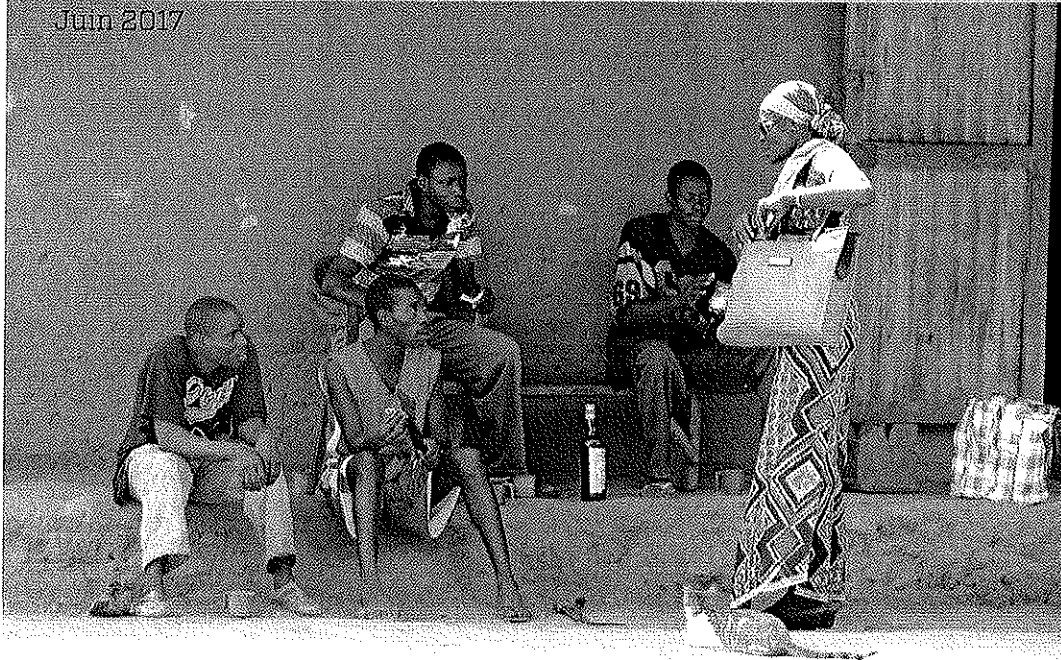


#03

June 2017



LLA

Linguistique  
et Langues  
Africaines



- About the substitution of the voiceless post-alveolar affricate among Igala speakers of English
- Cognate object constructions in Degema
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## Cognate object constructions in Degema<sup>1</sup>

Ethelbert Emmanuel KARI<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

This paper provides a descriptive analysis of cognate object constructions in Degema<sup>3</sup>. Cognate object constructions refer to constructions that involve a verb and a cognate nominal object that is morphologically and semantically related to the verb. It distinguishes between eventive and referential cognate object constructions in Degema, observing that verbs in the former select only a cognate object whereas those in the latter can select a cognate object or a non-cognate object. The paper highlights asymmetries in cognate object constructions in Degema in the licensing of syntactic phenomena such as pronominalization, questions and topicalization. Furthermore, the paper classifies cognate object constructions in Degema into three semantic groups based on the semantic class of verbs from which these objects are derived. Consequently, it distinguishes constructions with activity, achievement and stative reading. In general, cognate objects in Degema are noted as clarifying or providing contrastive information about the activity or state of the verb from which they are derived and with which they collocate.

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1. This is a significantly revised version of a paper presented at the 8th World Congress of African Linguistics, Kyoto University, Japan, held from 20-24 August, 2015. I am immensely grateful to the anonymous reviewers of the *Linguistique & Langues Africaines* (LLA) Journal. This version of the paper has greatly benefited from their enlightening comments and observations.

2. Dept. of African Languages & Literature, Univ. of Botswana, ethelbert.kari@mopipi.ub.bw.

3. Degema is spoken in Southern Nigeria by two autonomous communities – Usokun-Degema and Degema Town (Atala) in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State. It is a Delta Edoid language (Elugbc 1989) classified under West Benue-Congo (Blench 1989) within the Niger-Congo phylum. Degema speakers number approximately 22,000 (Kari, 2004:5). Each of the Degema-speaking communities speaks a variety of Degema that is highly mutually intelligible with the other and that is named after the community or place where it is used. For instance, the Usokun-Degema people speak the Usokun variety while the Degema Town (Atala) people speak the Atala variety. The Degema data in this paper are based on the Usokun variety.

**Keywords**

Cognate Objects, Cognate Object Constructions, Phonology-morphology-syntax-semantics interface, Transitivity, Degema

**Résumé**

Cet article propose une description des constructions transitives à objet interne dans la langue degema. Par constructions transitives à objet interne (COI), nous entendons les constructions qui font intervenir un verbe et un objet nominal associé dit « interne », c'est-à-dire présentant avec ce verbe des points communs sur les plans morphologique et sémantique. Notre étude nous a amené à classer les constructions transitives à objet interne en deux catégories : les constructions événementielles, dont l'objet est toujours interne, et les constructions référentielles, dont l'objet peut ou non être interne. Par ailleurs, nous avons mis en évidence des différences de comportement en degema entre les deux types de constructions précitées, en ce qui concerne les paramètres suivants : substitution par un pronom, interrogations partielles et topicalisation. En outre, en se fondant sur les propriétés sémantiques des verbes dont sont issus les objets internes étudiés, le présent article propose une classification en trois groupes des COI du degema, liées respectivement aux prédicats d'action (*activity*), de réalisation (*achievement*) et d'état (*stative*). Nous montrons enfin la façon dont les objets internes du degema ont une fonction d'explication ou de mise en emphase de l'action ou de l'état exprimé par les verbes dont ils sont dérivés et avec lesquels ils sont employés.

**Mots clés**

complément d'objet interne, constructions transitives à objet interne, interface phonologie-morphologie-syntaxe-sémantique, transitivité, degema

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**1. Introduction**

Cognate object constructions are common in the languages of the world. The linguistic literature is replete with discussions of these constructions (see Kim & Lim 2012, Ogata s.d., Okonkwo 1977). Cognate object constructions exist in Degema. However, not much discussion exists on these constructions in the language. The presence of cognate object constructions in Degema is noted by Kari (1995, 1997, 2004 and 2008). Kari (2004: 72) remarks that “stative and dynamic verbs take optional (inherent) complement objects or cognate objects” (see also Kari 2008: XLII). In the discussion that follows, we shall consider the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of cognate object constructions in Degema.

## 2. Method of Data Collection

The Degema data in this paper are obtained from existing materials on Degema, especially from Kari (2004, 2008), and from the native speaker intuition of the present author, and tested against the intuition of other native speakers of the language. Data from other languages, as may be appropriate, are obtained from the literature on the subject and duly acknowledged.

## 3. Cognate Object Constructions

Cognate object constructions are constructions in which the object of a verb is phonologically, morphologically and semantically related to the verb. Ogata (s.d.) defines cognate objects as objects “whose verbs, normally intransitive verbs, take their cognate nouns in their object positions”. In this regard, Ogata (1f.) notes that “cognate object constructions are quite low in transitivity as cognate objects are not targets of activities but additional elements to characterize the activities described by the verbs; for this reason, cognate objects can be left out of the COCs” (cognate objects constructions).

The use of the expression ‘...normally intransitive verbs’ in Ogata’s definition of cognate objects deserves some comment. Such expression could be taken as acknowledging the fact that not all verbs that take cognate objects are inherently intransitive. This reasoning is supported by Kim & Lim’s (2012) observation that some verbs can take either a cognate object, which functions as a predicate, or a non-cognate object, which functions as an argument of such verbs. Verbs that exhibit this interesting syntactic behaviour are not inherently intransitive but are more or less pseudo-intransitive. Thus in languages, such as Degema, English and Igbo, that have cognate objects, it is possible to find that some verbs take only cognate objects while some others can take either cognate objects or non-cognate objects.

Cognate object constructions are of interest to linguists for at least two reasons. The first reason is that these objects are related to their corresponding verbs as regards their phonology, morphology and semantics. The second is that they have interesting syntactic and semantic behaviours in contrast with other nominals that may not be cognate with their corresponding verbs.

Kim & Lim (2012) distinguish two types of cognate object constructions, which they call Eventive Cognate Object constructions (EVENTIVE-CO) and Referential Cognate Object constructions (REFERENTIAL-CO). The main difference between these two types of constructions lies in whether their verbs can take only a cognate object or whether the verbs in question can also take a non-cognate object in non-cognate object constructions. They note that verbs in EVENTIVE-CO can select only a

cognate object whereas those in REFERENTIAL-CO can select either a cognate object or a non-cognate object. Furthermore, they observe that, in REFERENTIAL-CO, the non-cognate object is a referential object, functioning as an argument of the verb, whereas the cognate object is a non-referential object, functioning as a predicate. On the basis of the referential property of the object, they note that the EVENTIVE-CO does not license syntactic phenomena like passivization, pronominalization, topicalization and *wh*-questioning because a cognate object in EVENTIVE-CO refers to an event or functions as a predicate. According to them, such phenomena are possible with the REFERENTIAL-CO when the object of such construction refers to an individual<sup>4</sup> or functions as a referential object (Kim & Lim 2012: 2f.).

In languages like English, which have phenomena such as unergativity and unaccusativity (s. Otsuka, to appear), the ability of verbs to appear in cognate object constructions depends on their status in respect of unergativity and unaccusativity. Thus it is noted that only unergative verbs like *sing*, *smile* and *sleep*, which represent volitional acts of the subject referents or involuntary bodily processes of humans, show up in cognate object constructions. Conversely, unaccusative verbs like *break*, *fall* and *melt*,<sup>5</sup> which represent non-volitional events of the subject referents and express changes of state/location of these referents do not co-occur with a cognate object (Kim & Lim 2012: 5).

In Igbo, a Niger-Congo language spoken in eastern Nigeria and in some parts of southern Nigeria, a distinction is made between cognate complements and cognate objects. Both cognate complements and cognate objects are formed from verbs. However, cognate complements and cognate objects seem to behave differently. Okonkwo (1977: 58) notes that a cognate complement helps to complete, amplify or stabilize the meaning of its associated verb. Furthermore, he notes that a cognate noun is sometimes used as the object of a verb that shares the same root as the noun. Okonkwo (1977: 62) refers to cognate nouns that can be used as objects of their verbs as cognate objects. A fundamental difference between cognate complements and cognate objects in Igbo, as Okonkwo notes, is that “whereas one can detach the cognate object and use it as a noun in a non-cognate construction, the complement cannot be used like that. It must go with its cognate verb” (Okonkwo 1977: 62). The following examples (interlinear glossing and literal translation,<sup>6</sup> added) illustrate this fundamental distinction:

4. The term *individual* should be understood not in terms of a human entity but in terms of target of activities described by verbs.

5. Kim & Lim (2012: 5) consider unaccusative verbs, such as *grow*, *drop* and *bounce*, as exceptions.

6. I am grateful to Mrs. N. Umunnakwe, a native speaker of Igbo at the University of Bostwana, for the literal translations of the Igbo sentences in (1).



- (1a) **O gburu egbugbu**  
 3SG<sup>7</sup> cut.PST mark.on.body  
 ‘S/he made a mark (on her/his body)’ (lit. S/he cut mark on body)
- (1b) **O nwere egbugbu**  
 3SG has. PST mark.on.body  
 ‘S/he has a mark (on her/his body)’ (lit. S/he has mark on body)
- (2a) **Ha bjara abja**  
 3PL come.PST coming  
 ‘They came’ (lit. They came coming)
- (2b) **O na-abja abja**  
 3PL PROG-coming coming  
 ‘S/he is coming’ (lit. S/he coming coming)

In (1a), the cognate object **egbugbu** ‘mark on body’ co-occurs with the verb **gburu** ‘cut’. In (1b), the cognate object **egbugbu** has been detached from the verb **gburu** and used in a non-cognate construction where it has no derivational relationship with the verb **nwere** ‘has’. In other words, **egbugbu** is no longer a cognate object in (1b), since it has no morphological affinity with the verb **nwere**. In comparison with (1a) and (1b), the cognate complement **abja** ‘coming’ only has meaning when used with the morphologically related inflected verb forms **bjara** ‘came’ and **na-abja** ‘coming’. It is noted that **abja** is not a noun in the true sense of the word and cannot be used in isolation (Okonkwo 1977: 62).

#### 4. Cognate Object Constructions in Degema

Cognate object constructions are attested in Degema, although not much discussion exists on these constructions in the language (see Introduction). Many verb-noun constructions exist in Degema. However, unlike other verb-noun constructions, the verb-cognate object construction is a unique construction in which the object noun<sup>8</sup> has interesting phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic relationship with the verb. In the discussion of verb-noun constructions in Degema, Kari (2004: 167) notes that cognate objects are among other possibilities of giving emphasis to elements of the clause. In particular, he remarks that “many

7. The following abbreviations are used in this paper: 1PL = first person plural, 1SG = first person singular, 2SG = second person singular, 3PL = third person plural, 3SG = third person singular, FE = factative enclitic, FUT = future, HD = high-downstep high, LH = low-high, LHD = low-high-downstep high, N = noun, O = object, NPM = non-past morpheme, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PEF = prefix, PROG = progressive, PST = past, S = subject, SCL = subject clitic, SG = singular.

8. Degema is a noun class language. Most nouns in the language have a stem and a vowel prefix. The noun prefixes form the basis of the semantic classification of the nouns into genders, each of which generally consists of a pair of prefixes (one for singular, one for plural), e.g. **ε-nám** [PREF.SG-root] ‘animal’ ~ **ɪ-nám** [PREF.PL-root] ‘animals’. Some genders, however, are marked by means of only one prefix and therefore have no morphological marking of number, e.g. **ɪ-ńfɔ́jɔw** [PREF.SG/PL-root] ‘chin(s)’. For a detailed discussion of the noun class system of Degema, see Elugbe (1976), Kari (2003, 2004 and 2008).

verbs in Degema are followed by cognate objects, which serve to emphasize the action or state of the verb” (Kari 2004: 168). In Kari (2008: XLII), cognate objects are referred to as ‘optional verb complements’.

The notion of emphasis associated with cognate objects in Degema, as noted by Kari (2004), is attributable to the fact that the presence of cognate objects provides some clarity or meaning contrast, which indicates that the action or state of the verb is nothing other than or different from what the verb expresses.

Thus some cognate object constructions such as (3) and (4) express respectively the fact that the person in question *ran* and nothing else (3a), and that the person is *tall* (i.e. essentially characterized by his *tallness*) and nothing else (4):

- (3a) **owéej nǎǎ o=síré=n ísí<sup>+</sup>ré.**<sup>9</sup>  
 person this SCL.3SG=run=FE running  
 ‘This person ran’ (lit. This person s/he ran running)
- (3b) **owéej nǎǎ o=síré=<sup>+</sup>én.**  
 person this SCL.3SG=run=FE  
 ‘This person ran’ (lit. This person s/he ran)
- (4) **owéej nǎǎ o=βóβ=n ú<sup>+</sup>βóβ.**  
 person this SCL.3SG=be.tall=FE tallness  
 ‘This person is tall’ (lit. This person s/he tall tallness)

Kari’s (2008) reference to cognate objects as optional verb complements stems from the fact that the grammaticality of the sentence is not affected by the presence or absence of cognate objects. Thus, a non-cognate object construction such as (3b) is as grammatical as its cognate object counterpart (3a). The fact that, at least in some languages, cognate objects are optional elements is noted by Takafumi Ogata who remarks that “cognate objects can be left out of cognate object constructions” (Ogata s.d.: 2).

Furthermore, Kari’s reference to cognate objects as verb complements is to be understood from the concept of the complement being any linguistic unit that is part of the predicate and which provides information about some constituent of the sentence (Emenanjo 2015: 501f). The cognate object in this case is part of the predicate and provides some clarity or contrastive information about the activity or state of the verb as was pointed out earlier in this paper. Such contrastive information could be glossed as “it is X that NP V-ed/-s, not Y or anything else”.

9. Degema has two basic tones, high tone, marked ( ‘ ), and low tone, which is unmarked for the sake of economy. There is also a tonal phenomenon known as downstep, which is the result of a high tone becoming phonetically lower than a preceding high tone. The downstepped tone is the tone that anchors on the syllable after the downward arrow, as represented in this work. Our transcription of Degema data uses International Phonetic Alphabet symbols.

Like Igbo, Degema nouns that serve as cognate objects can be detached from their cognate verbs and used in non-cognate constructions, as examples (5) and (6) show:

- (5a)  $\text{ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ ɔ=jɔ́w=n ɔ́jɔ́w.}$   
 child the SCL.3SG=swim=FE swimming  
 ‘The child swam’ (lit. The child s/he swam swimming)
- (5b)  $\text{ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ ɔ=té=n ɔ́jɔ́w.}$   
 child the SCL.3SG=be.skilled=FE swimming  
 ‘The child is skilled in swimming’ (lit. The child s/he skilled swimming)
- (6a)  $\text{ɔ́mɔ́ náá ɔ=bí=n úbí'á.}$   
 child this SCL.3SG=be.black=FE blackness  
 ‘This child is black’ (lit. This child s/he blacks blackness)
- (6b)  $\text{ɔ́mɔ́ náá ɔ=gén úbíá nɔ́ɔŋ' ɔ=dfijésé='én.}$   
 child this SCL.3SG=look blackness POSS.3SG SCL.3SG=spoil=FE  
 ‘This child despised her/his dark complexion’  
 (lit. This child s/he looked at her/his blackness s/he spoiled)

In examples (5a) and (6a), the nouns  $\text{ɔ́jɔ́w}$  ‘swimming’ and  $\text{úbí'á}$  ‘blackness’ respectively are used as the cognate objects of the verbs  $\text{jɔ́w}$  ‘swim’ and  $\text{bí}$  ‘be black’, whereas in (5b) and (6b)  $\text{ɔ́jɔ́w}$  and  $\text{úbí'á}$  are used with the verbs  $\text{té}$  ‘be skilled’ and  $\text{gén}$  ‘look’ respectively in non-cognate object constructions.

#### 4.1 Distinguishing between Cognate Objects and Reduplicated Verbs

There are cases of verb reduplication in Degema (Kari 2004: 366f). Verb reduplication in the language takes the form of total reduplication. In such cases, the totally reduplicated forms intensify the meaning of the verb root from which they are derived. Note that both reduplicated and simple forms of verbs belong to the same word class – the verbal class. Consider the following examples in (7) taken from Kari (2004: 366):

- (7a)  $\text{gɔ́dɔ́}$  ‘be long’ +  $\text{gɔ́dɔ́}$  ‘be long’ >  $\text{gɔ́dɔ́gɔ́dɔ́}$  ‘be very long’  
 (7b)  $\text{tɛ́β}$  ‘be low’ +  $\text{tɛ́β}$  ‘be low’ >  $\text{tɛ́βtɛ́β}$  ‘be very low’  
 (7c)  $\text{pɪ́jɔ́kɔ́}$  ‘be pointed’ +  $\text{pɪ́jɔ́kɔ́}$  ‘be pointed’ >  $\text{pɪ́jɔ́kɔ́pɪ́jɔ́kɔ́}$  ‘be very pointed’

In (7a-c), the forms  $\text{gɔ́dɔ́gɔ́dɔ́}$  ‘be very long’,  $\text{tɛ́βtɛ́β}$  ‘be very low’ and  $\text{pɪ́jɔ́kɔ́pɪ́jɔ́kɔ́}$  ‘be very pointed’ are totally reduplicated forms of  $\text{gɔ́dɔ́}$  ‘be long’,  $\text{tɛ́β}$  ‘be low’ and  $\text{pɪ́jɔ́kɔ́}$  ‘be pointed’ respectively. The tone pattern of reduplicated verbs is consistent with the general underlying low-high tone pattern associated with the isolation forms of verb roots in Degema (s. Kari 2003: 218ff).

Cognate objects in Degema are phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and semantically different from reduplicated verbs. A significant phonological difference between cognate objects and reduplicated verbs is in respect of their tone patterns. Whereas reduplicated verbs have a general low-high tone pattern, as shown in (7), cognate objects have tone patterns that are, in most cases, different from that of the verbs from

which they are derived, e.g. compare **kpɛtɛ** LH ‘curse’ (verb) with **ɛkpɛ<sup>+</sup>tɛ** LHD ‘curse’ (cognate noun).

In terms of morphology, cognate objects always begin with a vowel prefix, e.g. **ú-<sup>+</sup>dijér** ‘badness’ (< **dijér** ‘be bad’), like most nouns in the language, such as **e-sén** ‘fish’ and **ú-<sup>+</sup>βáj** ‘house’, or are marked by circumfixation, as in **i-dúmá<sup>+</sup>n-á** ‘dozing’ (< **dumón** ‘doze’). Unlike cognate objects, reduplicated verbs always begin with a consonant (7), like all verbs in the language, e.g. **kír** ‘return’ and **siré** ‘run’. Thus, the presence or absence of a vowel prefix also differentiates cognate objects from reduplicated verbs in Degema.

Syntactically, cognate objects function as nominals, as shown in (8) where no verbal marking is associated with **ú-<sup>+</sup>βóβ** ‘tallness’ (cognate noun derived from **βóβ** ‘be tall’), whereas reduplicated verbs, such as **pɔ̀jəkɔ̀pɔ̀jəkɔ̀** ‘be very pointed’ (< **pɔ̀jəkɔ̀** ‘be pointed’), can just be used as simple verbs, as shown in (9):

(8) **o=βóβ=n**                      **ú<sup>+</sup>βóβ.**  
 SCL.3SG=be.tall=FE tallness  
 ‘He is tall’ (lit. He is tall tallness)

(9) **ɔ̀=pɔ̀jəkɔ̀pɔ̀jəkɔ̀=<sup>+</sup>ɔ̀n.**  
 SCL.3SG=be.very.pointed=FE  
 ‘It is very pointed’.

Also from a syntactic point of view, another notable difference between cognate objects and reduplicated verbs in Degema is that unlike cognate objects, reduplicated verbs cannot serve as objects of their respective verbs, as the starred forms in (11) show:

(10a) **réré** ‘walk’ + **ó<sup>+</sup>réré** ‘walk’ > **rere ó<sup>+</sup>réré** ‘walk (v.) walk (n.)’

(10b) **jɔ̀w** ‘swim’ + **ɔ̀jɔ̀w** ‘swimming’ > **jɔ̀w ɔ̀jɔ̀w** ‘swim swimming’

(11a) **gɔ̀dɔ̀** ‘be long’ + **gɔ̀dɔ̀gɔ̀dɔ̀** ‘be very long’ > \***gɔ̀dɔ̀ gɔ̀dɔ̀gɔ̀dɔ̀**

(11b) **tɛ̀β** ‘be low’ + **tɛ̀βtɛ̀β** ‘be very low’ > \***tɛ̀β tɛ̀βtɛ̀β**

(11c) **pɔ̀jəkɔ̀** ‘be pointed’ + **pɔ̀jəkɔ̀pɔ̀jəkɔ̀** ‘be very pointed’  
 > \***pɔ̀jəkɔ̀ pɔ̀jəkɔ̀pɔ̀jəkɔ̀**

In terms of meaning, cognate objects and their corresponding verbs are related in meaning because cognate objects are derived from their corresponding verbs. Similarly, reduplicated verbs and their simple counterparts are related in meaning because the simple verbs are the source from which their reduplicated counterparts are derived. However, whereas both reduplicated verbs and their simple counterparts have a verbal meaning, cognate objects have a nominal meaning in contradistinction to their corresponding verbs, which have a purely verbal meaning. Compare (12a) and (12b):

(12a) Verb    Cognate Object (Noun)  
**kpɛkpɛ́n** ‘pray’                                      **i-kpɛkpɛ́<sup>+</sup>n-á** ‘prayer’

- (12b) Verb **ɔ́dɔ́** ‘be long’ > Reduplicated verb **ɔ́dɔ́ɔ́dɔ́** ‘be very long’

Example (12a) shows that although the verb **kpekpén** and its cognate noun **ɪ-kpékpé<sup>+</sup>n-á** are related in meaning in the sense that they both have something to do with *pray*, **kpekpén** ‘pray’ has a purely verbal meaning (i.e. ‘to offer devout petition, praise, thanks etc. to God or an object of worship’) whereas **ɪ-kpékpé<sup>+</sup>n-á** ‘prayer’ has a nominal meaning (i.e. ‘(the act of making) a reverent petition to God or another object of worship’).

In (12b), however, both the verb **ɔ́dɔ́** ‘be long’ and its reduplicant **ɔ́dɔ́ɔ́dɔ́** ‘be very long’ have a verbal meaning despite the fact that the verbal meaning is intensified in **ɔ́dɔ́ɔ́dɔ́** ‘be very long’ but not in **ɔ́dɔ́** ‘be long’.

Given the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic differences between cognate objects and reduplicated verbs highlighted in the preceding discussion, it is safe to conclude that cognate objects in Degema are not cases of reduplicated verbs, even though there appears to be some element of repetition of the verb stem in cognate objects by virtue of the fact that these nominals are derived from verbs.

#### 4.2 The Morphology of Cognate Objects

Cognate objects in Degema are derived from verbs by affixation. The claim that these nominal objects are derived from verbs is supported by the fact that other deverbal nouns in the language, such as gerunds (Elugbe 1984, Kari 2004) and agent nouns (Kari 2004) are also derived from verbs through the same morphological process. As Elugbe (1984: 77) notes “the gerund in Degema is derived by affixing a discontinuous morpheme to the verb stem”. Elugbe (1984) does not only provide an excellent discussion of the morphology of the gerund in Degema, he also shows that “the Degema gerund has cognates all over Edoid [a linguistic subgroup to which Degema belongs]” (*ibid.*: 88, brackets added).

The relationship that exists between nouns and verbs in Degema as far as affixal derivation is concerned is unidirectional, as the verb appears to be the only source from which other categories, including verbs, may be derived. In this regard, Kari (2004:355) remarks that “verbs in Degema are not derived from nouns, from ‘adjectives’, from adverbs or from any other category”. The fact that cognate objects in Degema are morphologically derived from verbs explains the structural relationship that holds between these nominal objects and their corresponding verbs. In fact, from a typological point of view, the morphological relationship between cognate objects and their corresponding verbs is well noted in the literature (see Kim & Lim 2012, Ogata s.d., Okonkwo 1977).

The process of deriving cognate objects in Degema separates them into morphologically regular and morphologically irregular cognate

objects (s. Kari 2008: xxixff). Morphologically regular cognate objects are derived from stative and non-stative verbs mainly through circumfixation<sup>10</sup> while a few others that are morphologically irregular are derived from non-stative verbs through prefixation.

#### 4.2.1 Regular Cognate Objects

##### 4.2.1.1 Tonal morphology

All regular cognate objects are characterized by the same tonal melody, namely L(H)<sub>n</sub>D, where *n* is the number of syllables of the verb root and *n* ≥ 1.

##### 4.2.1.2 Segmental Morphology

###### 4.2.1.2.1 Cognate Objects Derived from Stative Verbs<sup>11</sup>

The shape of the circumfix used in deriving cognate objects from stative verbs is U-...-A, where U is realized as u-/ʊ- and A as -ə/-a, depending on the ATR value<sup>12</sup> of the vowels in the verb stem (13):

| (13) Verb  |              | Cognate Object  |
|------------|--------------|---|
| <b>bí</b>  | 'be black'   | <b>u-bí-<sup>+</sup>ś</b> 'blackness'                   |
| <b>tú</b>  | 'be hot'     | <b>ʊ-tú-<sup>+</sup>á</b> 'hotness (sensation on skin)' |
| <b>fś</b>  | 'be whitish' | <b>u-fś-<sup>+</sup>ś</b> 'whiteness'                   |
| <b>kój</b> | 'be heavy'   | <b>ʊ-kój-<sup>+</sup>j-á</b> 'heaviness'                |
| <b>kár</b> | 'be strong'  | <b>ʊ-ká-<sup>+</sup>r-á</b> 'strength'                  |
| <b>βóβ</b> | 'be tall'    | <b>u-βó-<sup>+</sup>β-ś</b> 'tallness'                  |

###### 4.2.1.2.2 Cognate Objects Derived from Non-Stative Verbs

Similarly, the shape of the circumfix used in deriving cognate objects from non-stative verbs is I-...-(A), where I is realized as i-/ɪ- and A as -ə/-a for the sake of vowel harmony.

The form I-...-A is used where the verb stem ends with a consonant or with any of the high vowels **u**, **ʊ**, **i** or **ɪ** (14):

10. Circumfixation is a very productive process of nominal derivation in Degema. Different types of nouns are derived from verbs through this morphological process (see Elugbe 1984, Kari 1997, 2004, 2008 and 2015).

11. A distinction is made in Degema between stative verbs, such as **kár** 'be strong' and non-stative verbs, such as **sɪ** 'jump'. The verb **kár** 'be strong', for instance, is classified as stative because it expresses a state (of being) rather than an activity whereas the verb **sɪ** 'jump', for instance, expresses an activity rather than a state (of being). For more details about the semantic classification of Degema verbs, see also § 4.4.

12. Degema is an advanced tongue root (ATR) vowel harmony language. There are a total of ten phonemic vowels. The vowels separate into two neat sets of five each. One set of vowels /a, e, i, o, u/ has +ATR value while the other set /a, ɛ, ɪ, ɔ, ʊ/ has -ATR value. Vowels of the two sets cannot co-occur in one and the same word, except in compound words or in recently borrowed items (Williamson 1984: 23).

| (14) | Verb    |                | Cognate Object            |                  |
|------|---------|----------------|---------------------------|------------------|
|      | sɔl     | 'jump'         | r-sɔ <sup>+</sup> l-á     | 'jump (n.)'      |
|      | dɛɲ     | 'fall'         | i-dɛ <sup>+</sup> ɲ-ɔ     | 'falling'        |
|      | kotú    | 'call'         | i-kótú- <sup>+</sup> ɔ    | 'calling'        |
|      | ɖíkílí  | 'tickle'       | r-ɖíkílí- <sup>+</sup> á  | 'tickling'       |
|      | kasáɲ   | 'cough'        | r-kásá <sup>+</sup> ɲ-á   | 'coughing'       |
|      | ɖísáɲ   | 'sneeze'       | r-ɖísá <sup>+</sup> ɲ-á   | 'sneezing'       |
|      | tokóɟ   | 'vomit'        | i-tókó <sup>+</sup> ɟ-ɔ   | 'vomiting'       |
|      | papáɲ   | 'clap'         | r-pápá <sup>+</sup> ɲ-á   | 'clapping'       |
|      | kubáɲ   | 'belch'        | i-kúbá <sup>+</sup> ɲ-ɔ   | 'belching'       |
|      | βəhəɲ   | 'lose balance' | i-βəhə <sup>+</sup> ɲ-ɔ   | 'losing balance' |
|      | kpekpen | 'pray'         | r-kpekpe <sup>+</sup> n-á | 'prayer'         |

The form I-... is used with a monosyllabic verb stem that ends with a non-high vowel. Consequently, the non-high vowel is repeated and downstepped to achieve the tone pattern that is characteristic of all morphologically regular cognate objects (15):

| (15) | Verb |              | Cognate Object       |            |
|------|------|--------------|----------------------|------------|
|      | lɔ   | 'shout'      | r-lɔ- <sup>+</sup> ɔ | 'shouting' |
|      | lɛ   | 'move about' | r-lɛ- <sup>+</sup> ɛ | 'movement' |

Where a verb stem has more than one syllable and ends with a non-high vowel, the non-high vowel is not repeated because the stem already has the relevant phonological structure to accommodate the downstep on the final syllable (16):<sup>13</sup>

| (16) | Verb |        | Cognate Object       |           |
|------|------|--------|----------------------|-----------|
|      | siré | 'run'  | i-sí <sup>+</sup> rɛ | 'running' |
|      | mará | 'yawn' | r-má <sup>+</sup> rá | 'yawning' |

#### 4.2.2 Irregular Cognate Objects

##### 4.2.2.1 Irregular Cognate Objects Derived from Stative Verbs

Some monosyllabic stative verbs with a CVC structure can also take optional irregular cognate objects with no suffix and a HD associated melody (17):

| (17) | Verb |             | Cognate Object     |             |
|------|------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
|      | kɔɟ  | 'be heavy'  | ɔ <sup>+</sup> kɔɟ | 'heaviness' |
|      | kár  | 'be strong' | ɔ <sup>+</sup> kár | 'strength'  |
|      | βóβ  | 'be tall'   | ú <sup>+</sup> βóβ | 'tallness'  |

13. This is contrary to previous analysis which claims that when the verb stem is monosyllabic and ends with a non-high vowel, the underspecified vowel in the second part of the I-...-(A) circumfix completely assimilates all the segmental features of such a vowel (s. Kari 2004, 2008).

Such forms can be used interchangeably with their regular counterparts described in (13).

#### 4.2.2.2 Irregular Cognate Objects Derived from Non-Stative Verbs

The few morphologically irregular cognate objects derived from non-stative verbs by prefixation are irregular to the extent that the prefixes used in their derivation have different morphophonemic forms: **A-**, **E-**, **I-**, **O-**, **U-**. These morphophonemes are realized as **ə-/a-**, **e-/ε-**, **i-/ɪ-**, **o-/ɔ-** and **u-/ʊ-** respectively for reasons of vowel harmony. In most cases, these cognate objects have varying tone patterns. The data in example (18) illustrate this point:

| (18) | Verb          |              | Cognate Object            |                |
|------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------|
|      | <b>reré</b>   | ‘walk’       | <b>ó<sup>+</sup>réré</b>  | ‘walk’         |
|      | <b>ɓijé</b>   | ‘give birth’ | <b>ú<sup>+</sup>ɓijé</b>  | ‘giving birth’ |
|      | <b>kpeté</b>  | ‘curse’      | <b>εkpé<sup>+</sup>té</b> | ‘curse’        |
|      | <b>jɔw</b>    | ‘swim’       | <b>ɔjɔw</b>               | ‘swimming’     |
|      | <b>βéβ</b>    | ‘fly’        | <b>ɔβéβ</b>               | ‘flying’       |
|      | <b>gbéj</b>   | ‘laugh’      | <b>agbéj</b>              | ‘laughter’     |
|      | <b>wú</b>     | ‘die’        | <b>uwú</b>                | ‘death’        |
|      | <b>mené</b>   | ‘do’         | <b>umené</b>              | ‘work’         |
|      | <b>mesiné</b> | ‘dream’      | <b>imesiné</b>            | ‘dream’        |

In respect of the tone patterns and structure of the cognate objects in (18), Kari (2004: 352) remarks that “the prefixes and tones of these irregular nouns are not predictable. These appear to be old formations which are no longer productive in the language” (see Anagbogu 1990 for a similar discussion on Igbo). Similarly, Kari (2016: 85) says that “there are no phonological and/or morphological reasons that can be adduced to account for the tonal or structural behaviour of deverbal nouns derived by prefixation”.

### 4.3 The Syntax of Cognate Object Constructions

In this sub-section, we shall discuss the syntax of cognate object constructions in Degema. The syntactic features of cognate object constructions that we shall look at are transitivity and the possibility of cognate object constructions licensing syntactic phenomena such as pronominalization, topicalization and wh-questioning.

#### 4.3.1 Cognate Object Constructions and the Notion of Transitivity

There are different parameters according to which verbs can be classified. One of the dichotomies that can be made is the traditional distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. Transitive verbs, such as English *hit*, *wash* and *give*, require the presence of one or more objects, noun phrases or arguments. Conversely, intransitive verbs are those, such



as *laugh* and *cry*, that do not require the presence of any object, noun phrase or argument (s. Ndimele 1999: 100; Carnie 2007: 51). Although intransitive verbs do not usually require an object, noun phrase or argument, some intransitive verbs, e.g. *smile* and *sleep* in English and *rọ* ‘dream’ and *bja* ‘come’ in Igbo, may accept a specific kind of object, often called a ‘cognate object’ (Ndimele 1999: 100).

The notion of transitivity is relevant in the discussion and classification of Degema verbs. To this end, some verbs (transitive verbs) require that the action they express be passed onto an entity, which is often referred to as the object, patient or internal argument. Other verbs (intransitive verbs) do not require any object to follow them or at best are followed by a cognate object. Example (19) illustrates the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs in Degema:

(19a) ǝmɔ́sɪ jɔ ɔ=kún                    ʰésén.  
man     the    SCL.3SG=catch.FE    fish  
‘The man caught a fish’ (lit. The man he caught fish)

(19b) ǝmɔ́sɪ jɔ ɔ=βóʰóβ.  
man     the    SCL.3SG=be.tall.FE  
‘The man is tall’ (lit. The man he tallied)

(19c) ǝmɔ́sɪ jɔ ɔ=βóβ=n                    úʰβóβ.  
man     the    SCL.3SG=be.tall=FE    tallness  
‘The man is tall’ (lit. The man he tallied tallness)

Example (19a) shows that the verb *kún* ‘catch’ is a transitive verb, since it requires being followed by an entity – the object *esén* ‘fish’, which receives or suffers the action expressed by the verb. Example (19b) is an intransitive sentence, which ends with the verb *βóβ* ‘be tall’ with no object following it. Example (19c) is a cognate object construction. The verb *βóβ* ‘be tall’ is followed by an object, which is not an object in the sense of *esén* in (19a). The object *úʰβóβ* ‘tallness’ in (19c) is a cognate object.

#### 4.3.2 Types of Cognate Object Constructions in Degema

In this paper, following Kim & Lim (2012), we distinguish two types of cognate object constructions in Degema, the *EVENTIVE-CO* and *REFERENTIAL-CO*. These two types of constructions are distinguished in respect of the possibility of selecting an object other than a cognate object in object constructions. The *EVENTIVE-CO* in Degema is characterized by the fact that its verbs select only one type of object, the cognate object. Unlike the *EVENTIVE-CO*, the *REFERENTIAL-CO* in Degema is characterized by the fact that its verbs can select either a cognate object or a non-cognate object. Whereas the cognate object functions as a predicate, referring to the action or state expressed by the verb, the non-cognate object functions as an argument of the verb. Some Degema verbs that license only cognate objects are given in (20):

|      |               |                |                            |                          |                  |
|------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| (20) | <b>βόβ</b>    | 'be tall'      | <b>ú<sup>+</sup>βόβ</b>    | <b>υβό<sup>+</sup>βό</b> | 'tallness'       |
|      | <b>kɔj</b>    | 'be heavy'     | <b>ú<sup>+</sup>kɔj</b>    | <b>υkɔ<sup>+</sup>já</b> | 'heaviness'      |
|      | <b>kár</b>    | 'be strong'    | <b>ú<sup>+</sup>kár</b>    | <b>υká<sup>+</sup>rá</b> | 'strength'       |
|      | <b>lé</b>     | 'move about'   | <b>ιλέ<sup>+</sup>έ</b>    |                          | 'movement'       |
|      | <b>mará</b>   | 'yawn'         | <b>ιμά<sup>+</sup>rá</b>   |                          | 'yawning'        |
|      | <b>kasáɲ</b>  | 'cough'        | <b>ικásá<sup>+</sup>ɲá</b> |                          | 'coughing'       |
|      | <b>ɖísáɲ</b>  | 'sneeze'       | <b>ιɖísá<sup>+</sup>ɲá</b> |                          | 'sneezing'       |
|      | <b>kubóɲ</b>  | 'belch'        | <b>ικúβó<sup>+</sup>ɲó</b> |                          | 'belching'       |
|      | <b>βəháɲ</b>  | 'lose balance' | <b>ιβəhó<sup>+</sup>ɲó</b> |                          | 'losing balance' |
|      | <b>βέβ</b>    | 'fly'          | <b>ɔβέβ</b>                |                          | 'flying'         |
|      | <b>mesimé</b> | 'dream'        | <b>imesimé</b>             |                          | 'dream (n.)'     |

Let us consider examples (21) and (22), which illustrate the fact that the verbs listed in (20) take only cognate objects:

- (21a) **ɔmɔmɔsí** **jɔ** **o=βóβ=n** **ú<sup>+</sup>βόβ.**  
 man the SCL.3SG=be.tall=FE tallness  
 'The man is tall' (lit. The man he talled tallness)
- (21b) **ɔmɔmɔsí** **jɔ** **o=βóβ=n** **úβó<sup>+</sup>βó.**  
 man the SCL.3SG=be.tall=FE tallness  
 'The man is tall' (lit. The man he talled tallness)
- (21c) \***ɔmɔmɔsí** **jɔ** **o=βóβ=n** **ɔjɪ.**  
 man the SCL.3SG=be.tall=FE O.3SG  
 \*(lit. 'The man he talled him')
- (22a) **ɔmɔmɔsí** **jɔ** **ɔ=mará=n** **ímá<sup>+</sup>rá.**  
 man the SCL.3SG=yawn=FE yawning  
 'The man yawned' (lit. The man he yawned yawning)
- (22b) \***ɔmɔmɔsí** **jɔ** **ɔ=mará=n** **éni.**  
 man the SCL.3Sg=yawn=FE O.1PL  
 \*(lit. 'The man he yawned us')

Examples (21) and (22) show that the verbs **βόβ** 'be tall' and **mará** 'yawn' can only take **ú<sup>+</sup>βόβ/úβó<sup>+</sup>βó** 'tallness' and **ímá<sup>+</sup>rá** 'yawning' respectively as their cognate objects. Constructions with non-cognate objects collocating with the verbs **βόβ** 'be tall' and **mará** 'yawn', are ungrammatical, as seen in (21c) and (22b).

In (23), we provide a list of some of the verbs that can license either cognate objects or other typical objects, i.e. non-cognate objects:

|      |                |         |                              |              |                                  |
|------|----------------|---------|------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| (23) |                |         | Cognate Object               |              | Non-cognate Object               |
|      | <b>sɔl</b>     | 'jump'  | <b>ισó<sup>+</sup>lá</b>     | 'jump (n.)'  | <b>okpé</b> 'fence'              |
|      | <b>lɔ</b>      | 'shout' | <b>ιlɔ<sup>+</sup>ɔ</b>      | 'shout (n.)' | <b>iní</b> 'name'                |
|      | <b>tokóɲ</b>   | 'vomit' | <b>itókó<sup>+</sup>já</b>   | 'vomiting'   | <b>ɪɖí<sup>+</sup>jɔm</b> 'food' |
|      | <b>papáɲ</b>   | 'clap'  | <b>ɪpápá<sup>+</sup>ɲá</b>   | 'clapping'   | <b>aβɔ</b> 'hands'               |
|      | <b>kpekpén</b> | 'pray'  | <b>ɪkpekpé<sup>+</sup>ná</b> | 'prayer'     | <b>ɔmɔmɔsɪ</b> 'man'             |

|              |         |                           |            |                          |          |
|--------------|---------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------|----------|
| <b>kpɛtɛ</b> | ‘curse’ | <b>ɛkpɛ<sup>+</sup>tɛ</b> | ‘curse’    | <b>owɛ<sup>+</sup>ɛj</b> | ‘person’ |
| <b>jɔw</b>   | ‘swim’  | <b>ɔjɔw</b>               | ‘swimming’ | <b>i<sup>+</sup>dɔ</b>   | ‘rivers’ |
| <b>menɛ</b>  | ‘do’    | <b>umenɛ</b>              | ‘work’     | <b>agadá</b>             | ‘chair’  |
| <b>gbɛj</b>  | ‘laugh’ | <b>agbɛj</b>              | ‘laughter’ | <b>ɔji</b>               | ‘him’    |

Let us consider examples (24), (25) and (26), which illustrate the fact that the verbs listed in (23) can take either cognate objects or non-cognate objects:

- (24a) **ɔmɔ jɔ ɔ=sɔl=n ísɔ<sup>+</sup>lá.**  
 child the SCL.3SG=jump=FE jump (n.)  
 ‘The child jumped’ (lit. The child s/he jumped jumping)
- (24b) **ɔmɔ jɔ ɔ=sɔl=n ókpe jɔ.**  
 child the SCL.3SG=jump=FE fence the  
 ‘The child jumped over the fence’ (lit. the child s/he jumped the fence)
- (25a) **ɔmɔ jɔ ɔ=tókój=n ítókó<sup>+</sup>jɔ.**  
 child the SCL.3SG=vomit=FE vomiting  
 ‘The child vomited’ (lit. The child s/he vomited vomiting)
- (25b) **ɔmɔ jɔ ɔ=tókój=n ídijóm jɔ.**  
 child the SCL.3SG=vomit=FE food the  
 ‘The child vomited the food’ (lit. The child s/he vomited the food)
- (26a) **ɔmɔmɔsɪ jɔ ɔ=gbɛj=n <sup>+</sup>ágbɛj.**  
 man the SCL.3SG=laugh=FE laughter  
 ‘The man laughed’ (lit. The man he laughed laughter)
- (26b) **ɔmɔmɔsɪ jɔ ɔ=gbɛj=n ɔmɔ jɔ.**  
 man the SCL.3SG=laugh=FE child the  
 ‘The man laughed at the child’ (lit. The man he laughed the child)

Examples (24), (25) and (26) show that the verbs *sɔl* ‘jump’, *tokój* ‘vomit’, and *gbɛj* ‘laugh’, for instance, can take (i) either their respective cognate objects *ísɔ<sup>+</sup>lá* ‘jump (n.)’, *ítókó<sup>+</sup>jɔ* ‘vomiting’ and *agbɛj* ‘laughter’ (ii) or other typical objects, such as *ókpe* ‘fence’, *ídí<sup>+</sup>jóm* ‘food’ and *ɔ<sup>+</sup>mɔ* ‘child’, that are not cognate objects.

Note that the Degema verbs *sɔl* ‘jump’ and *gbɛj* ‘laugh’ and their English counterparts *jump* and *laugh* differ in respect of transitivity: the Degema verbs are transitive, as seen in (24) and (26), whereas their English counterparts are intransitive.<sup>14</sup> The English translations of the grammatical Degema verb + non-cognate object sequences *sɔl ókpe* ‘jump fence’ and *gbɛj ɔ<sup>+</sup>mɔ* ‘laugh child’ would be *jump over a/the fence* and *laugh at a/the child*, not *\*jump fence* and *\*laugh child* respectively. The implication of this obvious syntactic difference between Degema and English is that the notion of transitivity cannot be applied uniformly across languages (see Emenanjo 2015: 477). In other words, there is no

14. This is similar to the situation described by Emenanjo (2015:501).

universal one-to-one correspondence in the syntactic subcategorization of verbs as far as transitivity is concerned.

#### 4.3.3 Cognate Object Constructions and Licensing of Syntactic Processes

Kim & Lim (2012) note that the referential property of an object determines whether or not such object can license syntactic processes like passivization,<sup>15</sup> pronominalization, topicalization and wh-questioning. In this regard, they also note that such processes are possible with the REFERENTIAL-CO because the object of the REFERENTIAL-CO refers to an individual rather than the action or state expressed by the verb. According to them, these syntactic phenomena are not possible with the EVENTIVE-CO because the object of the EVENTIVE-CO refers to an event or functions as a predicate (Kim & Lim 2012: 2ff).

In this sub-section, we shall look at Degema cognate object constructions to establish their behaviour in respect of the licensing of the syntactic processes of pronominalization, topicalization and wh-questioning considered by Kim & Lim (2012: 3f). Let us first consider the object of the EVENTIVE-CO and that of the REFERENTIAL-CO in the light of pronominalization (27):

- (27a) EVENTIVE-CO (Pronominalization)  
 \*eni    ε=mésíné=n    ímesimε;    ohoso    káa  
 S.3SG    SCL.3SG=dream=FE    dream    ohoso    also  
 ɔ=mésíné=n    ʒji.  
 SCL.3SG=dream=FE    O.3SG  
 \*(lit. 'We we dreamt a dream [and] Ohoso also he dreamt it')
- (27b) REFERENTIAL-CO (Pronominalization)  
 \*eni    e=méné=n    úmene    ʒku    nú    éweɟ  
 we    SCL.1PL=do=FE    work    way    that    people  
 mε=mɔn    ʒji.  
 SCL.3PL=see.FE    it  
 \*(lit. 'We we did the work [in a] way that people they could see it')

Example (27) shows that pronominalization of a cognate object in Degema is not possible in both the EVENTIVE-CO and REFERENTIAL-CO. This contrasts with English where pronominalization of the cognate object of the EVENTIVE-CO is not possible but that of the REFERENTIAL-CO is possible (see *\*Fred smiled a silly smile and Sandy smiled it too* and *Today, we have the freedom to sing our song. And it will be definitely heard by others*, taken from Kim & Lim 2012: 4).

Next, let us consider the object of the EVENTIVE-CO and that of the REFERENTIAL-CO in the light of questioning (28):

15. In the present study, we will not take passivization into account, as this syntactic process is not attested in Degema (Kari 2004: 267).

- (28a) EVENTIVE-CO (Questioning)  
 ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ o=βóβ=n ú'βóβ.  
 child the SCL.3SG=be.tall=FE tallness  
 'The child is tall (tallness)' (lit. The child s/he talled tallness)
- (28b) úβoβ βó nɔ́ ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ o=βóoβ?  
 tallness what that child the SCL.3SG=be.tall.FE  
 'What (kind of) tallness is the child tall?'  
 (lit. What tallness that the child s/he talled?)
- (28c) REFERENTIAL-CO (Questioning)  
 ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ ɔ=sɔ́l=n ísɔ́'lá.  
 child the SCL.3SG=jump=FE jump (n.)  
 'The child jumped (a jump)' (lit. The child s/he jumped jump (n.))
- (28d) ísɔ́lá βó nɔ́ ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ ɔ=sɔ́l?  
 jump what that child the SCL.3SG=jump.FE  
 'What (kind of) jump did the child jump?'  
 (lit. What jumping that the child s/he jumped)

Example (28) shows that questioning of a cognate object in Degema is possible in both EVENTIVE-CO (28b) and REFERENTIAL-CO (28d), unlike English where questioning of a cognate object is not possible in EVENTIVE-CO but possible in REFERENTIAL-CO (cf. *\*What did Fred smile?* and *What song would you like to sing?*, taken from Kim & Lim 2012: 4). An interesting observation that this paper makes in respect of questioning of cognate objects in Degema is that there are different grammaticality results between the EVENTIVE-CO (28b and 29) and the REFERENTIAL-CO (28d and 30a) when cognate objects are replaced with question words. The reason for this asymmetry is that the EVENTIVE-CO in (29) allows only cognate objects to be used to initiate the question (28b) because the verb in an EVENTIVE-CO takes only cognate objects. By contrast, the REFERENTIAL-CO in (30a) allows a non-cognate object to be used to initiate the question because its verb can take either a cognate object or a non-cognate object (28d). Thus (30a) will elicit an answer that requires the mentioning of a cognate object or a non-cognate object, as shown in (30b) and (30c):

- (29) \*ímó nɔ́ ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ o=βóoβ?  
 what that child the SCL.3SG=be.tall.FE  
 \*(lit. What that the child s/he talled?)
- (30a) ímó nɔ́ ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ ɔ=sɔ́l?  
 what that child the SCL.3SG=jump.FE  
 'What did the child jump?' (lit. What that the child s/he jumped?)
- (30b) ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ ɔ=sɔ́l=n ísɔ́'lá.  
 child the SCL.3SG=jump=FE jumping  
 'The child jumped (a jump)' (lit. The child s/he jumped jumping)
- (30c) ɔ́mɔ́ jɔ́ ɔ=sɔ́l=n ókpe.  
 child the SCL.3SG=jump=FE fence  
 'The child jumped over a fence' (lit. The child s/he jumped fence)

Let us now consider the object of the EVENTIVE-CO and that of the REFERENTIAL-CO in the light of topicalization (31):

- (31a) EVENTIVE-CO (Topicalization)  
**mára náa, mɪ=mára=ʰán.**  
 yawn this SCL.1SG=yawn=FE  
 ‘As for this yawn, I yawned’ (lit. This yawn, I yawned)
- (31b) REFERENTIAL-CO (Topicalization)  
**ɪsɔ́lá jɔ, eni mɛ=sɔ́l á.**  
 jump the S.1PL SCL.1PL=jump NPM  
 ‘As for the jump, we will jump’ (lit. This jump, we we will jump)

Example (31) also shows that topicalization of a cognate object in Degema is possible in both the EVENTIVE-CO (31a) and REFERENTIAL-CO (31b). This is not like English where it is claimed that topicalization of the object of the EVENTIVE-CO is not possible while it is possible with that of the REFERENTIAL-CO (see *\*A silly smile, Fred smiled* and *...But that first song, we would sing it at each other’s shows*, taken from Kim & Lim 2012: 4).

The behaviour of the two types of cognate objects constructions in Degema is not limited to the syntactic processes discussed thus far. However, to have some kind of parallel discussion between Degema and English, we have hitherto restricted the discussion in this section to these syntactic phenomena in the light of which Kim & Lim (2012) considered their English data.

We can also consider the behaviour of the two types of Degema cognate object constructions in respect of negation, which involves focalization. Like topicalization and wh-questioning, negation involves giving prominence or emphasis to some constituent of the clause. Let us look at example (32):

- (32a) EVENTIVE-CO (Focalization)  
**mɪ=kár=n ɔ́ʰkár.**  
 SCL.1SG=be.strong=FE strength  
 ‘I carried out a manly action’ (lit. I stronged strength)
- (32b) **kú ɔ́kar<sup>16</sup> nú mɪ=káʰár.**  
 not strength that SCL.1SG=be.strong.FE  
 ‘I did not carry out a manly action’ (lit. Not strength that I stronged)
- (32c) REFERENTIAL-CO (Focalization)  
**mɪ=pápá=n ípápáʰná.**  
 SCL.1SG=clap=FE hands  
 ‘I clapped’ (lit. I clapped clapping)

16. In (32b) and (32d), the cognate objects are associated with low tone melodies (LL and LLL respectively) which are at variance with the characteristic cognate objects L(H)nD melody presented above (see § 4.2.1.1). These low tone melodies are due to specific tonal rules governing the interaction of cognate objects with the negative marker *kú*.

- (32d) **kú ipapana nó mi=pápá'áŋ.**  
 not clapping that SCL.1SG=clapped.FE  
 'I did not clap' (lit. Not clapping that I clapped)

Example (32) shows that focalization of the cognate object in Degema is possible in both the EVENTIVE-CO (32b) and REFERENTIAL-CO (32d).

#### 4.4 The Semantics of Cognate Object Constructions

Cognate objects and their corresponding verbs share some semantic similarity, given that cognate objects are nominals derived from verbs. In this section, we shall discuss the semantics of cognate objects in Degema in the light of certain verb characterizations as we shall consider shortly.

Different semantic distinctions can be made among verbs depending on whether the verbs are suggestive of processes, states, dispositions, occurrences, tasks, achievements, etc. Vendler (1957: 144ff) classifies English verbs into four categories, which he calls activities, accomplishments, achievements and states. According to him, activity verbs are those verbs that denote "processes going on in time; they consist of successive phases following one another in time" (Vendler 1957: 144). Such verbs include *running, walking, swimming, pushing, pulling*, etc. Accomplishment verbs are those denoting processes that have a set terminal point or climax. This category of verbs include *painting a picture, making a chair* and *building a house*. The third category of verbs is what he calls achievement verbs. These verbs are distinguished by the fact that they denote only a single moment. Achievement verbs include *recognizing, seeing, dying* and *being born*. Vendler refers to the fourth category of verbs as states. State verbs denote a longer duration of time, and include such verbs as *having, possessing, loving, hating, wanting something* and *knowing*.

What appears to be common between the first two categories of English verbs, i.e. activity and accomplishment, is that they can be used in progressive or continuous tenses while the last two, i.e. achievement and state, are related by the fact that they cannot be used in progressive or continuous tenses.

Sailer (2010:196) distinguishes two semantic readings that are associated with English cognate object constructions. He notes that in English, objects in cognate object constructions may have an event reading or an affected object reading. In all, he distinguishes a total of four semantically distinct cognate object constructions arguing that both an event reading and an affected object reading are attested in cognate object constructions. Furthermore, he distinguishes between a particular event reading (*Alex lived a happy life*) and a generic event reading (*Cameron slept the sleep of the just*), and between a concrete affected object (*Bailey sighed a sigh that said many things*) and an abstract affected object (*Devin smiled the smile of reassurance*) which,

according to him, leads to a total of four semantically different cognate object constructions.

Before proceeding to discuss the semantics of cognate objects in Degema, it is worthwhile to mention that a detailed semantic classification of Degema verbs has not yet been undertaken. Be that as it may, such a detailed semantic classification of verbs in Degema is outside the scope of this paper. In the discussion of verbs in Degema, reference is often made to dynamic and stative verbs (Kari 2003: 148; 2004: 268). The term *dynamic* is understood to mean a situation that can be completed or on-going while the term *stative* is understood to mean a state that once existed or still exists at the present time (Kari 2003: 93).

There are different semantic types of verbs in Degema which can take cognate objects in cognate object constructions. For the purpose of this paper, we shall set aside the term *dynamic verbs* used in characterizing some verbs in Degema (s. Kari 2003, 2004) and rather classify Degema verbs that take cognate objects into activities, achievements and states, in the light of Vendler's (1957) classification of English verbs. The reason for setting aside the term *dynamic verbs* stems from the fact that not all dynamic verbs in Degema take cognate objects in cognate object constructions. For example, whereas a dynamic verb such as *sɔl* 'jump' takes a cognate object *ɪsɔ<sup>+</sup>lɔ* 'jump (n.)', to become *sɔl ɪsɔ<sup>+</sup>lɔ* 'jump (a) jump', a dynamic verb such as *ɸɔ* 'build' does not take a cognate object \**ɸɔɔ<sup>+</sup>ɔ* to become \**ɸɔ ɸɔɔ<sup>+</sup>ɔ* 'build building'. For a similar reason, we shall leave out Vendler's (1957) term *accomplishment* used to refer to a category of verbs denoting processes that have a set terminal point or climax. As we have shown, a verb such as *ɸɔ* 'build', which should naturally fit into Vendler's category, accomplishment, does not take a cognate object \**ɸɔɔ<sup>+</sup>ɔ*.

Following Vendler (1957), we define activity verbs as those verbs that denote processes that continue in successive phases that follow one another in time, e.g. *reré* 'walk', *siré* 'run', *jɔw* 'swim', *sú* 'push', *βéβ* 'fly', etc. Generally, activity verbs denote some kind of activity, which continues through time in successive phases. Similarly, we define achievement verbs as verbs that denote a process that has a short duration or one that takes place in only a single moment, e.g. *mará* 'yawn', *kasáɲ* 'cough', *dísáɲ* 'sneeze', *kubáɲ* 'belch', etc. Again, following Vendler (1957), we define state verbs or what we refer to as stative verbs, in this paper, as verbs that denote a longer duration, e.g. *kár* 'be strong' and *βóβ* 'be tall'. Stative verbs in Degema, as we noted earlier in this paper, are characterized by the fact that they denote a state (of being) rather than an activity. In addition to denoting a state of being, stative verbs are associated with such concepts as emotions, senses and thoughts. In English, stative verbs are distinguished from other categories of verbs, such as



activity and accomplishment verbs, by their inability to be used in continuous tenses. They are also distinguished from achievement verbs by the fact that they denote a longer time duration than achievement verbs, which denote only a single moment (s. Vendler 1957: 148).

This having been said, objects in cognate object constructions in Degema can be classified into three semantic groups based on the semantic class of the verb from which they are derived. The first group consists of objects with an activity reading (i.e. cognate objects derived from activity verbs); the second group consists of objects with an achievement reading (i.e. cognate objects derived from achievement verbs), while the third group consists of cognate objects with a stative reading (i.e. cognate objects derived from stative verbs). The three semantic groups and a partial listing of the verbs that fall within these groups are given in (33) - (35):

(33) Activity Verbs with Cognate Objects with an Activity Reading

|         |              |                         |              |
|---------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| sɔl     | 'jump'       | ɪsɔ <sup>+</sup> lá     | 'jump (n.)'  |
| dép     | 'fall'       | idé <sup>+</sup> ɲó     | 'falling'    |
| siré    | 'run'        | isi <sup>+</sup> ré     | 'running'    |
| lɔ      | 'shout'      | ɪlɔ <sup>+</sup> ɔ      | 'shout (n.)' |
| lé      | 'move about' | ɪlé <sup>+</sup> é      | 'movement'   |
| papáɲ   | 'clap'       | ɪpápá <sup>+</sup> ɲá   | 'clapping'   |
| kpekpen | 'pray'       | ɪkpekpe <sup>+</sup> ná | 'prayer'     |
| reré    | 'walk'       | ó <sup>+</sup> réré     | 'walk (n.)'  |
| kpeté   | 'curse'      | ekpe <sup>+</sup> té    | 'curse (n.)' |
| jɔw     | 'swim'       | ɔjɔw                    | 'swimming'   |
| mené    | 'do'         | umené                   | 'work (n.)'  |
| βéβ     | 'fly'        | ɔβéβ                    | 'flight'     |

(34) Achievement Verbs with Cognate Objects with an Achievement Reading

|       |                |                       |                  |
|-------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| mará  | 'yawn'         | ɪmá <sup>+</sup> rá   | 'yawning'        |
| kasáɲ | 'cough'        | ɪkásá <sup>+</sup> ɲá | 'coughing'       |
| dísáɲ | 'sneeze'       | ɪdísá <sup>+</sup> ɲá | 'sneezing'       |
| kuβáɲ | 'belch'        | ɪkúβá <sup>+</sup> ɲó | 'belching'       |
| βəháɲ | 'lose balance' | ɪβəhá <sup>+</sup> ɲó | 'losing balance' |
| tokój | 'vomit'        | ɪtókó <sup>+</sup> jó | 'vomiting'       |
| mɛsmé | 'dream'        | ɪmɛsmé                | 'dream (n.)'     |
| gbéj  | 'laugh'        | agbéj                 | 'laughter'       |
| wú    | 'die'          | uwú                   | 'death'          |
| ɸijé  | 'give birth'   | úɸí <sup>+</sup> jé   | 'giving birth'   |

## (35) Stative Verbs and Cognate Objects with a Stative Reading

|            |             |  |                               |
|------------|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>bí</b>  | 'be black'  | <b>ubí<sup>+</sup>ó</b>                          | 'blackness'                   |
| <b>fú</b>  | 'be white'  | <b>ufú<sup>+</sup>á</b>                          | 'whiteness'                   |
| <b>tú</b>  | 'be hot'    | <b>ótú<sup>+</sup>á</b>                          | 'hotness (sensation on skin)' |
| <b>βóβ</b> | 'be tall'   | <b>uβó<sup>+</sup>βó</b> <b>ú<sup>+</sup>βóβ</b> | 'tallness'                    |
| <b>kǒj</b> | 'be heavy'  | <b>ukǒ<sup>+</sup>já</b> <b>ó<sup>+</sup>kǒj</b> | 'heaviness'                   |
| <b>kár</b> | 'be strong' | <b>uká<sup>+</sup>rá</b> <b>ó<sup>+</sup>kár</b> | 'strength'                    |

In our syntactic classification of cognate object constructions, we identified verbs, such as **βóβ** 'be tall' and **mará** 'yawn', that license only cognate objects and those, such as **sól** 'jump' and **gbéj** 'laugh', that can license cognate objects or other typical objects. The foregoing semantic classification of verbs shows that verbs that can license only cognate objects may not necessarily belong to the same semantic class. For example, verbs like **βóβ** 'be tall' and **kǒj** 'be heavy' fall under the class of stative verbs while others like **mará** 'yawn' and **kuβóɲ** 'belch' fall under the category of achievement verbs. Similarly, verbs that can license cognate objects or other typical objects may not necessarily belong to the same semantic class. Here too, verbs like **sól** 'jump' and **siré** 'run' fall under the class of activity verbs while others like **gbéj** 'laugh' and **tokój** 'vomit' fall under the category of achievement verbs. In general cognate objects in Degema, like cognate objects in other languages, help to provide some clarity or contrastive information about the activity, achievement or state of the verb from which they are morphologically derived and with which they collocate (s. Okonkwo 1977: 58), as a comparison of (36a), (37a) and (38a) with (36b), (37b) and (38b) shows:

- (36a) **ɔmɔ    jə    o=βó<sup>+</sup>óβ.**  
 child    the    SCL.3SG=be.tall.FE  
 'The child is tall' (lit. The child s/he tallied)
- (36b) **ɔmɔ    jə    o=βóβ=n                      ú<sup>+</sup>βóβ.**  
 child    the    SCL.3SG =be.tall=FE                      tallness  
 'The child is tall (tallness)'  
 (lit. The child s/he tallied tallness, *not* blackness)
- (37a) **mɪ=mára=<sup>+</sup>án.**  
 SCL.1SG =yawn=FE  
 'I yawned'
- (37b) **mɪ=mára=n                      ímá<sup>+</sup>rá.**  
 SCL.1SG=yawn=FE                      yawning  
 'I yawned (a yawn)' (lit. I yawned yawning, *not* belching)
- (38a) **eni    mé=siré.**  
 S.1PL    SCL.1PL=run  
 'We will run'
- (38b) **eni    mé=siré                      ísí<sup>+</sup>ré.**  
 S.1PL    SCL.1PL=run                      running  
 'We will run (a race)' (lit. We will run running, *not* walking)

Examples (36b), (37b) and (38b) differ from their (a) counterparts because the presence of the cognate objects  $\acute{u}^+\beta\acute{o}\beta$  'tallness',  $\acute{m}\acute{a}^+\acute{r}\acute{a}$  'yawning' and  $\acute{i}\acute{s}\acute{i}^+\acute{r}\acute{e}$  'running' helps to clarify or provide contrastive information about the state, achievement or activity of their corresponding verbs. The meanings of the verbs  $\beta\acute{o}\beta$  'be tall',  $\acute{m}\acute{a}\acute{r}\acute{a}$  'yawn' and  $\acute{s}\acute{i}\acute{r}\acute{e}$  'run' are "ordinary" or "unmarked" when used without their respective cognate objects.

### Conclusion

Following Kim & Lim (2012), the paper distinguishes EVENTIVE and REFERENTIAL cognate object constructions in Degema, noting that these two constructions differ with respect to the possibility of selecting an object other than the cognate object. In this regard, it notes that the EVENTIVE-CO in Degema is characterized by the fact that its verbs select only one type of object, the cognate object, which functions as a predicate referring to the activity, achievement or state expressed by the verb. The REFERENTIAL-CO in Degema, however, is characterized by the fact that its verbs can select a cognate object or non-cognate object, which refers to an individual rather than the activity, achievement or state expressed by the verb. The paper observes that cognate objects are functionally defective as they are incapable of functioning as true direct objects of their respective verbs. It notes that what accounts for the defectiveness in the objecthood of cognate objects is their abstractness resulting in their inability to be the targets of activities; rather they merely are additional elements used to characterize the activities described by the verbs. The paper observes the asymmetry in cognate object constructions in Degema in the licensing of phenomena, such as pronominalization, questions and topicalization. It notes that pronominalization of cognate objects is not possible in both EVENTIVE- and REFERENTIAL-CO. Similarly, the paper notes that in Degema topicalization is possible in both EVENTIVE and REFERENTIAL-CO, unlike English where it is claimed that such is only possible in REFERENTIAL-CO. The paper further notes that cognate objects in EVENTIVE-CO can be questioned, except when such objects are replaced with a non-cognate object. The paper classifies objects in cognate object constructions in Degema into three semantic groups: objects with activity, achievement and stative readings respectively. Finally, the paper notes that cognate objects in Degema serve to clarify or provide contrastive information about the activity, achievement or state of the verb from which they are morphologically derived and with which they collocate.

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