Libyan Arabic $fi$: distribution

In Libyan Arabic, direct objects can be either plain or preceded by the differential object marker $fi$.

1. Ahmed kle el-kosksi
   Ahmed eat.PST.3MSG DEF-couscous
   'Ahmed ate couscous.'

2. Ahmed yakil $fi$ el-kosksi
   Ahmed eat.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous
   'Ahmed is eating couscous.'

Note that we use PST for the form frequently referred to in literature on Modern Standard Arabic as 'perfective' and NONT for the form referred to as 'imperfective' (compare Ryding 2005).

(For an analysis of a similar use of $fi$ in Cairo Arabic, see Woidich 2006 and in Tunisian Arabic, see Pallottino & Askri 2015.)

Libyan Arabic $fi$: distribution

$fi$ occurs only with dynamic verbs

3. yakil $fi$ el-kosksi
   eat.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous
   'He is eating couscous.'

4. yibbi $(*fi)$ el-kosksi
   like.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous
   'He likes couscous.'

5. yibbi $(*fi)$ el-kosksi
   want.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous
   'He wants couscous.'

Libyan Arabic $fi$: aspectual properties

The resulting interpretation is

- progressive

(8) Ahmed yakil $fi$ el-kosksi tawwa.
   Ahmed eat.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous now
   'Ahmed is eating couscous now.'

- habitual

(9) Ahmed yakil $fi$ el-kosksi kol youm.
   Ahmed eat.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous every day
   'Ahmed eats couscous every day.'

Libyan Arabic $fi$: aspectual properties

When the interpretation is not progressive or habitual, $fi$ is excluded

- generic

(10) Ahmed yakil kosksi.
    Ahmed eat.NONT.3MSG couscous
    'Ahmed eats couscous.' (i.e. he is a couscous-eater)

- scheduled future

(11) Fi rijim? $godwa$ nakil kosksi.
    in diet.1sg poss tomorrow eat.NONT.1SG couscous
    'In my diet, tomorrow I eat couscous.'

- universal quantification over event tokens

(12) Lamma nakil kosksi nelfakker
    when eat.NONT.1SG couscous remember.NONT.1SG
    hinn-ai.
    grandma.1SG poss
    'When I eat couscous I remember my grandma.'
Libyan Arabic \(fi\): aspectual properties

- \(fi\) contributes progressive or habitual aspect
- ‘interior aspect’ generalises over progressive and habitual (Stassen 1997: 252)
  - progressive aspect portrays an event as happening inside a short time-span
  - habitual aspect portrays an event as happening inside a longer time-span

Libyan Arabic \(fi\): structural properties

- \(fi\) has two other functions in Libyan Arabic, both illustrated in
  - in existential sentences, parallel to English there
    - as a preposition meaning ‘in’
  - (13) \(fi\) 'tasir \(fi\) et-talaja
    - exist juice in DEP-fridge
    - ‘There is juice in the fridge.’
- aspectual \(fi\) and prepositional \(fi\) are conceptually ‘interior’ in nature
- aspectual \(fi\) shares structural properties with prepositional \(fi\)

Libyan Arabic \(fi\): structural properties

- both prepositional and aspectual \(fi\) can be fronted with its noun-phrase complement or left behind with a resumptive pronoun
  - (14) \(fi\) London Ahmed yoskun
    - in London Ahmed live
  - (15) London Ahmed yoskun \(fi\)-ha
    - London Ahmed live
    - ‘It’s in London that Ahmed lives.’
- (16) \(fi\) el-kosksi yakil kal youm
  - DEF-couscous eat Kal youm
da-phrase headed by \(fi\) can contribute aspectual information to the clause which contains it
- (17) el-kosksi \(fi\)-h kal youm
  - DEF-couscous eat Kal youm
  - ‘It’s couscous that he eats every day.’

Libyan Arabic \(fi\): analysis

- Libyan Arabic has a flat clause structure
  - no special features that could be associated with an \(I\) projection
  - no separate set of auxiliary verbs
  - the phrase headed by \(fi\) is a PP
  - but it maps onto \(O\)
  - inside-out functional designator allows \(fi\) to contribute aspectual information to the clause which contains it
  - \(\text{NON-TENSED}\) verbs do not carry any tense or aspect features, hence they are unmarked for \(\text{INTERIOR}\)
  - \(\text{PAST}\) verbs are marked as \(\text{INTERIOR}\)
  - \(\text{STATIVE}\) verbs are lexically specified as \(\neg \text{INTERIOR}\)

Libyan Arabic \(fi\): analysis

- \(\text{NOM}\)
  - \(\text{S}\)
  - \(\text{V}\)
  - \(\text{PP}\)
  - \(\text{NP}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{el-kosksi}\)
  - \(\text{fi} \quad \text{yakil} \quad \text{kal} \quad \text{youm}\)
  - \(\text{every day}\)
  - \(\text{def}\)
  - \(\text{couscous}\)
  - \(\text{eat}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{in}\)
  - \(\text{Paris}\)
  - \(\text{London}\)
  - \(\text{work}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{yoskun}\)
  - \(\text{live}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{in}\)
  - \(\text{Paris}\)
  - \(\text{London}\)
  - \(\text{work}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{yakil}\)
  - \(\text{fi} \quad \text{el-kosksi} \quad \text{def} \quad \text{couscous}\)
  - \(\text{eat}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{in}\)
  - \(\text{Paris}\)
  - \(\text{London}\)
  - \(\text{work}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{yakil}\)
  - \(\text{fi} \quad \text{el-kosksi} \quad \text{def} \quad \text{couscous} \quad \text{w} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{fi} \quad \text{el-salat}\)
  - \(\text{eat}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{in}\)
  - \(\text{Paris}\)
  - \(\text{London}\)
  - \(\text{work}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{yakil}\)
  - \(\text{fi} \quad \text{el-kosksi} \quad \text{def} \quad \text{couscous} \quad \text{w} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{fi} \quad \text{el-salat}\)
  - \(\text{eat}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
  - \(\text{in}\)
  - \(\text{Paris}\)
  - \(\text{London}\)
  - \(\text{work}\)
  - \(\text{Ahmed}\)
Libyan Arabic fi: analysis

Giving the f-structure

(23)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJ</th>
<th>PRED</th>
<th>'Ahmed'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRED</th>
<th>'eat &lt; SUBJ, OBJ&gt;'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERIOR</th>
<th>+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJ</th>
<th>PRED</th>
<th>'couscous'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

when the clause containing fi is the complement of a higher lexical verb:
then if the complement can take a complementiser, the lower verb determines the presence or absence of fi

(24)  

7a'taqid (ennah) yakil fi el-kosksi think.nont.1msg that eat.nont.3msg fi def-couscous 'I think that he is eating couscous.'

(25)  

7a'taqid (ennah) yibib el-kosksi think.nont.1msg that like.nont.3msg def-couscous 'I think that he likes couscous.'

→ if the complement cannot take a complementiser, the matrix verb determines the presence or absence of fi

(26)  

yibbi yakil fi el-kosksi want.nont.3msg eat.nont.3msg fi def-couscous 'He wants to eat couscous.'

Libyan Arabic fi: in complements of verbs

Lexical entry for yibbi 'want' in examples such as (26):

yibbi V(91) = 'want <subj, xcomp>'

(92) = (xcomp subj)

(¬ xcomp interior)

(¬ xcomp interior)

→ giving the tree in (27) for the ungrammatical version of (26)

![Tree diagram]

Libyan Arabic fi: in complements of verbs

when the clause containing fi is the complement of verbs:

→ when the clause containing fi is the complement of a higher lexical verb:

→ if the complement can take a complementiser, the lower verb determines the presence or absence of fi

(28)  

kan yakil fi el-kosksi amis.

be.pst.3msg eat.nont.3msg fi def-couscous yesterday 'He was eating couscous yesterday.'

(29)  

kan yakil fi el-kosksi kol youm.

be.pst.3msg eat.nont.3msg fi def-couscous every day 'He used to eat couscous every day.'

→ giving the tree in (31) for the sentence in (28)
Libyan Arabic fi: in complements of verbs

The behaviour of negation supports this bi-clausal analysis

(32) ma kunt-iš ma nakil-iš fi NEG be.PST.ISG-NEG NEG eat.MONT.ISG-NEG fi el-kosksi DEF-couscous

‘I wasn’t not eating the couscous.’

Libyan Arabic fi: in complements of verbs

Our analysis predicts that ykūn should have this blocking effect

Lexical entry for ykūn ‘be’ in examples such as (33):

ykūn V (TPRED) = ‘be <XCOMP> SUBJ’

(‘SUBJ’) = (‘XCOMP SUBJ’)

(‘-INTERIOR’) = (‘XCOMP TENSE PAST’)

→ giving the tree below for the sentence in (33)

References I


