Aspectual object marking in Libyan Arabic

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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.$\text{pst.3msg}$ def-couscous
    ‘Ahmed ate couscous.’

(2) Ahmed yakil $fi$ el-kosksi
    Ahmed eat.$\text{nont.3msg}$ $fi$ def-couscous
    ‘Ahmed is eating couscous.’

Note that we use $\text{pst}$ for the form frequently referred to in literature on Modern Standard Arabic as ‘perfective’ and $\text{nont}$ 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.)
fi occurs only with dynamic verbs

(3) yakil fi el-kosksi  
    eat.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous  
    ‘He is eating couscous.’

(4) yhibb (*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 \textit{fi}: distribution

\textit{fi} occurs only with non-tensed verb forms

(6) Ahmed yakil \textit{fi} el-kosksi.
    Ahmed eat.\texttt{NONT.3MSG} \textit{fi} DEF-couscous
    ‘Ahmed is eating couscous.’

(7) Ahmed kle \textit{(*fi)} el-kosksi
    Ahmed eat.\texttt{PST.3MSG} \textit{fi} DEF-couscous
    ‘Ahmed ate the couscous.’
The resulting interpretation is

- progressive

(8) Ahmed yakil fi el-kosksii tawwa.
   Ahmed eat.\textsc{Nont.3msg fi def-couscous} now
   ‘Ahmed is eating couscous now.’

- habitual

(9) Ahmed yakil fi el-kosksi kol youm.
   Ahmed eat.\textsc{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.$\text{NONT.3MSG}$ couscous
    ‘Ahmed eats couscous.’ (i.e. he is a couscous-eater)

- **scheduled future**

(11) Fi rijímī gordwa nakil kosksi.
    in diet.$\text{1SG.PSS}$ tomorrow eat.$\text{NONT.1SG}$ couscous
    ‘In my diet, tomorrow I eat couscous.’

- **universal quantification over event tokens**

(12) Lamma nakil kosksi netfakker
    when eat.$\text{NONT.1SG}$ couscous remember.$\text{NONT.1SG}$ hinn-ai.
    grandma-$\text{1SG.PSS}$
    ‘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 (13)
  - in existential sentences, parallel to English \(\text{there}\)
  - as a preposition meaning ‘in’

(13) \(fi\ \text{ﬁasīr} fi\ et-\text{ṭalaja}\)

exist juice in DEF-fridge

‘There is juice in the fridge.’

- aspectual \(fi\) and prepositional \(fi\) are conceptually ‘interior’ in nature
- aspectual \(fi\) shares structural properties with prepositional \(fi\)
both prepositional and aspectual *fi* can be fronted with its noun-phrase complement or left behind with a resumptive pronoun

(14)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fi} & \quad \text{London} \quad \text{Ahmed} \quad \text{yoskun} \\
\text{in} & \quad \text{London} \quad \text{Ahmed} \quad \text{live}.\text{NONT.3MSG}
\end{align*}
\]

(15)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{London} & \quad \text{Ahmed} \quad \text{yoskun} \quad \text{fi-ha} \\
\text{London} & \quad \text{Ahmed} \quad \text{live}.\text{NONT.3MSG} \quad \text{in-3FSG.OBL} \\
\text{‘It’s in London that Ahmed lives.’}
\end{align*}
\]

(16)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fi} & \quad \text{el-kosksi} \quad \text{yakil} \quad \text{kol} \quad \text{youm} \\
\text{FI} & \quad \text{DEF-couscous} \quad \text{eat}.\text{NONT.3MSG} \quad \text{every} \quad \text{day}
\end{align*}
\]

(17)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{el-kosksi} & \quad \text{yakil} \quad \text{fi-h} \quad \text{kol} \quad \text{youm} \\
\text{DEF-couscous} & \quad \text{eat}.\text{NONT.3MSG} \quad \text{FI-3MSG.OBL} \quad \text{every} \quad \text{day} \\
\text{‘It’s couscous that he eats every day.’}
\end{align*}
\]
Libyan Arabic *fi*: structural properties

- both prepositional and aspectual *fi* can
  - take scope over coordinated noun phrases
  - or be repeated on each noun phrase

(18) Ahmed yexdim fi Paris w London
    Ahmed work.NONT.3MSG in Paris and London

(19) Ahmed yexdim fi Paris w fi London
    Ahmed work.NONT.3MSG in Paris and in London
    ‘Ahmed works in Paris and London.’

(20) Ahmed yakil fi el-kosksi w eş-şlaţa
    Ahmed eat.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous and DEF-salad

(21) Ahmed yakil fi el-kosksi w fi eş-şlaţa
    Ahmed eat.NONT.3MSG FI DEF-couscous and FI DEF-salad
    ‘Ahmed eats/is eating couscous and salad.’
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 OBJ
- inside-out functional designator allows *fi* to contribute aspectual information to the clause which contains it
- NON-TENSED verbs do not carry any tense or aspect features, hence they are unmarked for INTERIOR
- PAST verbs are marked as \([\text{INTERIOR} \sim]\)
- stative verbs are lexically specified as \([\neg \text{INTERIOR}]\)
Libyan Arabic *fi*: analysis

(22)

S

NP

\(↑\text{SUBJ})=↓

N

\(↑=↓\)

Ahmed

\(↑\text{PRED})=‘Ahmed’

V

\(↑=↓\)

yakil

\(↑\text{PRED})=‘eat<\text{SUBJ, OBJ}>’

PP

\(↑(↑\text{PCASE}))=↓\)

P

\(↑=↓\)

fi

\(↑\text{PCASE}) = \text{OBJ}\)

NP

\(↑=↓\)

el-kosksi

\(↑\text{DEF})=+\)

\(((\text{OBJ} ↑) \text{INTERIOR}))=+\)

\(↑\text{PRED})=‘couscous’\)
Giving the f-structure

(23) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{SUBJ} \\
\text{PRED} \\
\text{INTERIOR} \\
\text{OBJ}
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\left[ \text{PRED} \ 'Ahmed' \right] \\
'\text{eat} < \text{SUBJ}, \text{OBJ} >' \\
+ \\
\left[ \text{PRED} \ 'couscous' \\
\text{DEF} + \right]
\end{array}
\]
Libyan Arabic *fi*: in complements 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*

  (24) ʔafaqtāqid (ennah) yakil fi el-kosksi
       think.NONT.1SG that eat.NONT.3MSG fi DEF-couscous
       ‘I think that he is eating couscous.’

  (25) ʔafaqtāqid (ennah) yḥib el-kosksi
       think.NONT.1SG 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.’
Lexical entry for *yibbi* ‘want’ in examples such as (26):

\[ yibbi \in \mathcal{V} \quad (\uparrow\text{PRED}) = \text{‘want} <\text{SUBJ}, \text{XCOMP}>' \\
(\uparrow\text{SUBJ}) \Rightarrow (\uparrow\text{XCOMP SUBJ}) \\
(\neg \text{INTERIOR}) \\
(\neg \text{XCOMP INTERIOR}) \]

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

\[
(*) \quad * \quad S
\]

\[
V \quad \uparrow=\downarrow \quad yibbi
\]

\[
(\uparrow PRED) = \text{`want<SUBJ, XCOMP>'}
\]

\[
(\uparrow SUBJ) = (\uparrow XCOMP \text{ SUBJ})
\]

\[
(\neg \text{INTERIOR})
\]

\[
(\neg \text{XCOMP INTERIOR})
\]

\[
S \quad \downarrow \quad V \quad \text{PP}
\]

\[
\uparrow=\downarrow \quad (\uparrow XCOMP) = \downarrow
\]

\[
yakil \quad (\uparrow PRED) = \text{`eat<SUBJ, OBJ>'}
\]

\[
\uparrow=\downarrow
\]

\[
f \quad \uparrow=\downarrow
\]

\[
N \quad \uparrow=\downarrow
\]

\[
el-kosksi
\]

\[
(\uparrow PRED) = \text{`couscous'}
\]

\[
(\uparrow DEF) = +
\]
when the clause containing \textit{fi} is the complement of the auxiliary verb \textit{kan} ‘be.\textsc{pst}’ the distribution is not affected

\begin{align*}
\text{(28)} & \quad \text{kan} \quad \text{yakil} \quad \text{fi} \quad \text{el-kosksi} \quad \text{amis.} \quad \text{be.\textsc{pst.3msg}} \quad \text{eat.\textsc{nont.3msg}} \quad \text{fi} \quad \text{def-couscous} \quad \text{yesterday} \\
& \quad \text{‘He was eating couscous yesterday.’}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{(29)} & \quad \text{kan} \quad \text{yakil} \quad \text{fi} \quad \text{el-kosksi} \quad \text{kol} \quad \text{youm.} \quad \text{be.\textsc{pst.3msg}} \quad \text{eat.\textsc{nont.3msg}} \quad \text{fi} \quad \text{def-couscous} \quad \text{every day} \\
& \quad \text{‘He used to eat couscous every day.’}
\end{align*}
Libyan Arabic *fi*: in complements of verbs

- as a stative verb *kan* is [← INTERIOR]
- analysing *kan* as a functional co-head would conflict with the presence of *fi* in the complement
- we analyse *kan* as a matrix verb taking an XCOMP, giving the lexical entry in (30).

\[(\uparrow\text{PRED}) = \text{‘be } \langle\text{XCOMP}\rangle\text{ SUBJ’}\]
\[(\uparrow\text{SUBJ}) = (\uparrow\text{XCOMP SUBJ})\]

\[(\text{30})\]

\[\text{kan V} \quad (\uparrow\text{TENSE}) = \text{past}\]
\[(\neg \text{XCOMP TENSE PAST})\]
\[(\neg \text{INTERIOR})\]

- giving the tree in (31) for the sentence in (28)
(31)

S

V

↑=↓

kan

(↑pred)=‘be<\text{xcomp}> subj’
(↑subj)=(↑xcomp subj)
↑tense=past
(¬interior)
(¬xcomp tense past)

S

(↑xcomp)=↓

V

↑=↓
yakil

(↑pred)=‘eat<\text{subj}, \text{obj}>’ ↑=↓

P

↑=↓

PP

NP

↑=↓

fi

↑=↓

el-kosksi

(↑pred)=‘couscous’
(↑def)=+
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.1SG-NEG NEG eat.NONT.1SG-NEG FI
el-kosksi
DEF-couscous
‘I wasn’t not eating the couscous.’
Libyan Arabic *fi*: in complements of verbs

- when the clause containing *fi* is the complement of an auxiliary verb, which in turn is the complement of a higher non-dynamic lexical verb, the auxiliary “blocks” the effect of the non-dynamic verb

(33) yibbi ykūn yakil fi
want.nont.3msg be.nont.3msg eat.nont.3msg fi
el-kosksi
DEF-couscous
‘He would like to be eating couscous.’
Our analysis predicts that *ykūn* should have this blocking effect

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

*ykūn* \( V \quad (\uparrow \text{PRED}) = '\text{be } <\text{XCOMP}> \text{ SUBJ}' \)

\( (\uparrow \text{SUBJ}) = (\uparrow \text{XCOMP SUBJ}) \)

\( (\neg \text{ INTERIOR}) \)

\( (\neg \text{ XCOMP TENSE PAST}) \)

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

