG SUBJ-want-inside white
 I want the interior to be white.
- c. ***Mè-pè-ń** **nó** **fitáá**
 1SG SUBJ-want-inside DEF white
 I want the interior to be white.

Again, since cross-linguistically nouns occur as free rather than bound morphemes (and since all nouns are free morphemes in Akan) the boundedness of **-m** suggests a shift; a loss of membership from the category of nouns. This analysis is consistent with the grammaticalization process. For example, according to Heine and Reh (1982), the loss of phonetic segment(s) of a lexical item signals an advanced stage of grammaticalization of the form on the cline and the farther the form is on the cline the more grammatical it becomes. Thus, **mú** can be said to have advanced in becoming more of a grammatical word than its lexical uses in various speech contexts in the language. The evidence therefore suggests that **-m** can be appropriately categorized as a postposition in the language.

Situating the so-called postpositions in Akan in the framework of grammaticalization allows us to adequately account for their current status in the language. The analysis reveals that to claim that all these forms are postpositions would be premature even though the evidence is there to show that some are on the path toward that category. This is because, as Post (1997:378) notes, postpositions “indicate a closed set of highly grammaticalized NP operators which are positionally . . . quite distinct.” The forms we have considered in Akan exhibit morpho-syntactic properties of nouns signaling that they are better analyzed as some sort of nouns—relator nouns to be precise (DeLancey 2005).

4. RELATIONAL/RELATOR NOUNS

The term relational/relator noun (RN) has been used to refer to words, nominal in origin, which express spatio-temporal and locative concepts. It refers to the second identifiable category on the noun-to-affix cline of grammaticalization. According to Hopper and Traugott (2003:110), “a relational noun is one whose meaning is a location or direction potentially in relation to some other noun.” They note that, syntactically, relational nouns may function as the head of the noun phrase or appear as an inflected noun. It has been demonstrated for Akan that, words which express spatio-temporal relations can function as the head of NP (3a and 4a). Also, the forms function as possessed nouns in genitive constructions (7). However, as we demonstrated in (10b-c)), the relator noun **mú** may even cliticise on the immediate preceding verb or noun signaling an advanced stage of grammaticalization (11a-c).

5. CONCLUSION

Traditional conception of language as consisting of a few predetermined set of syntactic categories with discreet members cannot be entirely supported by evidence from languages themselves. In reality, languages continue to develop new classes of words from existing categories for emerging functional purposes. This development in language can be monitored through the framework of grammaticalization and the stage(s) of development of the forms noted. Research and analysis of forms in language should, therefore, pay attention to these developments in order to aid an accurate characterization of such forms. Again, as we have shown for Akan, linguistic research which describes linguistic forms in terms of other languages distorts synchronic language internal evidence in the process. As we have iterated, evidence from Akan shows that the so-called postpositions are not only derived from but behave syntactically as nouns and are better analyzed as relational/relator nouns. Nevertheless, from a functional view point, relator noun constructions demonstrate what has been referred to as a ‘universal adposition function’ in language (DeLancey 2005). Thus, even though one cannot stipulate a postposition category in Akan for these forms except **-m**, relator constructions reveal the presence of such a function.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	First Person	PERF	Perfect
2	Second Person	PL	Plural
3	Third Person	POSS	Possession
COMPL	Completive	PROG	Progressive
CONT	Continuative	RED	Reduplication
DEF	Definite	SCPs	So-called Postpositions
DET	Determiner	SG	Singular
NEG	Negative	SUBJ	Subject
OBJ	Object		

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