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Non-Compositional Preverb + Verb Compounds in the
Rg Veda:
Constructions, Idiosyncrasy, and Semantic Change

Several recent projects have examined particle verbs in Indo-European corpora using a construction-based framework: the series on local particles in the Rg Veda by Hettrich, Schneider, and Casaretto (1991–ongoing) and C. Bozzone's recent dissertation on constructions in Homer (2014) are notable examples. Following these scholars, I use a construction-based approach to analyze Rg Veda preverb + verb constructions in which the meanings are no longer reducible to their constituent preverbs and verbs. I investigate semantic change along three axes: the axis of the verb (specifically the case of $\acute{a}nu + \sqrt{\text{mad}}$, $abh\acute{i} + \sqrt{\text{mad}}$, and $\acute{a}pi + \sqrt{\text{mad}}$ 'make someone else intoxicated'), the axis of the preverb (specifically the negative connotations and associations of $p\acute{a}r\bar{a}$ 'forth, away'), and the axis of the construction type (specifically 'pseudoreversatives', in which the meaning of the preverb contradicts that of the verb, and the resulting compound verb is in some way the 'opposite' or the reversal of the simplex verb: $\acute{a}pa$ 'away, forth, off' + $\sqrt{\text{vy}\bar{a}}$ 'cover, envelop' = 'uncover'). I will argue that this construction-based approach clarifies previously opaque complex verbs, refines the meanings of others, and reveals connections to cognate constructions in other Indo-European languages.