Further Evidence in Favour of the Affixal Origin of Degema Clitics*

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It is claimed that Degema clitics developed from affixal morphology at some remote stage in the development of the language. This paper presents an additional piece of evidence in support of the affixal origin of Degema clitics, noting that whereas bound morphemes that attach to the bound verb root \textit{b3} 'be present/exist' in negative constructions can be separated from the verb, it is not possible for a bound morpheme to be separated from the same verb when it features in positive constructions. This inseparability of a morpheme from the verb in question points to the fact that there was a period in the diachronic development of Degema when synchronic clitics were indeed morphological elements that were inseparably bound to the verb. The synchronic separability of bound morphemes that attach to the verb in Degema reflects the clitic status of these hitherto affixal elements as they transit from morphology to syntax.

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\textbf{Keywords:} clitics, cliticization, affixal origin of clitics, Degema, agreement morphemes

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0. Introduction

Definitions of the clitic and affix in Degema, a Benue-Congo language of the Delta Edoid sub-family, are set forth in Kari (2002d). I adopt the same definitions in this paper. The clitic, in Degema, is any linguistic element that usually attaches itself before a (main) verb and/or auxiliary verb or preverbal adverb (proclitic), or after a verb or pronoun (enclitic), for the sole purpose of gaining phonological identity. The affix, in Degema, is any linguistic element that attaches itself before a noun, nominal modifier or verb (prefix), after a verb (suffix), or surrounds the verb (circumfix), for the sole purpose of gaining both morphological and phonological identity. For a detailed discussion of the distinction between clitics and affixes, see Kari (2002d and 2003).

There are two types of clitics in Degema, including a surface endoclitic that results from a metathesis rule that applies after the external attachment of the factative clitic (Kari 2002a and 2003). These two types of clitics are subject clitics (proclitics) and non-subject clitics (enclitics). In this paper, I will concern myself with subject clitics only, with the understanding that whatever claims that are made regarding the origin of subject clitics apply to non-subject clitics as well. Although subject and non-subject clitics are different in the possession or non-possession of coreferential properties, the two types of clitics are similar in their phonological (agreeing with vowels of their host in expandedness or non-expandedness, like synchronic affixes) and syntactic (relative freedom of attachment to a variety of morphosyntactic categories, unlike synchronic affixes) behaviour. For the reasons of these phonological and syntactic behaviour, and given the absence of a relatively long tradition of writing to establish the remote origin of non-subject clitics, it is concluded in Kari (2003) that non-subject clitics were also diachronic affixes. The reason for not discussing the endoclitic in this paper stems from the fact that it is one of the clitics established in the language — the factative enclitic.¹)

¹) Degema subject and non-subject clitics are presented in Table 1.

1. Affixal Origin of Degema Clitics: Evidence from the Similarity between Subject Clitics and Affixes

Three alternative analyses regarding the source of Degema clitics are proposed and discussed in Kari (2003). These are the pronominal source, the fully-fledged word source and the affixal morphological source. The first two analyses are rejected in favour of the third, which is considered most plausible. For the purpose of this paper, some of the arguments advanced in favour of the third alternative analysis, as discussed in Kari (2003), will be presented. Evidence in favour of the affixal morphological

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¹) For those interested in how the factative enclitic comes to be located within its host, see Kari (2002a and 2003).
Table 1. Forms of Degema Clitics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Clitics (Proclitics)</th>
<th>Non-subject Clitics (Enclitics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>factative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Vₙ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>negative imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>discontinuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>excessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>ant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source of Degema clitics comes from the similarity in behaviour between 3rd person subject clitics and the prefixes of modifying derived nominals (moden’s), quantifiers and numerals⁴ in respect of agreement with a subject NP⁵, as in the case of subject clitics, and with a modified NP, as in the case of moden’s, in [±HUMAN] and number.

It is observed in Kari (2002b and 2003) that the 3rd person plural forms of subject clitics agree with their associated subject NP in the [±HUMAN] semantic feature of that NP. This is the only semantic feature of nouns that is retained in subject clitics. Consider examples (1) and (2):

(1a) imomosi jo me=si kotu jir.

men DEF 3PISCL=still call him

[±HUMAN] [±HUMAN]

‘The men will still call him’

2) V in the form of the factative enclitic is an underspecified vowel that agrees completely with the vowel of the immediately preceding syllable of the host.

3) Linguistic data in Degema are transcribed in phonetic symbols that have IPA values. Degema data are based on the Usokun variety.

4) An elaborate discussion of the agreement between moden’s, quantifiers and numerals and nouns is presented in Kari (2002b and 2003). In this paper, I will consider the agreement between moden’s, quantifiers and numerals and nouns briefly.

5) The following abbreviations are used in this paper: 1SgSCL = 1st person singular subject clitic, 1PISCL = 1st person plural subject clitic, 2SgSCL = 2nd person singular subject clitic, 2PISCL = 2nd person plural subject clitic, 3SgSCL = 3rd person singular subject clitic, 3PISCL = 3rd person plural subject clitic, BVR = bound verb root, CAUS = causative suffix, DE = discontinuation enclitic, DEF = definite article, EAUX = emphatic auxiliary, EE = excessive enclitic, FE = factative enclitic, FSCP = fossilized semi-concordal prefix, IPA = International Phonetic Alphabet, NEG = negative, NIE = negative imperative enclitic, NP = noun phrase, NPM = non past morpheme, PE = perfect enclitic, Q = question, RE = request enclitic.
(1b) iwótu jo mi=sí gbóm ẹjì.
rats DEF 3PISCL=still bite him
[-HUMAN] [-HUMAN]
'The rats will still bite him'

(2a) ewéey e=ji=tié.
people 3PISCL=come=PE
[+HUMAN] [+HUMAN]
'People have come'

(2b) mam i=siré=tié.
animals 3PISCL=run=PE
[-HUMAN] [-HUMAN]
'Animals have run'

In (1a) and (2a), the subject clitics have the feature [+HUMAN] because the subject NP is [+HUMAN], while in (1b) and (2b) they have the feature [-HUMAN] because the subject NP is [-HUMAN] (see Kari 2002c and 2003 for a discussion of how subject clitics acquire the grammatical features of nominals in subject position).

For the purpose of the third alternative analysis, I will consider the relationship between subject clitics and modern’s, quantifiers, and numerals. Modern’s have prefixes that agree with the noun they modify not only in singularity and plurality but also in human and non-human property of the noun.

The plural forms of modern’s are derived from stative verbs by two sets of prefixes, depending on whether they modify a noun referring to a human or non-human entity. The prefix used in deriving the plural form of a modern that modifies a noun referring to a human entity is e-/e-, which attaches to the verb stem, while that used in deriving the form that modifies a noun referring to a non-human entity is i-/i-, which attaches to the verb stem, as examples (3) and (4) show:

(3a) kambí > e-kambí ẹ-kambí(6) imo
‘be tiny’ (v.) ‘tiny’ (moden) tiny children
‘tiny children’

(3b) kambí > i-kambí i-kambí isen
‘be tiny’ (v.) ‘tiny’ (moden) tiny fish
‘tiny fish’

6) Vowel harmony applies between prefix and stem. Low tone is unmarked for the sake of convenience.
(4a) kpükirákó > e-kpükirákó e-kpükirákó ímómosi
    'be stout' (v.)    'stout' (moden)     stout men
                     'stout men'

(4b) kpükirákó > i-kpükirákó i-kpükirákó ágbo
    'be big' (v.)     'big' (moden)       big chewing sticks
                     'big chewing sticks'

The quantifier 5-βo ‘a/one’ shows concordial agreement with the noun it co-occurs in terms of prefix alternation. This prefix alternation, which is seen in the plural form of the quantifier, is also conditioned by the [±HUMAN] property of the noun, as examples (5)–(8) show:

(5) 5βiré 5-βo
    friend a/one
    'a/one friend'

(6) áβiré é-βo
    friends some
    'some friends'

(7a) ínyén í-βo
    monkeys some
    'some monkeys'

(8a) ímó é-βo
    children some
    'some children'

(7b) *ínyén é-βo
(8b) *ímó í-βo

Like moden’s and the quantifier 5-βo ‘a/one’, it is noted that cardinal numerals begin with vowel prefixes that agree with the noun in number whereby the numeral that denotes ‘one’ is used with a singular noun whereas numerals that denote the concept of more than one are used with a plural noun, as (9)–(12) show:

(9) úkpókpó 5-βo
    sardine one
    'one sardine'

(10) íkpókpó í-βo
     sardines two
     'two sardines'

(11) íkpókpó í-saj
     sardines three
     'three sardines'

(12) íkpókpó í-ni
     sardines four
     'four sardines'

In addition, it is noted that the prefixes of the numerals that are higher than ‘one’ also change their forms to agree with the noun they modify in humanness/non-humanness. Compare (13)–(16) with (9)–(12) above:
(13) šmó š-βu
   child one
   'one child'
(14) ímó mé-βə
   children two
   'two children'
(15) ñtum é-saj
   persons three
   'three persons'
(16) ímómosí é-ni
   men four
   'four men'

It is clear from what has been presented that only the (plural) forms of affixes
(prefixes), especially those of moden’s, quantifiers and numerals are determined by
the [±HUMAN] semantic property of the noun. These modifiers thus agree with the
noun in respect of this feature, in addition to number. That the plural forms of clitics,
especially the 3rd person subject clitics, are determined by the [±HUMAN] semantic
property of the noun and thus agree with the subject noun in respect of this semantic
feature, in addition to number, points to their diachronic affixal status when they were
morphologically bound to the verb.

What has been considered are cases involving 3rd person subject clitics only. The
[±HUMAN] semantic feature of nouns with which subject clitics agree is not found in
subject clitics referring to other persons, although they have the feature of number.
Nevertheless, one can on the basis of the behaviour of 3rd person subject clitics, which
is similar to those of affixes, especially the prefixes of moden’s, quantifiers and numerals,
say that in general synchronic subject clitics were diachronic agreement affixes that
have become demorphologized.

There also seems to be some agreement between the forms of noun prefixes and
subject clitics in distinguishing between human and non-human, especially in the plu-
ral. However, let it be pointed out that this agreement is not maintained in all the plu-
ral forms. Consider the following data:

(17a) o-wé‘ej ‘person’   (17b) o-wéej mó=ji š.
   person 3SgSCL=come NPM
   'somebody is coming'
(18a) e-wé‘ej ‘persons’   (18b) e-wéej mé=ji š.
   persons 3PlSCL=come NPM
   'People are coming'
(19a) e-fén ‘bird’   (19b) e-fén m5=βεβ š.
   bird 3SgSCL=fly NPM
   'A bird is flying'
(20a) ți-fēn  ‘birds’
(20b) ți-fēn mî=βéβ  ṭ.  
birds 3SgSCL=fly NPM  
‘Birds are flying’

(21a) ți-môbîtam  ‘woman’
(21b) ți-môbîtam mô=rôrê.  
woman 3SgSCL=walk  
‘A woman is walking’

(22a) ți-môbîtam  ‘women’
(22b) ți-môbîtam mê=rôrê.  
women 3SgSCL=walk  
‘Women are walking’

(23a) ți-gbôlô  ‘giant rat’
(23b) ți-gbôlô mô=sirê.  
giant rat 3SgSCL=run  
‘A giant rat is running’

(24a) ți-gbôlô  ‘giant rats’
(24b) ți-gbôlô mî=sirê.  
giant rat 3SgSCL=run  
‘A giant rat is running’

In (17b), (18b), (20b), (21b), (23b) and (24b), the subject clitics are phonologically and semantically related to the noun prefix. Phonologically, the vocalic part of these clitics is related to the vowels in the verb root by being either expanded or non-expanded, depending on the set to which the vowels of the verb roots belong. In (19b) and (22b), for instance, where there is no phonological relationship between the subject clitic and the noun prefix, the semantic relationship is still maintained. This is probably due to the reduced nature of the noun class system.

It can therefore be concluded that the concordial relationship between nouns and moden’s, quantifiers, numerals and 3rd person (plural) subject clitics in respect of the semantic property of the noun is one of the relics of the noun class system of Degema. Again, the similarities between subject clitics and moden’s in terms of agreement with nouns in human/non-human, in addition to number, and the possibility of an intervening element to separate subject clitics from the verb, suggest that Degema clitics were morphological elements that have transited to syntax.7)

7) See Zwicky and Pullum (1983) for some of the characteristics that distinguish clitics from affixes, one of which is degree of selection. The prefixes of moden’s, for instance, attach only to verbs, as in (3) – (4), whereas subject clitics, for instance, attach to verbs and preverbal adverbs, as in (1) and (2). Moden’s, therefore, have a high degree of selection of their host, whereas subject clitics have a low degree of selection of their host.

Although the source of Degema clitics has already been established (see Kari 2002b and 2003), there is fresh evidence that further confirms the affixal origin of Degema clitics. This piece of evidence comes from a bound verb root bọ, meaning ‘be present/exist’. The verb root is bound in the sense that its meaning is compositionally determined. It does not exist in isolation but goes with an affix in the positive or with a clitic in the negative.

2.1. bọ as a Verb

Although I have mentioned that bọ ‘be present/exist’ is a verb, it is good to justify its status as a verb. Like other verbs, bọ ‘be present/exist’ begins with a consonant and has a verbal meaning — a stative verbal meaning, as a comparison of (25) and (26) show. The only affix that attaches to it in the positive responds to vowel harmony, i.e. the vowel of the affix agrees with that of bọ ‘be present/exist’ in non-expandedness, like dependent morphemes that attach to other verbs in the language (cf. (25) and (26)). Unfortunately, there is no way of showing agreement in expandedness because the attachment of affixes is restricted to the prefix ‘a-’.⁹ Again, like other verbs, bọ ‘be present/exist’ can take an enclitic that is inherently negative (see Section 2.2.5.).

(25)  á->bọ.
FSCP-BVR.be present
‘I, you (sg.) (s)he, etc. am/are/is present’

(26)  ọ=`sọm-ọsẹ.
3PISCL=be good-CAUS
‘You (pl.) should cause (something) to be good’

⁸ The cases considered so far involve 3rd person subject clitics. Nevertheless, one can on the basis of the behaviour of these clitics, which is similar to those of affixes, especially to those of the prefixes of modern’s and other nominal modifiers, say that in general synchronic subject clitics were diachronic agreement affixes that have become demorphologized (cf. Janda 1981 and Nevis 1987). It should be noted that whereas non-3rd person subject clitics do not agree with the noun in human/non-human, they do agree with the noun in number. Like 3rd person subject clitics, non-3rd person subject clitics obey vowel harmony rules and are also characterized by relative freedom of attachment to a variety of morphosyntactic categories. For a discussion of the relative freedom of attachment of Degema clitics see Kari (1997, 2001, 2002b and 2003).

⁹ I assume that, like all verbs in the language, bọ ‘be present/exist’ also ends with a high tone in isolation. And like all verbs in the negative, the negative form of bọ ‘be present/exist’, which is mo ‘be not present/not exist’, also ends with a low tone (see note 6).

⁹ This is what I would like to call a ‘fossilized semi-concordial prefix’, which refers to the subject. This morpheme is not a clitic because it does not meet the second of the defining criteria for clitics in Degema, i.e. ability to attach to more than one morphosyntactic category. Unlike subject clitics, the prefix does not vary according to the number, person and human/non-human properties of the subject NP, as will be shown later.
2.2. Some Characteristics of fé

A few things need to be said about this bound verb root, having observed that though it is similar to other verbs in Degema, it differs from them in interesting ways.

2.2.1. fé as an Irregular Verb

Unlike other verbs in Degema, fé ‘be present/exist’ is an irregular verb, and appears to be the only one in the language. Some of the notable features of this irregular verb manifest in the asymmetry in its forms in positive and negative constructions, its inability to take suffixes, and its inability to take clitics in the positive. I consider these features in some detail below as a precursor to the discussion of the beginnings of cliticization in Degema.

2.2.2. Asymmetry in Positive and Negative Forms of fé

The positive and negative forms of fé ‘be present/exist’ differ from each other, unlike those of regular verbs. Compare (27) and (28) involving positive and negative forms of fé ‘be present/exist’ – an irregular verb – with (29) and (30) involving positive and negative forms of tá ‘go’ – a regular verb.

(27) á-fe fé.
FSCP-BVR.be present
‘I, you (sg.) (s)he, etc. am/are/is present’ (Positive)

(28) ó=mo.
3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present
‘(S)he is not present’ (Negative)

(29) m3=tá
3SgSCL=go.
‘(S)he will go’ (Positive)

(30) 5=ta.
3SgSCL.NEG=go.
‘(S)he will not go’ (Negative)

A comparison of (27) and (28) with (29) and (30) shows that there are marked differences between the positive and negative counterparts of fé ‘be present/exist’, in morphology and phonology, and those of tá. In terms of morphology, the regular verb tá has an invariant form in both positive and negative constructions, unlike fé ‘be present/exist’ whose form varies according to polarity. It is observed that fé ‘be present/exist’

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10) This is the first mention of Degema as having an irregular verb.
changes to mo 'be not present/not exist' in the negative. The asymmetry in the forms of ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’ contrasts with the symmetry in regular verbs and thus justifies the classification of ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’ as an irregular verb. Phonologically, there is a difference in segmental composition between the positive and negative forms of ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’, unlike tɑ. Whereas there is no difference in the segmental composition of tɑ in positive and negative constructions, the irregular verb begins with a voiced bilabial implosive [ɓ] and followed by an open-mid back rounded non-expanded vowel [ɔ] in the positive but begins with a voiced bilabial nasal [m] and followed by a close-mid back rounded expanded vowel [ʊ] in the negative. Regular and irregular verbs, as seen in (27) and (28) and (29) and (30), differ suprasegmentally in the positive. Whereas a regular verb, as in (29) has a high-high tone pattern in positive non-past constructions when preceded by a subject clitic (except when preceded by a 1st person singular subject clitic in positive non-past constructions, see Kari 2003, p.115), an irregular verb, as in (27) has a high downstepped-high tone pattern in positive non-past constructions.

The reason for this asymmetry in tone pattern between regular and irregular verbs is that whereas the morpheme that precedes the regular verb in positive non-past constructions is a (subject) clitic, that which precedes the only irregular verb that has been identified, in positive non-past constructions, is not a (subject) clitic but an affix. I will comment further on this affix later.

2.2.3. Inability of ɓɔ to Take Suffixes

Unlike regular verbs, which take synchronic suffixes but not prefixes in both positive and negative constructions, ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’ does not admit synchronic suffixes in both positive and negative constructions. However, ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’ admits a fossilized semi-concordial prefix in the positive but none in the negative. Consider the following examples:

(31a) ɑ-ɓɔ.
FSCP-BVR.be present
‘I, you (sg.), (s)he, etc. am/are/is present’

* (31b) ɑ-ɓɔ-se.
FSCP-BVR.be present-CAUS

(31c) ó-mо.
3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present
‘(S)he is not present’

*(31d)  ó=mo-se.
       3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present-CAUS

(32a)  me=bí  ó.
       1SgSCL=become black  NPM
       ‘I will become black’

(32b)  me=bí-ésé.
       1SgSCL=become black-CAUS
       ‘I will blacken (something)’

(32c)  mí=bi.
       1SgSCL.NEG=become black
       ‘I will not become black’

(32d)  mí=bi-ese.
       1SgSCL.NEG=become black-CAUS
       ‘I will not blacken (something)’

The data in (31) and (32) show that whereas the regular (stative) verb bí ‘become black’ takes the causative suffix -ese/-esê in both positive and negative, as in (32b) and (32d), the irregular verb does not do so, as seen in (31b) and (31d).

2.2.4. Inability of ɓọ to Take Subject Clitics in Positive Constructions

A noteworthy remark regarding ɓọ ‘be present/exist’ is that subject clitics do not attach to it in positive constructions, unlike regular verbs. In negative constructions, however, ɓọ ‘be present/exist’ admits subject clitics, like regular verbs. Compare the following positive and negative forms of ɓọ ‘be present/exist’ in Tables 2 and 3 with those of regular verbs such as kotú ‘call’ in Tables 4 and 5:

A look at Tables 2–5 reveals that whereas the positive and negative forms of kotú in Tables 4 and 5 are preceded by subject clitics, which change their forms to reflect the number and person of the subject NP, only the negative form of ɓọ ‘be present/exist’ is preceded by subject clitics co-referencing the subject NP in person and number (cf. Tables 2b and 3). The positive form of ɓọ ‘be present/exist’, in Table 2a, is preceded by the fossilized semi-concordial prefix, which though refers to the subject and can take the place of subject when the substantive subject is deleted, that does not vary in shape according to the person and number features of the subject NP.

12) For a discussion of suffixes and their underlying forms in Degema, see Kari (1995).
Table 2a. Positive Forms of ṅó

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mē</td>
<td>eni</td>
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<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á-نغ</td>
<td>á-نغ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>‘I am present’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wọ</td>
<td>map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á-نغ</td>
<td>á-نغ</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>‘You are present’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
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<td>ọji</td>
<td>ọja</td>
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<tr>
<td>(s)he</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á-نغ</td>
<td>á-نغ</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>‘(s)he is present’</td>
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<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
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Table 2b. Positive Forms of ṅó

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<td>é-نغ</td>
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<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á-نغ</td>
<td>á-نغ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>‘be present/exist’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ọji</td>
<td>ọja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(s)he</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á-نغ</td>
<td>é-نغ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>‘be present/exist’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
<td>FSCP-BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would like to mention that unlike 3rd person plural subject clitics that change their forms to reflect the human/non-human semantic properties of the noun or nominal in the subject NP, the fossilized prefix in the positive form of ṅó ‘be present/exist’ is invariant, regardless of whether the noun or nominal that heads the subject NP is human or non-human. Consider the following data in (33) and (34).

(33a) mām jọ á-نغ.
animals DEF FSCP-BVR.be present
‘The animals are present’

13) This form seems grammatical because the fossilized semi-concordial prefix is identical to the 2nd plural subject clitic. Nevertheless, given the ungrammaticality in cases where distinct forms are used with ṅó ‘be present/exist’, I assume that the 2nd plural subject clitic used with ṅó ‘be present/exist’ is also ungrammatical.
Table 3. Negative Forms of bɔ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>'I am not present'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mɛɛ mɪ=mɔ</td>
<td>I 1SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔɔ ɔ=mɔ</td>
<td>you 2SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔjɔ o=mɔ</td>
<td>(s)he 3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>'You are not present'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eni ɛ=mɔ</td>
<td>we 1PISCL.NEG=BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɑn ɔ=mɔ</td>
<td>you 2PISCL.NEG=BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓaw ́ɛ=mɔ</td>
<td>they 3PISCL.NEG=BVR.be present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'They are not present'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Positive Forms of kotù

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>'I am calling him'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mɛɛ mɛ=kọtù ɔjɪ</td>
<td>I 1SgSCL=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔɔ mɛ=mọtù ɔjɪ</td>
<td>you 2SgSCL=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔjɔ mɛ=mọtù ɔjɪ</td>
<td>(s)he 3SgSCL=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>'You are calling him'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eni mɛ=kọtù ɔjɪ</td>
<td>we 1PISCL=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɑn mɛ=kọtù ɔjɪ</td>
<td>you 2PISCL=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓaw mɛ=kọtù ɔjɪ</td>
<td>they 3PISCL=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'We are calling him'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Negative Forms of kotù

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>'I am not calling him'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mɛɛ mɪ=kotu ɔjɪ</td>
<td>I 1SgSCL.NEG=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔɔ ɔ=kotu ɔjɪ</td>
<td>you 2SgSCL.NEG=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔjɔ ɔ=kotu ɔjɪ</td>
<td>(s)he 3SgSCL.NEG=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>'You are not calling him'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eni ́ɛ=kotu ɔjɪ</td>
<td>we 1PISCL.NEG=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mɑn ́ɛ=kotu ɔjɪ</td>
<td>you 2PISCL.NEG=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓaw ́ɛ=kotu ɔjɪ</td>
<td>they 3PISCL.NEG=call him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'We are not calling him'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  | 'They are not calling him'                 |

|                  |                                              |
(33b) mám jɔ i-mo.
animals DEF 3PI SCL.NEG=BVR.be present
'The animals are not present'

(33c) ewɛj jɔ á-bɔ.
people DEF FSCP-BVR.be present
'The people are present'

(33d) ewɛj jɔ é-mo.
people DEF 3PI SCL.NEG=BVR.be present
'The people are not present'

(34a) mám jɔ mĩ-ji ɔ.
animals DEF 3PI SCL=come NPM
'The animals are coming'

(34b) mám jɔ ĩ-ji.
animals DEF 3PI SCL.NEG=come
'The animals are not coming'

(34c) ewɛj jɔ mé-ji ɔ.
people DEF 3PI SCL=come NPM
'The people are coming'

(34d) ewɛj jɔ é-ji.
people DEF 3PI SCL.NEG=come
'The people are not coming'

Examples (33) and (34) show that the 3rd person subject clitics in (33b) and (33d) and (34a)–(34d) change their forms, like I demonstrated in (1) and (2), to reflect the distinction between human and non-human inherent in the noun that heads the subject NP. This is, however, not the case with the fossilized prefix that attaches to ɓɔ 'be present/exist', as seen in (33a) and (33c). The implication of this is that the fossilized morpheme is not a clitic. Again, it suggests that the distinction between human and non-human has been lost in non-modifying/non-derivational prefixes that attach to the verb.

2.2.5. Inability of ɓɔ to Take Non-subject Clitics in Positive Constructions

Unlike regular verbs that take non-subject clitics in positive and negative constructions, the irregular verb ɓɔ 'be present/exist' takes a non-subject clitic — the negative non-imperative enclitic — only in negative constructions. Compare the regular verb kjɛ 'give',
which takes all six enclitics, with ɓɔ̀ ‘be present/exist’ that takes only one of these enclitics:

(35a) ɔ=kij̣=n ɗj̣t.
3SgSCL=give=FE him
‘(S)he gave him’

(35b) ɔ=kij̣=tɛ ɗj̣t.
3SgSCL=give=PE him
‘(S)he has given him’

(35c) ë=kij̣=tu ɗj̣t.
2SgSCL.NEG=give=NIE him
‘Don’t give him!’

(35d) ñ=kij̣=mono ɗj̣t.
3SgSCL.NEG=give=DE him
‘(S)he will not give him again’

(35e) ɔ=kij̣=pîṛ=tɛ ɗj̣t.
3SgSCL=give=EE=PE him
‘(S)he has given him too much’

(35f) kij̣=am ɗj̣t.
give=RE him
‘Please, give him’

*(36a) a-ɓɔ̀=ŋn.14)
FSCP-BVR.be present=FE

*(36b) a-ɓɔ̀=tɛ.
FSCP-BVR.be present=PE

*(36c) á-ɓɔ̀=tu.
FSCP.NEG-BVR.be present=NIE

*(36d) á-ɓɔ̀=mono.
FSCP.NEG-BVR.be present=DE

14) On the analogy of a stative verb like sòm ‘be good’ taking a factative enclitic to become o=so’óm ‘It is good’, I transcribe ɓɔ̀ ‘be present/exist’ in the same manner with the factative enclitic attaching to it in the ungrammatical (36a).
*(36e)  a-ɓiɗé=té.
FSCP-BVR.be present=EE=PE

*(36f)  a-ɓɔ=aní.
FSCP-BVR.be present=RE

In the negative, both ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’ and kiɗé ‘give’ take enclitics that have an inherent negative meaning. Whereas kiɗé ‘give’ takes two of these enclitics, ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’ takes only one, as shown in (37) and (38):

(37a)  ɗ=kiɗé=muonu ɗjì.
3SgSCL.NEG=give=DE him
‘(S) he will not give him again’

(37b)  ɗ=kiɗé=to ɗjì.
2SgSCL.NEG=give=NIE him
‘Don’t give him!’

(38a)  ɗ=mo=munu.
3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present=DE
‘(S) he is not present again’

*(38b)  ɗ=mo=to.
2SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present=DE

Although ɓɔ does not take enclitics in the positive, the fact that it does in the negative qualifies it as a verb (see Section 2.1).

2.3. The Beginnings of Cliticization in Degema

In this section, I provide further evidence that buttresses the claim made in Kari (2002b and 2003) that Degema clitics were diachronic affixes — evidence that points to the beginnings of cliticization in Degema. As I pointed out in the preceding discussion, ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’ is preceded by a fossilized prefix. Preliminary investigations show that this prefix is inseparably bound to the verb in positive constructions. In other words, the sequence of this prefix and the verb root to which it attaches cannot be interrupted by an intervening element such as a preverbal adverb or an auxiliary verb. Although the fossilized prefix is present in positive constructions featuring the bound verb root ɓɔ ‘be present/exist’, the same prefix is absent in negative constructions or is replaced by a subject clitic in negative constructions. Consider (39) and (40):

---

*(36e)  a-ɓiɗé=té.
FSCP-BVR.be present=EE=PE

*(36f)  a-ɓɔ=aní.
FSCP-BVR.be present=RE

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FSCP-BVR.be present=RE

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‘(S) he will not give him again’

(37b)  ɗ=kiɗé=to ɗjì.
2SgSCL.NEG=give=NIE him
‘Don’t give him!’

(38a)  ɗ=mo=munu.
3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present=DE
‘(S) he is not present again’

*(38b)  ɗ=mo=to.
2SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present=DE

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‘Don’t give him!’

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3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present=DE
‘(S) he is not present again’

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(39a)  ámbó jë á-ðó.
child DEF Q.FSCP-BVR.be present
‘Is the child present?’

(39b)  ámbó jë á-gá á-ðó.
child DEF Q.FSCP-EAUX FSCP-BVR.be present
‘Is the child really present?’

(39c)  ámbó jë á-sí á-ðó.
child DEF Q.FSCP-still FSCP-BVR.be present
‘Is the child still present?’

(40a)  ámbó jë ó=mo.
child DEF 3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present
‘The child is not present’

(40b)  ámbó jë 5=sí mo.
child DEF 3SgSCL.NEG=still BVR.be present
‘The child is still not present’

(40c)  imó jë é=mo.
children DEF 3SgSCL.NEG=BVR.be present
‘The children are not present’

(40d)  imó jë é=sí mo.
children DEF 3SgSCL.NEG=still BVR.be present
‘The children are still not present’

The data in (39) show that the fossilized prefix attaches to the bound verb root Ḟó ‘be present/exist’ in (39a), to the bound verb root and the emphatic auxiliary simultaneously15 in (39b) and to the bound verb root and the preverbal adverb simultaneously in (39c). In (40a) and (40c), however, the subject clitics attach to the negative form of the bound verb root mo ‘be not present/not exist’ but to the preverbal adverb in (40b) and (40d). Examples (39b) and (39c) seem to point to an era when the concordial prefix that attaches to the verb was duplicated on the preverbal adverbs and auxiliaries because the verb stem and affix formed a cohesive unit. These examples represent the stage when the prefix was inseparable from the verb (cf. (39a)). They,

---

15 A similar situation is reported in Kari (2003, p.30ff.) whereby subject clitics attach to main verbs and auxiliary verbs or preverbal adverbs simultaneously. In those cases, it is observed that the V-form of subject clitics, except the 1st person singular subject clitic, attaches to auxiliaries and preverbal adverbs, whereas the mV-form of subject clitics attaches to main verbs.
therefore, provide evidence of the relic of a morphological phenomenon.

Examples (40b) and (40d) show a situation where the sequence of prefix and verb is interrupted by a preverbal adverb (cf. (40a) and (40c)). These examples point to a period when the concordial verbal prefix that is duplicated on the preverbal adverb no longer formed a cohesive unit with the verb, as the prefix lost its affixal status and became cliticized unto the preverbal adverb. The result is that the preverbal adverb now stands between the hitherto affixal morpheme and the verb.

The historical development of clitics in Degema could probably be as given below:

\[
\text{affix-verb-affix} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{affix X verb X affix} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{clitic (X) verb (X) clitic}
\]

(first stage)  
(second stage)  
(third stage)

The development of Degema clitics may have been in three stages. The first is the stage when clitics existed as affixes attached to the verb — a stage when no element interrupted the affix-verb sequence. The second shows the beginning of cliticization—a stage when it became possible for the affix-verb sequence to be interrupted. The third shows a stage when the affix lost its morphological unity with the verb, and thus became a clitic, being sometimes separated from the verb by an auxiliary, sometimes by a preverbal adverb (as in the case of a subject clitics), and sometimes by an object pronoun beginning with a consonant (as in the case of non-subject clitics). The precise period when Degema affixes became clitics or when an auxiliary or preverbal adverb broke the affix-verb sequence is unknown.

3. Conclusion

In this paper, I have demonstrated further that Degema (subject) clitics have their origins in diachronic affixal morphology, contrary to the popular view that clitics in human language developed from free lexical items or from syntactic categories that must appear without accent in various languages, and may become affixes at a later stage (cf. Zwicky 1977, Bybee 1985, Spencer 1991, Hopper and Traugott 1993 and Klavans 1995, to mention but a few). Supplementary evidence supporting the affixal origin of Degema clitics — a claim that was made in Kari (2002b and 2003) — comes from the bound verb root ɓ5 ‘be present/exist’. As I have shown, ɓ5 ‘be present/exist’ is preceded by a fossilized semi-concordial prefix that is inseparable from the verb in positive constructions, and that this prefix is duplicated on preverbal adverbs and auxiliaries preceding the verb. In negative constructions, ɓ5 ‘be present/exist’ becomes
mo ‘be not present/not exist’ and is preceded by subject clitics, which vary in form to reflect the person, number and human/non-human properties of the noun heading the subject NP. The behaviour of ɓɓ ‘be present/exist’ in positive and negative constructions points to two major stages in the development of Degema clitics. The first stage, as evidenced by ɓɓ ‘be present/exist’ in positive constructions, represents the period when Degema clitics existed as agreement affixes that were inseparably bound to the verb. The second stage, again, as evidenced by ɓɓ ‘be present/exist’ in negative constructions, represents the period when these agreement affixes became demorphologized, thereby permitting elements such as perverbal adverbs and auxiliaries to intervene between them (i.e. agreement affixes) and the verb. This stage also signals the gradual loss of concord whereby agreement morphemes that attach to a regular verb are duplicated on preverbal adverbs and auxiliaries. The loss of this agreement, therefore, correlates with the clitic status of these hitherto affixal morphemes.

References


