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A DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR OF LIBYAN ARABIC

A Dissertation
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Languages and Linguistics

By

Abubaker A. Elfitoury

Washington, D.C.
September 1976
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

The dissertation of Abubaker A. Elfitoury
entitled
A Descriptive Grammar of Libyan Arabic

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in the Graduate School of Georgetown University has been read and approved by the Committee:

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Waller K. Turner
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Head of Department

September 23, 1976
Date
A DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR OF LIBYAN ARABIC

Abubaker A. Elfitoury

The theme of this paper is a linguistic study of Libyan Arabic, the variety of Arabic spoken in the North African country of Libya, particularly the dialect spoken in Tripoli. The study deals descriptively with the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the dialect.

In the phonology part, sounds are classified and described in articulatory terms as well as in terms of their distribution, clustering, and their influence on each other. A characteristic set of velarized consonants is treated separately and compared with the corresponding plain ones, via à vis their positions and their relationship to the neighboring sounds in the same word and the same syllable.

Morphologically, the word is described in terms of its root (strong, hollow, and defective) and the pattern of vowels inserted between the radical consonants of that root. A triliteral verb in its third person masculine singular form is considered the minimum basic form from which other words may be derived. From such a verb, eight forms or 'measure' of verbs are derived in Libyan Arabic, through the process of affixation and change in the vowel patterns. Verbs are inflected for tense, gender,
number, mood, and person. The perfect and imperfect tenses are indicated by attaching certain affixes to the form of the verb. Each tense carries its own usages and meanings.

From nouns, a certain number of verbal noun patterns, instance nouns, unit nouns, and feminine nouns are derived. Nouns are also divided into singular, dual, and plural, with the latter subdivided into 'sound' and 'broken' plural.

Also included under morphology are treatments of numerals, interrogatives, conjunctions, pronouns, and adjectives. From verbs various patterns of participles (active and passive) are derived.

Syntactically, an attempt is made to study the types of sentences of Libyan Arabic and the types of clauses within each type of sentence. Treatments of negation, interrogation, and transformation into passive are also related to the syntax of the sentence. Agreement between various parts of the sentence (mainly between nouns and adjectives, and verbs and pronouns) is also treated and considered an important feature. Equally characteristic of Libyan Arabic is the modification of a noun by another noun, a phenomenon linguists usually call 'annexion' in reference to the fact that a noun is annexed to another. A noun in Libyan Arabic is modified by a noun, an adjective, a particle, a demonstrative, and many other elements. The most common of all is the noun-adjective modification structure.
Other particles associated with nouns (such as the vocative /ya/), as well as nouns that have specific meanings, are touched upon in this study.
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i
The Arabic described in this paper is the kind of Arabic used in everyday conversation by the dwellers of the city of Tripoli, the largest city in Libya, located on the western coast of the country. This paper is not intended to be a study of the kind of Libyan Arabic spoken in the eastern regions since the latter differs, particularly in its phonology, from the one discussed here.

All that is intended in this paper is to list and tabulate, by the descriptive structural method, the main features of this dialect as it is spoken today. This, as far as I know, is the first attempt, in English, to study this dialect in a purely linguistic sense. It is hoped that this study will be the point of departure for more detailed and systematic studies of this dialect and other dialects of Arabic in general. It is hoped also that other models of linguistics will be applied to it.

This paper is a short reference grammar for all those who want to learn something about Libyan Arabic, particularly teachers, linguists, and students of Semitic languages or dialects.

The material used in this paper comes from taped samples of conversations and other native-spoken material. It was checked against my idiolect and those of my friends.
I would like to thank all those who contributed to the completion of this paper, especially the members of my committee: Dr. R. R. Macdonald, Dr. S. Sara and Dr. W. Erwin of Georgetown University, for their patience in reading the paper and for their valuable advice.

A. Elfitoury
Washington, D.C.
September 1976
PART I

PHONOLOGY
CHAPTER I

CONSONANTS

Libyan Arabic has thirty-four consonants, a number of which are velarized (or emphatic). Table 1 shows the consonants of Libyan Arabic described in articulatory terms. The velarized consonants are marked by a dot under the corresponding nonvelarized consonants, with the exception of /h/ which is not considered a velarized consonant.

The consonants in the table occur in contrast to each other in such minimal pairs as the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b-d</td>
<td>/bal/ 'mind, attention'</td>
<td>/dal/ 'the letter ‘d’'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b-m</td>
<td>/bās/ 'only'</td>
<td>/mās/ 'he touched'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b-w</td>
<td>/blad/ 'country'</td>
<td>/wlad/ 'boys'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m-w</td>
<td>/sāmār/ 'he closed tightly'</td>
<td>/sāwwr/ 'he took pictures'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ-φ</td>
<td>/θany/ 'a second'</td>
<td>/fany/ 'vanishing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-k</td>
<td>/tmāl/ 'you (M) get bored'</td>
<td>/kmāl/ 'it ended'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d-g</td>
<td>/dimā/ 'always'</td>
<td>/gīma/ 'value'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿ-z</td>
<td>/ʿhār/ 'he went out'</td>
<td>/zhār/ 'kind of perfume'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-ṣ</td>
<td>/ṣef/ 'sword'</td>
<td>/ṣef/ 'summer'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-s</td>
<td>/ṣim/ 'poison'</td>
<td>/ṣim/ 'smell! (imperative)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-n</td>
<td>/tar/ 'revenge'</td>
<td>/nār/ 'fire'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d-n</td>
<td>/dāyir/ 'he is doing'</td>
<td>/nāyir/ 'bright'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d-l</td>
<td>/dam/ 'it lasted'</td>
<td>/lām/ 'he blamed'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-l</td>
<td>/rāwwin/ 'he mixed'</td>
<td>/lāwwin/ 'he colored'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r-ʾ</td>
<td>/raš/ 'head'</td>
<td>/laš/ 'ace'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-g</td>
<td>/kle/ 'he ate'</td>
<td>/gle/ 'he fried'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q-ʔ</td>
<td>/qīsmāh/ 'dividing'</td>
<td>/ʔīsmāh/ 'his name'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x-ḥ</td>
<td>/xāmra/ 'concrete'</td>
<td>/ḥāmra/ 'red (Feminine)'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Interdental</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Alveopalatal</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Uvular</th>
<th>Pharyngeal</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>Vd</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ȳ</td>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td>q</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricatives</td>
<td>Vl</td>
<td>(v)*</td>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>z</td>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vd</td>
<td>(θ)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>z</td>
<td></td>
<td>z</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vd</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasals</td>
<td>Vd</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laterals</td>
<td>Vd</td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flap</td>
<td>Vd</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semivowels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The voiced labiodental fricative [v] is very rare in Libyan Arabic. It may be heard only in such borrowed words as: varanda (porch), villa, etc. In all other cases /f/ is used.

**The sounds in parentheses are used in scattered rural areas in the east and the west but may be heard in the speech of people from those areas migrating to the city of Tripoli.
Since many of the sounds in Libyan Arabic differ substantially from those in many other languages, it may be worthwhile describing them articulatorily. The phonetic symbols used here are those that are widely used by American linguists. Phonemes are written between slant lines; allophonic variants between square brackets. The wedge sign over the vowel indicates a short vowel.

**Stops**

A stop is a sound that is formed by a complete closure of the air passage through the mouth. Libyan Arabic has the following stops:

/b/: a voiced bilabial stop. Produced, like its English counterpart, with the lower lip against the upper lip. It may become voiceless when it occurs before a voiceless obstruent; e.g. /ḥab/ 'jail', /bšal/ 'onions'. Otherwise it is always voiced. Its position in a word like all consonants of Libyan Arabic may be initial, medial, or final.

/bahi/ 'good'
/saḅṣa/ 'seven'
/ḥlib/ 'milk'

/t/: a voiceless dental stop. Produced with the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper teeth. It is different from the English stop which is alveolar; i.e. the tongue touches the area beyond the upper teeth.
/tarix/ ‘history’
/ktab/ ‘a book’
/ḥut/ ‘fish’

/d/: a voiced dental stop. Produced with the tip of the tongue touching the upper teeth while the vocal bands are vibrating.

/dima/ ‘always’
/bde/ ‘he began’
/blad/ ‘country’

/k/: a voiceless velar stop. Produced with the back of the tongue touching the velum (the soft palate area). It tends to be palatal before front vowels and velar before back vowels.

/ktiba/ ‘writing’
/fluka/ ‘boat’
/xuk/ ‘your brother’

/g/: a voiced velar stop. Produced with the back of the tongue touching the velum while the vocal bands are vibrating. It becomes palatal before front vowels and velar before back vowels.

/girid/ ‘monkey’
/migly/ ‘fried’
/ţrig/ ‘road’

/q/: a voiceless uvular stop. Produced with the back of the tongue contacting the uvula in such a way that the flow of air is stopped. The normal Libyan reflex of Standard Arabic /q/ is /g/; /q/ does occur, however, in a few proper names and words of religious connotation, such as:

/qāṭār/ ‘Qatar’
/âlqiyya/ ‘resurrection day’
/ḍimāšq/ ‘Damascus’

/ʔ/: a voiceless glottal stop. Produced by a complete closure of the vocal bands followed by a sudden release of the air. It does not exist as a sound unit in English but it is close to the initial of the word ‘ouch’. In Libyan Arabic it may occur initially, medially, or finally. Initially its presence is random and noncontrastive. In many instances the stop cannot be heard unless the word is preceded by a preposition or some other particle. Also, initially it occurs often in imperative forms of verbs. It may be heard in the following words when they are pronounced in the Standard Arabic pronunciation:

/ʔärni/ ‘rabbit’
/sʔal/ ‘he asked’
/wābaʔ/ ‘epidemic disease’

Generally speaking stops are aspirated or unaspirated in free variation when they occur initially in a stressed syllable. Also, they may be released or unreleased in free variation when they occur finally.

Fricatives

A fricative is a sound that is produced when the breath stream is caused to pass through a narrow constriction in the mouth creating audible friction. Libyan Arabic has:

/t/: a voiceless labiodental fricative. Produced with the lower lip contacting the upper teeth. It is always voiceless except when it occurs
before a voiced obstruent, where it becomes voiced, e.g. /fɔːl/ ‘radish’.

The voiced counterpart /v/ exists only in foreign words used by speakers living mainly in the cities. People living in the countryside use the voiceless fricative.

/flus/ ‘money’  /vālvula/ ‘valve’
/?āsfir/ ‘yellow’  /kurva/ ‘curve’
/sef/ ‘sword’  /katšāviti/ ‘screwdriver’

/θ/: a voiceless interdental fricative. Produced with the tip of the tongue between the upper and lower teeth. It is not very common in the speech of Libyans. In the city of Tripoli and its vicinity it is consistently replaced by the dental stop /t/. The following examples may be heard in the speech of those in Tripoli but belong to areas where such sounds are used.

/θmanyə/ ‘eight’
/?ændə/ ‘female’
/θulθa/ ‘one third’

/ə:/ a voiced interdental fricative. Produced with the tip of the tongue between the upper and lower teeth while the vocal bands are vibrating. It is very rare in Libyan Arabic. People consistently use /d/ instead of /ə/. However, the following examples may still be heard in some areas around Tripoli:

/əl/ ‘tail’
/ѡwən/ ‘ear’
/yaxid/ ‘he takes’

/s/: a voiceless dental fricative. Produced with the tip of the tongue
near the back of the upper teeth, creating a narrow constriction through which air flows with audible friction.

/smin/ ‘fat’
/fsad/ ‘corruption’
/nas/ ‘people’

/z/: a voiced dental fricative. In producing it the tip of the tongue approaches the back of the upper teeth while the vocal bands are vibrating.

/zman/ ‘old times’
/rzg/ ‘fortune, property’
/loz/ ‘nuts’

/s/: a voiceless alveopalatal fricative. Produced with the blade of the tongue almost touching the area on the borders of the alveolar ridge and the palate, creating a channel through which air flows. It may be voiced when it occurs before a voiced obstruent; e.g. /sduk/ ‘cheeks’.

/sahi/ ‘tea’
/maši/ ‘he is walking’
/murš/ ‘glass’

/z/: a voiced alveopalatal fricative. Produced with the blade of the tongue almost touching the area on the borders of the alveolar ridge and the palate, forming a channel through which air flows, while the vocal bands are vibrating.

/žlâm/ ‘large scissors’
/džaž/ ‘chicken’
/taž/ ‘crown’
/x/: a voiceless uvular fricative. English has no equivalent, but the final sound of the German ‘Bach’ is very close to it. It is produced with the back of the tongue almost touching the area between the velum and the beginning of the uvula, leaving a channel through which air flows creating audible noise. It becomes slightly more forward before front vowels and more back before back vowels.

/xayɪ/ ‘he is afraid’
/duːxan/ ‘smoke, tobacco’
/wšäx/ ‘dirt’

/ɣ/: a voiced uvular fricative. Produced with the back of the tongue almost touching the border area between the velum and the uvula, forming a channel through which air flows, while the vocal bands are vibrating. It becomes slightly more forward before front vowels and more back before back vowels.

/ɣali/ ‘expensive’
/sʰir/ ‘small, young’
/ʃrʊʏ/ ‘became empty’

/ħ/: a voiceless pharyngeal fricative. It is heard when the pharyngeal walls shrink together forming a narrow channel through which air passes with force. There is no equivalent to this sound in English.

/ħmar/ ‘donkey’
/bʰar/ ‘sea’
/milh/ ‘salt’
/ʕ/: a voiced pharyngeal fricative. It is the voiced counterpart of the preceding sound with less audible noise when the air flows through the channel. The vocal bands are vibrating.

/ɣuša/ ‘bride’
/ňaʃa/ ‘ewe’
/baʔ/ ‘he sold’

/h/: a voiceless glottal fricative. It is heard when air passes through the glottis making a breathy sound. Similar to the first sound of English *hope*. It may be voiced intervocally or before voiced obstruents.

/hdiyya/ ‘a present’
/sah1/ ‘easy’
/xålilih/ ‘leave him’

Nasals

A nasal sound is one that is produced when the breath is interrupted at some point in the mouth while the velum is lowered to allow the air to pass through the nose. Libyan Arabic has:

/m/: a voiced bilabial nasal. It is produced with the two lips coming together while the nasal passage is open. It becomes labiodental when it occurs before /f/ but remains bilabial elsewhere.

/moz/ ‘bananas’
/smah/ ‘his name’
/nom/ ‘sleeping’

/n/: a voiced dental nasal. It differs from the corresponding English nasal only in the fact that the latter is alveolar. It may vary in articulation
Laterals

A lateral sound is one which is produced when the flow of air is halted at the center in such a way that it is forced to flow along the sides of the tongue. Libyan Arabic has two laterals, one of which will be dealt with here and the other treated under velarized consonants:

/\l/: a voiced dental lateral. In its production the tongue contacts the upper teeth with air flowing along the sides of the tongue. If we use the English distinction between clear (plain) and dark (velarized) /\l/ we find that this corresponds to the English clear /\l/. It may be voiceless when it occurs before voiceless obstruents; e.g. /lsan/ 'tongue', /ltammu/ 'they got together'. It is voiced elsewhere.

/\l\n/ 'color'
/mlih/ 'good, fine'
/\lawil/ 'he tried'

Flaps

A flap is a sound produced with the tip of the tongue making a quick tap against the upper teeth. Libyan Arabic has two flaps, one of which will be
deal with here and the other treated under velarized consonants.

/r/: a voiced dental flap. When the tongue taps quickly against the area just behind the upper teeth this sound results. When doubled or in final position it becomes a trill because its clustering involves more than one tap by the tongue against the upper teeth.

/riːʔ/ ‘wind’
/xəɾiʃ/ ‘autumn’
/far/ ‘mouse’

**Semivowels**

/w/: a high back rounded semivowel. Produced with the lips rounded and the dorsum of the tongue raised.

/wen/ ‘where’
/ʕawd/ ‘he repeated’
/ʒəɾu/ ‘puppy (diminutive)’

/y/: a high front unrounded semivowel. Produced with the lips spread apart and the front of the tongue raised high.

/yak.setSize/ ‘he eats’
/byad/ ‘charcoal’
/ʃāj/ ‘nothing’

**Velarized Consonants**

Libyan Arabic, like other Arabic dialects, has a set of velarized consonants. A velarized consonant may be defined as one that is produced with the blade of the tongue somewhat depressed while the back is slightly
raised, narrowing the velar channel. In the pronunciation of velarized con-
sonants there is also more muscular tension involved.

The consonants ﹶﹴﹰ ﹱﹲ ﹳﹴ are velarized in Libyan Arabic. When one of them occurs in a word it causes the velarization of all other consonants in the same syllable and in certain circumstances even in the whole word. It may be convenient, therefore, to label ﹶﹴﹰ ﹱﹲ ﹳﹴ as “primary velarized consonants”, and the ones velarized under their influence as “secondary velarized consonants”. All plain consonants in Libyan Arabic may be velarized because of the influence of the primary velarized ones, but no velarization sign will be written under these secondary velarized consonants in this paper.2

All the primary velarized consonants are phonemically distinct from their plain counterparts: t d ﹳ s ﹴ m r. The following are minimal pairs contrasting the two sets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plain</th>
<th>Velarized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tin/ ‘figs’</td>
<td>/ṭin/ ‘clay, mud’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/daʕ/ ‘he broadcasted’</td>
<td>/daʕ/ ‘he was lost’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/yāsbaḥ/ ‘he slaughters’</td>
<td>/yāṣbaḥ/ ‘he calls on’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ṣāb/ ‘he insulted’</td>
<td>/ṣāb/ ‘he poured’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2Primary velarized consonants may occur anywhere in a word and constitute an indispensable part of the root. Secondary ones are limited in distribution, mainly in the vicinity of a velarized consonant.
These may be described in articulatory terms as follows:

/τ/: the velarized counterpart of /t/. Produced with the tip of the tongue touching the beginning of the alveolar ridge. The center of the tongue is lowered while the dorsum is somewhat raised.

/τασα/ ‘a glass’
/βατιν/ ‘stomach’
/κάββυτ/ ‘coat’

/ɣ/: the velarized counterpart of /d/. The tongue touches the front area of the alveolar ridge. The center of the tongue is depressed while the back is raised.

/ɣάγγ/ ‘light’
/βδαφα/ ‘merchandise’
/μρίδ/ ‘sick’

/θ/: the velarized counterpart of /θ/. Produced with the tip of the tongue between the teeth. The central part of the tongue is depressed; the back is raised. In the speech of most people it is often replaced by the emphatic alveolar stop /d/, although the interdental may be used by few speakers here and there in different areas.

/θυρ/ ‘noon’
/μυσταρ/ ‘demonstration’
/θλιθ/ ‘thick’
/s/: the velarized counterpart of /s/. Produced with the tongue a little farther back than /s/, still forming a narrow constriction through which air flows creating audible friction. The central part of the tongue is depressed; the back is raised.

/ʂwani/: ‘plates’
/bšaɾa/: ‘joking’
/ʨwɜmʂ/: ‘chick peas’

/z/: the velarized counterpart of /z/. It is produced a little farther back than /z/; i.e. with the tip of the tongue touching the area immediately behind the upper teeth, creating a passage through which air passes with friction. The center of the tongue is depressed; the back is raised.

/zmət/: ‘he swallowed’
/bzɛ/: ‘he paid’
/rʊz/: ‘rice’

/l/: the velarized (or dark) counterpart of the plain /l/; produced farther back than the latter. The tongue touches the upper teeth, the air flowing along the sides. The center of the tongue is depressed; the back is raised.

/ɬəmba/: ‘bulb’
/bāllah/: ‘by God’
/ɬwɜ/: ‘shadow, shade’

/m/: the velarized counterpart of the voiced bilabial nasal /m/. Air passes through the nasal passage while the oral passage is blocked.

The lips are closed; the center of the tongue is depressed, while the back is
It becomes labiodental when it occurs before /f/ but remains bilabial elsewhere.

/mary/ 'a woman'
/zwafa/ 'Friday'
/yufa/ 'he swims'

/r/: the emphatic counterpart of the plain flap /r/. Produced farther back in the mouth with the tip of the tongue tapping against the area behind the upper teeth. The center of the tongue is depressed; the back is raised. It becomes a trill when doubled.

/ray/ 'he got lost'
/yurm/ 'heap'
/yaft/ 'disgrace'

Consonant Clusters

Libyan Arabic has two-consonant clusters and three-consonant clusters with the former more prevalent. In consonant clusters the articulation of each consonant is completed and no intervening vowel occurs to break up the cluster. The two-consonant clusters may be initial, medial, or final:

Initial

/bruda/ 'breeze, cool air'
/tlata/ 'three'
/drus/ 'lessons'
/gbal/ 'he accepted'
/sbul/ 'corn'
/ske/ 'he complained'
/bbad/ 'he pulled'
/brug/ 'he drowned'
Three-consonant clusters are found in initial and medial position only:

**Initial**

/\nžr\r\h/ 'he is wounded'
/\nsm\n\f/ 'he is heard'
/\nxnx\g/ 'he is strangled'
/\ntf\n\x/ 'it (M) is inflated'
/\n\t\r\h/ 'he lay down'

**Medial**

/mg\n\g\n\mza/ 'she is sitting'
/mi\x\n\\r\tsin/ 'they are arrogant'
/m\d\r\s\a/ 'school'
/yist\n\g\n\l/ 'they hurry up'
Chapter II

Vowels

Libyan Arabic has a total of eight vowels, five long: \( i, c, a, u, o \) and three short: \( i, \dot{a}, \) and \( u \). Many of these vowels have allophonic variations. Before are the vowels in tabular form, with descriptions thereafter.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>( i )</td>
<td></td>
<td>( u )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low high</td>
<td>( i )</td>
<td></td>
<td>( u )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>( e )</td>
<td></td>
<td>( o )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>( \dot{a} )</td>
<td>( a )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long Vowels

Libyan Arabic vowels do not have a diphthongal quality and, generally speaking, they are tenser than the English vowels.

All long vowels become shorter when they occur in final position. All long vowels become shorter before a stressed syllable.
/i/: a high-front unrounded vowel. Similar to the English vowel in \textit{seat}, and even closer to the French vowel in \textit{vite} 'quick'.

/e/: a mid-front unrounded vowel. It is longer than the English vowel in \textit{laid}, but without any diphthongization.

/ʃret/ 'I bought'
/kleb/ 'dog (diminutive)'

/a/: a low-central vowel; produced farther fr. \textit{t} in the mouth than the English vowel in \textit{father}. It becomes more retracted in the vicinity of a velarized consonant.

/xar/ 'hot'
/xnar/ 'lighthouse'
/dyar/ 'rooms'

An allophone of this vowel is [æ]. It is used in the environment of no velarized consonants.

/[bäggæl] 'grocer'
/[fälæh] 'farmer'

/o/: a mid-back rounded vowel, longer and involves more lip rounding than the English vowel.

/xol/ 'hear'
/xmola/ 'owner'
/lon/ 'color'

/u/: a high-back rounded vowel. Similar to the English vowel in \textit{boot}.

/xul/ 'beans'
/xmuses/ 'knife'
/xsbul/ 'corn'
Short Vowels

Libyan Arabic short vowels occur finally only rarely but they do occur initially and medially.

/i/: a low-high front unrounded vowel. Phonemically different from /i/ and contrasts with it.

/bríd/ 'became cool'
/siša/ 'merchandise'
/ybís/ 'became dry'

A nonphonemic variant of /i/ is a short, slightly centralized and round vowel between [ə] and [ɪ]. It occurs in such words as /fāllis/ 'went bankrupt', /yābkit/ 'he sends'. Hereafter this will be written /i/ whenever it occurs.

/ā/: a low-front central vowel. It is longer than the English schwa, although in final position it comes close to it.

/ḥāfla/ 'party'
/dārs/ 'lesson'
/māktib/ 'office'

An allophonic variant of this vowel is [ɛ], close to the English vowel in egg. It occurs in the environment of an unstressed closed syllable.

[dorɛk] 'your turn'
[ktabɛk] 'your book'
[ṣaṭɛr] 'staying late at night'

/u/: a low-high back rounded vowel, similar to the English vowel in put.
These vowels contrast with each other as follows:

**Long vowels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i-e</th>
<th>/grina/ ‘epilepsy’</th>
<th>/grena/ ‘we studied’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i-a</td>
<td>/yṣir/ ‘it happens’</td>
<td>/yṣar/ ‘left’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i-u</td>
<td>/ṣris/ ‘groom’</td>
<td>/ṣrus/ ‘pride’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i-o</td>
<td>/lim/ ‘lemon, oranges’</td>
<td>/lom/ ‘blaming’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-a</td>
<td>/xdena/ ‘we took’</td>
<td>/xdana/ ‘he took us’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-u</td>
<td>/žrena/ ‘we ran’</td>
<td>/žrulāh/ ‘they ran to him’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-o</td>
<td>/len/ ‘until’</td>
<td>/lon/ ‘color’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-u</td>
<td>/ṛras/ ‘weddings’</td>
<td>/ṛrus/ ‘pride’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-o</td>
<td>/gam/ ‘he lifted’</td>
<td>/gom/ ‘people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u-o</td>
<td>/fuz/ ‘win, (imperative)’</td>
<td>/fuz/ ‘dice’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Short vowels**

| i-ā     | /ḥabb/ ‘love, (imperative)’ | /ḥább/ ‘pimples’ |
| i-ū     | /sīll/ ‘pull out (imperative)’ | /swll/ ‘tuberculosis’ |
| ā-ū     | /bāṣd/ ‘after’ | /buṣd/ ‘distance’ |

**Contrasts between short and long vowels**

| i-ī     | /lim/ ‘gather! (imperative)’ | /lim/ ‘oranges’ |
| ā-ā     | /šārī/ ‘legal’ | /šarī/ ‘my street’ |
| u-ū     | /ruz/ ‘rice’ | /ruz/ ‘weigh! (imperative)’ |

**Diphthongs**

Libyan Arabic has the following sets of diphthongs.
Fronting diphthongs

/iy/: /miyya/ ‘hundred’ /xțiyya/ ‘mistake’
/ay/: /ḥayra/ ‘puzzled, Fem.’ /rayḥa/ ‘lost, Fem.’
/uı/: /buy/ ‘my father’ /xuy/ ‘my brother’
/āy/: /šāy/ ‘nothing’ /ṭāy/ ‘alive’

Retracting diphthongs

/ew/: occurs mainly in diminutive forms:
   /žew/ ‘puppy, dim.’ /hlew/ ‘good, sweet’
/aw/: /ḥawlt/ ‘she tried’ /fawdit/ ‘she repeated’
/āw/: /fawnäh/ ‘there he is’ /faw-fit/ ‘more difficult’
/aw/: this diphthong is the least common:
   /mrovwa/ ‘courtesy’ /duwwa/ ‘speech, argument’

Stress

Stress in Libyan Arabic is, to a large extent, predictable. Stress rules may be summarized in the following:

1. Primary stress is assigned to the final syllable if it has either of the following:
   a. A long vowel followed by a consonant, as in:

   /duxxän/ ‘tobacco, smoke’
   /măzküm/ ‘having cold’
   /firän/ ‘mice’

   b. A short vowel followed by two consonants:

   /lāfufst/ ‘I turned’
   /harfsft/ ‘I fought’
   /farrfst/ ‘I furnished’

2. If each of the last two syllables has a short a vowel followed by a single consonant stress falls on the antepenult.
2. /mʊsāţāda/ ‘aid’
    /bârâka/ ‘blessing’
    /mâţkâma/ ‘court’

3. In all other cases stress falls on the penult.
    /nʊšryb/ ‘we drink’
    /yɪstârزا/ ‘he recalls, gets back’
    /yɪtmâhtku/ ‘they are not serious’
    /mɪtbâhdu/ ‘she is in bad condition’
    /mʊstâšfa/ ‘hospital’

**Phonetic Change**

**Assimilation**

Assimilation is a common phenomenon in the speech of Libyans. The most common type is regressive. The following examples are the most common types, and are by no means exhaustive.¹

**Non-velarized to velarized**

| td $\rightarrow$ dd | /tdur/ $\rightarrow$ /dďur/ ‘it hurts’ |
| tt $\rightarrow$ tt | /ttir/ $\rightarrow$ /tţir/ ‘it flies’ |
| st $\rightarrow$ st | /măstra/ $\rightarrow$ /măštra/ ‘ruler’ |

**Voiceless to voiced**

| td $\rightarrow$ dd | /tdăwür/ $\rightarrow$ /ddăwür/ ‘she looks for’ |
| tz $\rightarrow$ dz | /tţawgît/ $\rightarrow$ /dzăwgit/ ‘It is painted’ |
| kg $\rightarrow$ gg | /ţak găbl/ $\rightarrow$ /ţag găbl/ ‘he came to you first’ |

¹For more details and elaboration see Ester Panetta’s ‘L’Arabo Parlato a Bengasi,’ Vol. II, Bengasi, 1943.
Voiced to voiceless

\[ \text{gk} \rightarrow \text{kk} \quad /\text{ṭrīgum}/ \rightarrow /\text{ṭrīkkum/} \quad \text{‘your (Pl.) way’} \]
\[ \text{dt} \rightarrow \text{tt} \quad /\text{žāʃʃidtha}/ \rightarrow /\text{žāʃʃittha}/ \quad \text{‘I stretched it’} \]

Point of articulation

\[ \text{nb} \rightarrow \text{mb} \quad /\text{krunb}/ \rightarrow /\text{krumb/} \quad \text{‘cabbage’} \]
\[ \text{nf} \rightarrow \text{mf} \quad /\text{nfl%}/ \rightarrow /\text{mfl%}/ \quad \text{‘it burst’} \]

Other

\[ \text{ts} \rightarrow \text{ss} \quad /\text{ṭsāgmít}/ \rightarrow /\text{ssāgmít/} \quad \text{‘it straightened’} \]
\[ \text{tž} \rightarrow \text{žž} \quad /\text{ṭžāwwiz}/ \rightarrow /\text{žžāwwiz}/ \quad \text{‘he got married’} \]
\[ \text{nr} \rightarrow \text{rr} \quad /\text{mın rah?}/ \rightarrow /\text{mır rah/} \quad \text{‘who saw him’} \]
\[ \text{ln} \rightarrow \text{nn} \quad /\text{wšulna}/ \rightarrow /\text{wšunna/} \quad \text{‘our arrival’} \]
\[ \text{nl} \rightarrow \text{ll} \quad /\text{mın lık}/ \rightarrow /\text{mnl lık/} \quad \text{‘where did you get, (the \right to . . .)’} \]
PART II

MORPHOLOGY
Most Arabic words consist of a basic number of consonants and a variety of vowels that may be inserted between those consonants. The consonantal body is normally called the root of the word while the variety of vowels are called patterns. The structure of words of Libyan Arabic will be understood best if we adhere to these two basic morphological concepts. Roots usually carry a general idea of the meaning of the word, while the patterns may specify it. The root /xnib/, which has something to do with 'stealing', for example, may be used with different vowels giving various specific meanings as follows:

/xnàb/ 'he stole'
/xanìb/ 'thief'
/xnìba/ 'theft'
/xnìba/ 'stealing'
/màxnìb/ 'stolen'
/yìnìrb/ 'he steals'

Roots in Libyan Arabic may be divided into triliteral roots (i.e. those consisting of three radical consonants), quadriliteral roots and, very rarely, roots of more than four radicals. The triliteral root is the most common type, followed by the quadriliteral. Both may be further subdivided into strong roots and weak roots. The first are those that consist of consonants
only; the second are those that may include a vowel besides the consonants. The vowel may occur medially or finally.\(^1\) Included under strong roots are what is called **doubled** roots; i.e. roots in which two of the radicals are identical. Following is an example of each type and its subdivisions. Each root has the general meaning indicated.

**Triliteral roots**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/fth/ ‘opening’</td>
<td>/dVx/ ‘getting dizzy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/hrb/ ‘escaping’</td>
<td>/lVm/ ‘blaming’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/smt/ ‘hearing’</td>
<td>/mšV/ ‘going’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/rgV/ ‘climbing’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Doubled**

| /mss/ ‘touching’ | /sdd/ ‘holding’ |
| /hss/ ‘feeling’  |

**Quadriliteral roots**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/drhb/ ‘rolling’</td>
<td>/mškV/ ‘shuffling (cards)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/xrbš/ ‘scribbling’</td>
<td>/tVrx/ ‘dating (historically)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tržm/ ‘translating’</td>
<td>/hVhV/ ‘singing (baby) to sleep’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^2\) \(V\) stands for a vowel. Any long vowel may occur in that position.
Doubled

/drdr/ ‘sprinkling’
/mşmş/ ‘rinsing’
CHAPTER IV

THE VERB

Derivation

Libyan Arabic has a definite number of derivational measures,¹ or classes (to be discussed in detail later), for verbs, for associated adjectives, and nouns. These measures correspond to the Standard Arabic measures which are numbered I to X, with the first being simple and the rest derived from it. For convenience, the radical consonants of the root are symbolized as follows: 'F' for the first radical: 'ṣ' for the middle, and 'L' for the last one. For example, a verb like /xnāb/ 'he stole' will be symbolized 'FṣL'. For doubled verbs the symbols FṣFṣ will be used. For quadriliteral root the last symbol 'L' will be repeated.

Libyan Arabic has eight of the ten standard Arabic measures of the triliteral verbs. It does not have measures corresponding to the Standard Arabic measures IV and IX. The eight measures are as follows.

---

¹ Measures are patterns against which forms of the verb are derived from the basic form, which is the first measure.
Measure I Verbs

This measure is the simplest and the most common of all. It has the patterns /FיוVЛ/ for strong verbs, /Fחﬀ/ for doubled verbs, /Fט/ for final-weak verbs, and /FaL/ for middle-weak verbs.\(^1\) Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Final-weak verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ץראפ/ ‘he knew’</td>
<td>/רמ/ ‘he threw’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/חמבג/ ‘he became furious’</td>
<td>/יג/ ‘he found’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/סਮינ/ ‘he became fat’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doubled verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doubled verbs</th>
<th>Middle-weak verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/חאיל/ ‘he opened’</td>
<td>/דאר/ ‘he did’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/רッド/ ‘he returned’ (transitive)</td>
<td>/ץאん/ ‘he betrayed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/דאש/ ‘he hid’</td>
<td>/זאב/ ‘he brought’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measure II Verbs

The verbs of this measure are characterized by the doubling of the middle radical. Most are transitive verbs with the pattern /Fחﬀל/ or /Faחיל/.

Strong verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/סהלח/ ‘he fixed, repaired’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/בתעיל/ ‘he dismissed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/גﬀיר/ ‘he whistled’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/סחנימ/ ‘he poisoned’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^1\) Middle-weak verbs are also called ‘hollow’ verbs; final-weak verbs are called ‘defective’. Both terms are used in this paper.
The hollow verbs\(^1\) of this measure take -yy or -ww as the doubled middle consonant.

/tàyyīb/ 'he cooked'
/zàwwīz/ 'he married, (trans.)'
/sàyyīb/ 'he left'
/zàwwīg/ 'he painted'

The defective verbs have the pattern /Fāṣa/.

/sàlla/ 'he elevated'
/dānna/ 'he moved close'
/sàlla/ 'he prayed'

As it is noticeable from the examples above, the doubled middle consonant in all the verbs is preceded and followed by a vowel. The preceding vowel is /a/ while the following vowel may be /a/ or /i/. This measure has no doubled verbs as a separate subclass since the doubling is a characteristic of the verbs of this measure in general.

**Measure III Verbs**

The pattern for this measure is /FaṣāL/ or /FaṣāL/. Only a limited

\(^1\)Or, to state the case more precisely, those verbs which correspond to hollow verbs of Measure I:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure I</th>
<th>Measure II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tāb/ 'It is cooked'</td>
<td>/tàyyīb/ 'he cooked'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/dar/ 'he turned'</td>
<td>/dāwīr/ 'he turned, (trans.)'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are, strictly speaking, no hollow verbs in Measure II since the middle position is filled with a (double) consonant.
number of verbs, mainly transitive, have this pattern. It remains the same for strong verbs and hollow verbs, with the middle consonant for the latter being -y or -w. For defective verbs it is /Fa'afa/.

**Strong and hollow verbs**

/samāh/ 'he forgave'
/šarik/ 'he fought, reprimanded'
/xasīm/ 'he argued with'
/šawīn/ 'he helped'
/šayīn/ 'he examined'

**Defective verbs**

/hada/ 'he came close'
/šada/ 'he antagonized'
/nada/ 'he called'

**Measure V Verbs**

The patterns for this measure are /tFāṣīl/ for strong and hollow verbs and /tFāṣa/ for defective verbs. Hollow verbs take -yy or -ww as the doubled middle consonant. This measure differs from Measure II in having a prefixed t-. The t- usually changes the meaning of the verb into semi-passive and sometimes into reflexive. While Measure II verbs may mean something like 'to cause to do something', Measure V verbs indicate 'entering the state' caused by Measure II verbs. It may also mean 'to do something oneself', e.g. /tšallīm/.

---

Strong and hollow verbs

/tvāššiš/ ‘he became upset’
/tmārrin/ ‘he trained (himself)’
/tlāwwin/ ‘it became colored’
/tḥāyyir/ ‘he became puzzled’

Defective verbs

/tnāhha/ ‘he removed (himself)’
/thānna/ ‘he became relieved’
/twāffa/ ‘he died’

Measure VI Verbs

This measure has the same pattern as Measure III plus a prefixed t-.

The pattern for strong and hollow verbs is /tFaʕ:iL/ (and rarely /tFaʕ:uL/).

The pattern for defective verbs is /tFaʕa/. The verbs of this measure have a reciprocal meaning.

Strong and hollow verbs

/tnāšif/ ‘he argued (with somebody)’
/tḥarib/ ‘he fought (with somebody)’
/tšawwr/ ‘he consulted (with somebody)’

Defective verbs

/tšafa/ ‘he settled the matter (with somebody)’
/tḥata/ ‘he became reconciled (with somebody)’
/tbəra/ ‘he played (against somebody)’

1In many instances the t- assimilates to the following consonant. It may be an assimilation of voiceless to voiced (/tdərrːb/ → /ddərrːb/ ‘to train (oneself)’) or it may be a total assimilation (/tsəwwug/ → /ssəwwug/ ‘to go to the market place’).
Measure VII Verbs

This measure is the same as Measure I with a prefixed n-. It has a semi-passive, and sometimes reflexive, meaning. Its patterns are as follows: /nFtáL/ for strong verbs, /nFáṣ/ for doubled verbs, /nFaṣ/ for hollow verbs, and /nFṣe/ for defective verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Hollow verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/nžbād/ ‘it was pulled’</td>
<td>/ndar/ ‘it was done’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/nžbāt/ ‘it was controlled’</td>
<td>/ngal/ ‘it was said’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/nhrāg/ ‘it was burned out’</td>
<td>/nbaṣ/ ‘it was sold’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doubled verbs</th>
<th>Defective verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ndāss/ ‘It was hidden’</td>
<td>/nṣre/ ‘It was bought’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/nṣābb/ ‘It was poured’</td>
<td>/ngre/ ‘It was read’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/nbāll/ ‘It was wetted’</td>
<td>/nbze/ ‘It was paid’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measure VIII Verbs

This has the pattern /FțtáL/ for strong verbs, /Fṭāṣ/ for doubled verbs, /Fṭaṣ/ for hollow verbs, and /Fṭe/ for defective verbs. It differs from Measure I in that it has an infixed -t- after the first radical.

---

1 In the speech of some people the prefix is in-.

2 When the n- is followed by a voiced bilabial stop the n- usually assimilates to it, creating an /m/ effect; e.g. /nbne/ → /mbne/ ‘it was built’.
### Strong verbs

| /l̩təb/ ‘it was played’ | /xtær/ ‘he chose’ |
| /ntfax/ ‘it was inflated’ | /ŋtag/ ‘he was nostalgic’ |
| /l̩təm/ ‘it was welded’ |

### Hollow verbs

| /l̩təmm/ ‘It was gathered’ | /sthɛ/ ‘he became shy’ |
| /l̩təzz/ ‘he was dismissed’ | /btlɛ/ ‘he was plagued’ |
| /ftəkk/ ‘he was relieved’ |

### Doubled verbs

| /l̩təmg/ ‘he wondered’ | /stah/ ‘he rested’ |
| /l̩təmlɪk/ ‘it became haunted’ | /stfaɪ/ ‘he was optimistic’ |
| /stəblɪd/ ‘he became stupid’ |

### Defective verbs

| /stəbga/ ‘he deserved’ | /stəbla/ ‘he was plagued by’ |
| /stəmr/ ‘he continued’ | /stərxə/ ‘he slowed down’ |
| /stəld/ ‘he enjoyed the taste’ | /stəsnə/ ‘he took care of’ |

---

1 Some weak middle roots also take /stəF̩ːl/ where the is usually /-w/ or /-y/; e.g. /stahwin/ ‘he underestimated’, /stəxwil/ ‘he became wild’. 

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#### Measure X Verbs

This measure has the prefix st-. For strong verbs the pattern is /stəF̩ːl/, for doubled verbs it is /stF̩ː/; for hollow verbs /stFaʃ/; and for defective verbs the pattern is /stəF̩a/. 

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Quadriliteral Verbs

Quadriliteral verbs are divided into simple forms and derived forms. The pattern for the simple strong verbs is /FāṣLīL/ (sometimes /FāṣLāL/) and only rarely /FāṣLōL/. For hollow verbs (in which the weak item is usually the second) the pattern is /FōṣīL/; for defective verbs it is /Fōṣa/ or /FāṣLa/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Hollow verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/dārhib/ 'he rolled'</td>
<td>/torix/ 'he dated, historically'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/šārbit/ 'he put in sequence'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/dāržāh/ 'he swung'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/xārbiš/ 'he scribbled'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defective verbs

/māška/ 'he shuffled (cards)'  
/hohā/ 'he sang (baby) to sleep'

There are many reduplications in quadriliteral roots. In some verbs the second and the fourth radicals are repeated; e.g. /šālwil/ 'he turned upside down'. In a few other verbs the first and the third are reduplicated; e.g. /bārbis/ 'he dug out', /tarṭis/ 'he shattered'. In still other verbs we find multiple reduplication; i.e. the first and the third as well as the second and the fourth, all in the same word, e.g. /ṭagīg/ 'he knocked', /fāṭfit/ 'he crushed.'
Derived Quadriliteral Verbs

Derived verbs are formed by prefixing a t- to the simple quadri-literal verbs in the same way as Measure V triliteral verbs are derived from Measure II. The addition of t- gives the meaning of semi-passive. The patterns are the same as those of the simple verbs plus the prefix t-.

Strong verbs

Hollow verbs

/txārbaš/ ‘it was scribbled’
/ddārhrb/ ‘it was rolled’
/ddāržah/ ‘it was swung’
/txorix/ ‘it was dated’
/tṣōbn/ ‘it was washed’

Inflection

Verbs in Libyan Arabic are inflected for the following:

Tense: Perfect and imperfect
Mood: Indicative and imperative
Number: (Singular (S) and plural (Pl.)
Gender: Masculine (M) and feminine (F)
Person: First, second, third.

Inflectional affixes may be prefixes, suffixes, or a combination of both. The perfect tense is indicated by attaching suffixes; the imperfect by prefixes (and in some cases also by suffixes). An inflectional affix is added to a verb stem (which is, of course, a combination of a root and a pattern).

1 No derived defective verbs have been observed in Libyan Arabic.
Verb stems may be divided into: (a) strong stems, which end in a short vowel plus a consonant, such as /hbəs/ ‘he jailed’; (b) doubled stems in which the last radical is doubled, such as /bāll/ ‘he wetted’; (c) hollow stems (those ending in a long vowel plus a consonant), such as /mat/ ‘he died’; (d) defective stems, ending in a vowel, such as /xde/ ‘he took’.

The Perfect Tense

Strong Verbs

The perfect tense of strong verbs is formed by the addition of suffixes to verb stems. The suffixes are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>-ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
<td>-tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>-u</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These suffixes may be added to the eight measures of the triliteral verbs and to the quadriliteral verbs. Some internal changes may result but, as we will see, the patterns are in general quite consistent. The following example is an inflectional paradigm of a Measure I verb:
/srâb/ ‘he drank’

I /srâb\_t\_1
we /srâb\_na/

you (MS) /srâb/
you (FS) /srâb\_i/
you (Pl.) /srâb\_u/

he /srâb/
she /srâb\_i/
they /srâb\_u/

As may be seen from this paradigm, the third person masculine singular lacks any kind of suffix (Ø indicates lack of inflection). This same form is considered the simple form from which all others are derived. Arabic does not have an infinitive form as in English. The third person masculine singular of the perfect is therefore considered the base form.

In the third person feminine singular and the third person plural form the stem vowel not only shifts back to a place between the first and the second radicals but also changes to /u/ in some verbs (like /srâb/) and to /I/ in others, like the following:

/skân/ ‘he lived (at)’

I /skânt/
we /skâna/

\[1\] Note that the forms for the second person masculine singular and the first person singular are identical in the perfect tense.
This shift is characteristic of verbs of Measures I, VII, and VIII. Examples:

Measure VII:

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ \text{‘he was dismissed’} /\text{n̪há redistribute}/ \text{‘he was jailed’}
\]

I

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

we

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

you (MS)

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

you (FS)

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

you (Pl.)

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

he

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

she

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

they

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{n̪há redistribute}/
\]

Measure VIII:

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ \text{‘he stood upright’} /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ \text{‘he shivered’}
\]

I

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

we

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

you (MS)

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

you (FS)

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

you (Pl.)

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

he

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

she

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

they

\[
/\text{nt̪ redistribute}/ /\text{nt̪ redistribute}/
\]

In Measures II, III, V, VI, and X, this vowel shift does not occur.

Instead the vowel of the second syllable drops completely. The following
are examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure II:</th>
<th>Measure III:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/šākkir/ ‘he closed’</td>
<td>/samāḥ/ ‘he pardoned’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>/šākkt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>/šākkırna/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>/šākkir/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>/šākkırıt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
<td>/šākkırtı/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>/šākkır/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>/šākktı/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>/šākkırı/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure V:</th>
<th>Measure VI:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tmārrın/ ‘he trained (himself)’</td>
<td>/tšārik/ ‘he fought (with somebody)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>/tmārrınt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>/tmārrınna/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>/tmārrınt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>/tmārrıntı/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
<td>/tmārrıntu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>/tmārrın/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>/tmārrınt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>/tmārrınu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measure X:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/stāfžıl/ ‘he hurried’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doubled Verbs

Verbs with a doubled final radical of Measures I, VII, VIII, and X have the vowel /e/ inserted before the suffixes, in the perfect tense, in all the persons except the third person feminine singular and the third person plural.

Examples:

Measure I:          Measure VII:

/dâff/ 'he pushed'   /ndârr/ 'he was hurt'
I         /dâffet/       /ndârret/
we        /dâffena/      /ndârrena/

you (MS) /dâffet/       /ndârret/
you (FS) /dâffeti/      /ndârreti/
you (Pl.) /dâffetu/      /ndârretu/

he        /dâff/        /ndârr/
she       /dâffit/       /ndârrit/
they      /dâffu/        /ndârru/

Measure VIII:      Measure X:

/stâff/ 'he wrapped
(himself)'          /stðâgg/ 'he deserved'
I         /stâffet/     /stðâgget/
we       /stâffena/     /stðâggena/

you (MS) /stâffet/     /stðâgget/
you (FS) /stâffeti/    /stðâggeti/
you (Pl.) /stâffetu/    /stðâggetu/
Hollow Verbs

Hollow verbs are so called because they have the long vowel /a/ before the final consonant in place of the second radical. When the perfect tense suffixes are added to these verbs the vowel changes into /u/ or /i/, unpredictably, in the first and second persons—that is, where the suffixes begin with a consonant. Hollow verbs are found in Measures I, VII, VIII, and X. Examples:

Measure I:

/he/ /fag/ ‘he woke up’
/she/ /ltaffit/ ‘she fasted’
/they/ /ltaffu/ ‘they fasted’

/I/ /fagt/ ‘I woke up’
/we/ /fagnu/ ‘we fasted’

/you (MS)/ /figt/ ‘you (MS) woke up’
/you (FS)/ /figtit/ ‘you (FS) fasted’
/you (Pl.)/ /figtu/ ‘you (Pl.) fasted’

/they/ /fagu/ ‘they fasted’

Measure VII:

/he/ /nxan/ ‘he was betrayed’
/she/ /nxantit/ ‘she was betrayed to’
/they/ /nxantu/ ‘they were betrayed to’

/I/ /nxunt/ ‘I was betrayed’
/we/ /nxunta/ ‘we were betrayed’

/you (MS)/ /mxunt/ ‘you (MS) were betrayed’
/you (FS)/ /mxunti/ ‘you (FS) were betrayed to’
/you (Pl.)/ /mxuntu/ ‘you (Pl.) were betrayed to’
Defective Verbs

Defective verbs are those that end in the vowels /e/ or /a/. In verbs ending in /a/, this changes to /e/ before the suffixes of the first and second persons. In all verbs, the final /e/ or /a/ is dropped before the feminine
and plural third person suffixes. These changes occur in all eight measures of triliteral verbs and in quadriliterals.\(^1\) The following are examples from Measure I and X.

Measure I: Measure X:

\[
\begin{array}{lcl}
/m\text{še}/ & 'he went' & /st\text{ärxa}/ 'he relaxed' \\
I & /m\text{šët}/ & /st\text{ärxet}/ \\
we & /m\text{šëna}/ & /st\text{ärxena}/ \\
you (MS) & /m\text{šët}/ & /st\text{ärxet}/ \\
you (FS) & /m\text{šëti}/ & /st\text{ärxeti}/ \\
you (PL.) & /m\text{šëtu}/ & /st\text{ärxetu}/ \\
he & /m\text{še}/ & /st\text{ärxa}/ \\
she & /m\text{šët}/ & /st\text{ärxet}/ \\
they & /m\text{šët}/ & /st\text{ärxetu}/ \\
\end{array}
\]

The Imperfect Tense

The inflectional affixes of the imperfect tense may be prefixes, suffixes, or a combination of both. The imperfect affixes are as follows:

\[\text{This applies also to such rare biliteral verbs as } /z\text{è}/ 'he came' \text{ and } /r\text{e}/ 'he saw', \text{ which are conjugated as follows:}\]

\[
\begin{array}{lcl}
I & /r\text{èt}/ \\
we & /r\text{ëna}/ \\
you (MS) & /r\text{èt}/ \\
you (FS) & /r\text{èti}/ \\
you (PL.) & /r\text{ètu}/ \\
he & /r\text{è}/ \\
she & /r\text{ët}/ \\
they & /r\text{ù}/ \\
\end{array}
\]

Notice that in the third person feminine and plural the second radical drops completely and the suffix is attached to a monoradical stem.
Suffixes are always vowels. Prefixes may be consonants alone or consonants plus one of the vowels enclosed in parentheses. Prefixes are consonants alone if the verb stem begins with a single consonant; and a consonant plus one of the vowels if the stem begins in a cluster of two consonants or more. As shown in the following examples (from Measure I), prefixes are combined with suffixes only in the second person feminine singular form and in the plural forms.

I  n(i/ä/U)
we  n(i/ä/U) . . . u

you (MS)  t(i/ä/U)
you (FS)  t(i/ä/U) . . . i
you (Pl.)  t(i/a/U) . . . u

he  y(i/a/U)
she  t(i/a/U)
they  y(i/a/U) . . . u

When this combination of prefixes and suffixes are added to different verbs some changes take place in different measures. The following are examples of those changes.

I  /hāl/ 'he opened'  /rbāt/ 'he tied'  /lāfāb/ 'he played'
we  /nīll/  /nūrbūt/  /nālīfāb/

you (MS)  /thīll/  /turbut/  /tālīfāb/
you (FS)  /thill/  /turbi/  /tālībī/
you (Pl.)  /thillu/  /turbutu/  /tālību/

he  /yhill/  /yūrbūt/  /yālīfāb/
she  /thill/  /turbut/  /tālīfāb/
they  /yhillu/  /yūrbūtu/  /yālību/
Strong Verbs

When the imperfect tense affixes are added to strong verbs the stem vowel drops in the second person feminine singular and in all the plural forms, creating a cluster of three consonants in the middle. This is true of strong verbs of all measures except VII and VIII. The following is an example of Measure II.

/ʂəффr/ ‘he whistled’
I /nʂəффr/
we /nʂəффru/
you (MS) /tʂəффr/
you (FS) /tʂəффri/
you (Pl.) /tʂəффru/
he /yʂəффr/
she /tʂəффr/
they /yʂəффru/¹

In Measures VII and VIII the stem vowel does not drop but, instead, it changes its position. It moves back to a place between the first and second radicals instead of its previous position between the second and the third. This happens in the second person feminine singular and in the plural forms; that is, with any (vowel) suffix.

¹Notice that in the plural forms and in the second person feminine singular the F is doubled, in the pronunciation of Libyans, despite the fact that it occurs before a consonant; it is, therefore, different from /nsəfru/ ‘we travel’, /tʃəfr/ ‘you (FS) travel’, etc.
\[\text{I} \quad \text{we} \quad \text{you (MS)} \quad \text{you (FS)} \quad \text{you (Pl.)} \quad \text{he} \quad \text{she} \quad \text{they}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'he was hit'</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>/nundrub/</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>/nundurbu/</td>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>/tundrub/</td>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>/tundurbi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>/yundrub/</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>/tundrub/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>/yundurbu/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the imperfect prefixes are added to stems beginning with \(w\)- or \(y\)-, the prefixes merge with these sounds, resulting in a long high back vowel for \(w\)- and long high front vowel for \(y\)-; e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/wgaf/</th>
<th>'he stood'</th>
<th>/ybis/</th>
<th>'it became dry'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>/nuguf/</td>
<td>/nibis/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>/nugfu/</td>
<td>/nibs/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>/tuguf/</td>
<td>/tibis/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>/tugfi/</td>
<td>/tibs/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
<td>/tugfu/</td>
<td>/tibs/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>/yuguf/</td>
<td>/yibis/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>/tuguf/</td>
<td>/tibs/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>/yugfu/</td>
<td>/yibs/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hollow Verbs**

In hollow verbs of Measure I, the stem vowel in the imperfect is different from the stem vowel in the perfect. The stem vowel \(/a/\) in the perfect changes, unpredictably, to \(/i/\) in such verbs as \(/fag/ \rightarrow /yfig/\) 'he wakes up' and to \(/u/\) in such verbs as \(/bas/ \rightarrow /ybus/\) 'he kisses'. In still other verbs the \(/a/\) does not change at all. Examples:
Defective Verbs

In defective verbs the final vowel of the stem (normally /e/ or /a/) changes to /i/, eliminating the distinction between masculine and feminine in the second person singular. This is the case in defective verbs of Measures I, II, III, and VIII, and in quadriliteral verbs such as /hoha/ ‘he sang (the baby) to sleep’. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Form</th>
<th>Masculine Singular</th>
<th>Feminine Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/a/ → /i/</td>
<td>/fag/ 'he woke up'</td>
<td></td>
<td>/yfig/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/bas/ 'he kissed'</td>
<td></td>
<td>/ybus/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>/nfig/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/yfig/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>/nfigu/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/yfigu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>/tfig/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/yfig/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>/tfigi/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/yfigi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
<td>/tfigu/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/yfigu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>/yfig/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/yfig/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>/tfig/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/tfig/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>/tfigu/</td>
<td></td>
<td>/tfigu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where:
- /a/ represents 'he spent the night'
- /bat/ represents 'he kissed'
- /bas/ represents 'he woke up'
- /fag/ represents 'he sang (the baby) to sleep'
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure I:</th>
<th>Measure II:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/šre/ ‘he bought’</td>
<td>/hálλa/ ‘he sweetened’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I /nišri/</td>
<td>I /n̥ałλi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we /nišru/</td>
<td>we /n̥ałλu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS) /tišri/</td>
<td>you (MS) /th álλi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS) /tišri/</td>
<td>you (FS) /θ álλi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.) /tišru/</td>
<td>you (Pl.) /θ álλu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he /yišri/</td>
<td>he /y h álλi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she /tišri/</td>
<td>she /θ álλi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they /yišru/</td>
<td>they /y h álλu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure III:</th>
<th>Measure VIII:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/n ada/ ‘he called on . . .’</td>
<td>/rtme/ ‘he lay down’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I /nnadi/</td>
<td>I /n rtm i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we /nnadu/</td>
<td>we /n rtm u/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS) /tnadi/</td>
<td>you (MS) /t rtm i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS) /tnadi/</td>
<td>you (FS) /t rtm i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.) /tnadu/</td>
<td>you (Pl.) /t rtm u/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he /ynadi/</td>
<td>he /y rtmi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she /tnadi/</td>
<td>she /t rtmi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they /ynadu/</td>
<td>they /y rtmu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quadriliteral /hoh a/ ‘he sang (the baby) to sleep’:

| I /nhoh i/ | I /nr / |
| we /nhohu/ | we /nr / |
| you (MS) /thoh i/ | you (MS) /t / |
| you (FS) /thoh i/ | you (FS) /t / |
| you (Pl.) /thohu/ | you (Pl.) /th / |

---

1 Notice that the /i/ is omitted when the plural suffix is attached.
Defective verbs of Measures V and VI do not change at all in the imperfect. Their stems are, therefore, identical to those of the perfect, ending in /a/. This /a/ is dropped before the suffix /i/ or /u/. Examples:

Measure V:

Measure VI:

A different group of defective verbs is the one in which the final vowel (usually /e/) changes to /a/. This includes all verbs of Measures VII, and some verbs of Measure I. Examples:

Measure VII:

Measure I:

1Also conjugated in the same way (i.e. with /i/ at the end) are bilateral verbs such as /že/ 'he came' which becomes /yži/, /yžu/, etc.
Inflection of the Imperative

The imperative forms of verbs are identical with, or close to, the basic forms of the second person of the imperfect. Some exceptions will be noted later in the chapter. Imperative forms of verbs may be divided into two groups: (a) a group that is formed from the imperfect by replacing the consonantal element of the prefix by a glottal stop (leaving the vowel element intact). This group includes: the strong and defective verbs of Measure I and all the verbs of Measures VII, VIII, and X. Examples:

Measure I

Strong verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfect</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tušrub/ 'you (MS) drink'</td>
<td>/?ušrub/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tušrbi/ 'you (FS) drink'</td>
<td>/?ušrbi/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tušrbu/ 'you (Pl.) drink'</td>
<td>/?ušrbu/!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defective verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfect</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tirmi/ 'you (MS) throw'</td>
<td>/?irmi/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tirmi/ 'you (FS) throw'</td>
<td>/?irmi/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tirmu/ 'you (Pl.) throw'</td>
<td>/?irmu/!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measure VII

Strong verbs:

/tnʊŋlʊg/ 'you (MS) get loose' /?unŋlug/!
/tnʊŋlʊgi/ 'you (FS) get loose' /?unŋlugi/!
/tnʊŋlʊgu/ 'you (PI.) get loose' /?unŋlugu/!

Doubled verbs:

/tʊndəss/ 'you (MS) hide (yourself)' /?indaʃṣ/!
/tʊndəssi/ 'you (FS) hide (yourself)' /?indaʃṣi/!
/tʊndəssu/ 'you (PI.) hide (yourself)' /?indaʃṣu/!

Hollow verbs:

/tʊŋgam/ 'you (MS) get picked up' /?ingam/!
/tʊŋgam/ 'you (FS) get picked up' /?ingam/!
/tʊŋgamu/ 'you (PI.) get picked up' /?ingamu/!

Defective verbs:

/tʊŋnu/ 'you (MS) bend' /?in‰n/!
/tʊŋnu/ 'you (FS) bend' /?in‰n/!
/tʊŋnu/ 'you (PI.) bend' /?in‰nu/!

Measure VIII

Strong verbs:

/t久tələf/ 'you (MS) differ' /?äxtələf/!
/təxtəlif/ 'you (FS) differ' /?äxtəlif/!
/təxtəlifu/ 'you (PI.) differ' /?äxtəlifu/!

Doubled verbs:

/tiftek/ 'you (MS) become relieved' /?iftəkk/!
/tiftekki/ 'you (FS) become relieved' /?iftəkki/!
/tiftekku/ 'you (PI.) become relieved' /?iftəkku/!
Hollow verbs:

/t̡t̡t̡az/ ‘you (MS) need’
/t̡t̡t̡azi/ ‘you (FS) need’
/t̡t̡t̡azu/ ‘you (PL) need’

Defective verbs:

/t̡st̡t̡hi/ ‘you (MS) become shy’
/t̡st̡t̡hi/ ‘you (FS) become shy’
/t̡st̡t̡hu/ ‘you (PL) become shy’

Measure X

Strong verbs:

/t̡st̡t̡f̡bd̡i/ ‘you (MS) enslave’
/t̡st̡t̡f̡bd̡i/ ‘you (FS) enslave’
/t̡st̡t̡f̡bd̡du/ ‘you (PL) enslave’

Doubled verbs:

/t̡st̡t̡f̡ddi/ ‘you (MS) get ready’
/t̡st̡t̡f̡ddi/ ‘you (FS) get ready’
/t̡st̡t̡f̡ddu/ ‘you (PL) get ready’

Hollow verbs:

/t̡st̡t̡fal/ ‘you (MS) become optimistic’
/t̡st̡t̡fal/ ‘you (FS) become optimistic’
/t̡st̡t̡fal/ ‘you (PL) become optimistic’

Defective verbs:

/t̡st̡t̡t̡na/ ‘you (MS) except’
/t̡st̡t̡t̡ni/ ‘you (FS) except’
/t̡st̡t̡t̡nu/ ‘you (PL) except’

(b) A group that is formed by omitting the imperfect prefixes from the second person forms, without making any other changes. This group includes: the
doubled and hollow verbs of Measure I and all the verbs of Measures II, III, V, and VI. Examples:

**Measure I**

**Doubled verbs:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfect</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tʃidd/ ‘you (MS) count’</td>
<td>/ʃidd/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʃiddi/ ‘you (FS) count’</td>
<td>/ʃiddi/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʃiddu/ ‘you (PL.) count’</td>
<td>/ʃiddu/!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hollow verbs:**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ddir/ ‘you (MS) do’</td>
<td>/dir/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ddiri/ ‘you (FS) do’</td>
<td>/diri/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ddiru/ ‘you (PL.) do’</td>
<td>/diru/!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measure II**

**Strong verbs:**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tfällah/ ‘you (MS) farm’</td>
<td>/fällah/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tfällhi/ ‘you (FS) farm’</td>
<td>/fällhi/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tfällhu/ ‘you (PL.) farm’</td>
<td>/fällhu/!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hollow verbs:**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tnåwwir/ ‘you (MS) lighten’</td>
<td>/nåwwir/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tnåwwri/ ‘you (FS) lighten’</td>
<td>/nåwwri/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tnåwwru/ ‘you (PL.) lighten’</td>
<td>/nåwwru/!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Defective verbs:**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/txälli/ ‘you (MS) leave’</td>
<td>/xälli/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/txälli/ ‘you (FS) leave’</td>
<td>/xälli/!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/txällu/ ‘you (PL.) leave’</td>
<td>/xällu/!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measure III

Strong verbs:

\[ /\text{tma}n\acute{\text{a}}\text{f}/ \text{you (MS) object'} \quad /\text{ma}n\acute{\text{a}}\text{f}/! \]
\[ /\text{tma}n\text{f}i/ \text{you (FS) object'} \quad /\text{ma}n\text{f}i/! \]
\[ /\text{tma}n\text{fu}/ \text{you (PL.) object'} \quad /\text{ma}n\text{fu}/! \]

Hollow verbs:

\[ /\text{t}\text{say}r\text{r}/ \text{you (MS) go along with'} \quad /\text{say}r\text{r}/! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{sayr}i/ \text{you (FS) go along with'} \quad /\text{sayr}i/! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{sayru}/ \text{you (PL.) go along with'} \quad /\text{sayru}/! \]

Defective verbs:

\[ /\text{t}\text{sad}/ \text{you (MS) antagonize'} \quad /\text{sad}/! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{sad}/i/ \text{you (FS) antagonize'} \quad /\text{sad}/i! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{sad}/u/ \text{you (PL.) antagonize'} \quad /\text{sad}/u! \]

Measure V

Strong verbs:

\[ /\text{t}\text{t}b\acute{\text{a}}\text{rr}d\text{i}/ \text{you (MS) cool (yourself)' } \quad /\text{t}b\acute{\text{a}}\text{rrd}/! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{t}b\acute{\text{a}}\text{rrd}/i/ \text{you (FS) cool (yourself)' } \quad /\text{t}b\acute{\text{a}}\text{rrd}/i! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{t}b\acute{\text{a}}\text{rrd}/u/ \text{you (PL.) cool (yourselves)' } \quad /\text{t}b\acute{\text{a}}\text{rrd}/u! \]

Hollow verbs:

\[ /\text{t}\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{yy}r\text{ir}/ \text{you (MS) change'} \quad /\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{yy}r\text{ir}/! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{yy}r\text{iri}/ \text{you (FS) change'} \quad /\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{yy}r\text{iri}/! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{yy}r\text{ru}/ \text{you (PL.) change'} \quad /\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{yy}r\text{ru}/! \]

Defective verbs:

\[ /\text{t}\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{dd}/ \text{you (MS) have lunch'} \quad /\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{dd}/! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{dd}/i/ \text{you (FS) have lunch'} \quad /\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{dd}/i! \]
\[ /\text{t}\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{dd}/u/ \text{you (PL.) have lunch'} \quad /\text{t}\acute{\text{a}}\text{dd}/u! \]
Strong verbs:

/tʃarik/ 'you (MS) fight'    /tʃarik/!
/tʃarki/ 'you (FS) fight'   /tʃarki/!
/tʃarku/ 'you (Pl.) fight'  /tʃarku/!

Hollow verbs:

/tʃawni/ 'you (MS) cooperate' /tʃawn/!
/tʃawni/ 'you (FS) cooperate' /tʃawni/!
/tʃawnu/ 'you (Pl.) cooperate' /tʃawnu/!

Defective verbs:

/tʃbara/ 'you (MS) compete with' /tbara/!
/tʃbari/ 'you (FS) compete with' /tbari/!
/tʃbaru/ 'you (Pl.) compete with' /tbaru/!

Among the few verbs that have irregular imperative forms are the two biliteral verbs /że/ 'he came' and /re/ 'he saw'. In the imperatives of these two verbs, totally different stems are used; e.g.

/że/                  /re/
/tʃala/ 'you (MS) come!' /ʔiʃbāh/ 'you (MS) see!'
/tʃali/ 'you (FS) come!' /ʔiʃbi/ 'you (FS) see!'
/tʃalu/ 'you (Pl.) come!' /ʔiʃbhu/ 'you (Pl.) see!'

_______________________

¹/šbāh/ is actually an independent verb of its own, synonymous with /re/. Since /re/ has no imperative form the imperative of the other verb is used instead.
The Inflection of /kle/ and /xde/

The two verbs /kle/ 'he ate' and /xde/ 'he took' are irregular in their inflection and behavior. These are basically defective triliteral Measure I verbs, with the final radical being /e/. They behave as such when they are inflected for the perfect; e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/kle/</th>
<th>/xde/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>/kle/</td>
<td>/xde/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>/kle/</td>
<td>/xde/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>/klet/</td>
<td>/xdet/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>/kleti/</td>
<td>/xdeti/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
<td>/kletu/</td>
<td>/xdetu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>/kle/</td>
<td>/xde/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>/klt/</td>
<td>/xdt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>/klu/</td>
<td>/xdu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When they are inflected for the imperfect, however, they become strong verbs with the different stems: /-akl/ and /-axd/. Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/kle/</th>
<th>/xde/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>/nak1/</td>
<td>/nax1/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we</td>
<td>/naklu/</td>
<td>/naxdu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (MS)</td>
<td>/takl/</td>
<td>/tax1/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (FS)</td>
<td>/takli/</td>
<td>/taxdi/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (Pl.)</td>
<td>/taklu/</td>
<td>/taxdu/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>/yak1/</td>
<td>/yax1/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>/takl/</td>
<td>/tax1/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>/yaklu/</td>
<td>/yaxdu/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the imperative they also have irregular forms that do not relate to the imperfect forms. The stem in the imperative has /u/ as the middle radical and therefore behaves like a hollow stem; e.g.

/klı/  /xdı/  
Imperative:  /kuı/! 'you (MS) eat'  /xudı/! 'you (MS) take'
/kuli/! 'you (FS) eat'  /xudi/! 'you (FS) take'
/kulu/! 'you (Pl.) eat'  /xudu/! 'you (Pl.) take'
CHAPTER V

NOUNS

Derivation

Derivation of Verbal Nouns

A verbal noun is the noun that is derived from a verb. It often has the meaning of an 'action' or 'state', and in few instances, of action combined with its result. Verbal nouns normally have abstract meanings but many have acquired concrete meanings through different processes.

There are a number of patterns by which verbal nouns are derived. These patterns vary according to the verb measure in question. Measure I verbs, for example, have a wide variety of verbal noun patterns and they cannot all be predicted. What follows is the patterns of most of the measures in Libyan Arabic arranged in numerical order, with examples.

Measure I Patterns

This measure has the following patterns for verbal nouns:

A. Strong verbs: /FāğL/

Doubled verbs: /Fāğ/ ~ /Fāğan/

Hollow verbs: /Foŋ/ ~ /Foŋan/, /Feŋ/ ~ /Feŋan/

Defective verbs: /Fāh/, /FāLa/
Examples:

Strong verbs

'/nbâh/ 'it barked'
'/drâb/ 'he hit'
'/šmâs/ 'he heard'

Doubled verbs

'/mâdd/ 'he stretched'
'/râdd/ 'to give back'
'/lâmâ/ 'to gather'

Hollow verbs

'/dab/ 'it melted'
'/mal/ 'it bent'
'/han/ '
'/daš/ '

Defective verbs

'/žre/ 'he ran'
'/mle/ 'he filled'
'/nse/ 'he forgot'
'/she/ 'he forgot'

Verbal nouns

'/nâbâh/ 'barking'
'/dârâb/ 'hitting'
'/šâmâs/ 'hearing'

'/mâdd/ 'stretching'
'/râdd/ 'giving back'
'/lâmâ/ 'gathering'

'/dob/ 'melting'
'/mel/ 'bending'
'/ihana/
'/daša/

'/žâri/ 'running'
'/mâli/ 'filling'
'/nâsâwa/ 'forgetting'
'/sâhâwa/ 'forgetting'

B. Strong verbs: /FîlL/

Hollow verbs: /Fîla/

Examples:

Strong verbs

'/kdâb/ 'he lied'
'/lâb/ 'he played'

Hollow verbs

'/har/ 'he became puzzled'
'/šar/ 'he became jealous'

Verbal nouns

'/kûdâb/ 'lying'
'/lîfâb/ 'playing'

'/hîra/ 'puzzlement'
'/šîra/ 'jealousy'
C. Strong verbs: /Fwɔul/

Doubled verbs: /Fwɔʃʃ/

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Verbal nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/bxɔl/ 'he was stingy'</td>
<td>/bwɔxɔl/ 'stinginess'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/dhɔk/ 'he laughed'</td>
<td>/d乎ɔk/ 'laughing'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doubled verbs

/ɣəʃʃ/ 'he cheated' /ɣɔʃʃ/ 'cheating'¹

D. Strong verbs: /FɔːL/`

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/hlɔf/ 'he swore'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zɔbɔd/ 'he pulled'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʂɔɡɔd/ 'he tied'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Strong verbs: /Fɔəl/

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Verbal nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/glɔɡ/ 'he lost patience'</td>
<td>/glɔɡ/ 'loosing patience'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tʂɔb/ 'he got tired'</td>
<td>/tʂɔb/ 'tiredness'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Strong verbs: /FɔuL/

Examples:

¹Pattern A of the doubled verbs may be used as a verbal noun for this verb too.
Strong verbs

/xtäm/ ‘he passed by’ /xtum/ ‘passing by’
/hräb/ ‘he escaped’ /hrub/ ‘escaping’
/zrāg/ ‘he sneaked out’ /zrug/ ‘sneaking out’

G. Strong verbs: /FǐLa/ – /FũLa/

Examples:

Strong verbs

/xnäb/ ‘he stole’ /xinba/ ‘stealing’
/xtēb/ ‘he announced his engagement’

H. Strong verbs: /FĩLa/

Hollow verbs: /Fĩa/, /FĩaLa/

Examples:

Strong verbs and hollow verbs

/rgäd/ ‘he slept’ /rgad/ ‘sleeping’
/hbä/ ‘he became crazy’ /hbal/ ‘craziness’
/tyäb/ ‘it became cooked’ /tyab/ ‘cooking’
/syam/ ‘he fasted’ /syam/ ‘fasting’
/zyrä/ ‘he visited’ /zyara/ ‘visiting’

Measure II Patterns

Measure II has the following verbal noun patterns:

A. Strong verbs:

Defective verbs: /FĩaLa/
Examples:

**Strong verbs and defective verbs**

/dâbbir/ 'he thought of something' /dbara/ 'thinking'
/fâllâh/ 'he farmed' /flâğa/ 'farming'

**Defective verbs**

/wâša/ 'he gave a message' /wâšaya/ 'giving a message'
/kâffa/ 'it satisfied' /kfâya/ 'satisfying'

B. Strong verbs: /trF̱eL/

Defective verbs: /trF̱e/

Examples:

**Strong verbs**

/xâlît/ 'he mixed' /tîxît/ 'mixing'
/bârrid/ 'he cooled' /tîbrîd/ 'cooling'
/lâmîm/ 'he collected' /tîlîmîd/ 'collecting'

**Defective verbs**

/wârra/ 'he showed' /tùwre/ 'showing'
/gâwwa/ 'he strengthened' /tûgwî/ 'strengthening'

**Verbal nouns**

C. Strong verbs: /F̱aL/

Defective verbs: /F̱e/

Examples:

**Strong verbs**

/sâllîm/ 'he greeted' /sîlîm/ 'greeting'
/kâllîm/ 'he talked to . . .' /kîlîm/ 'talking'
Defective verbs

/ðəna/ ‘he sang’ /ðne/ ‘singing’
/ðalla/ ‘he prayed’ /ðle/ ‘praying’

Measure III Patterns

The verbal noun patterns for Measure III are as follows:

A. Strong verbs: /mFəLa/

Defective verbs: /mFaʃe/ ~ /mFaʃa/

Examples:

Strong verbs

/ðayin/ ‘he examined’ /m$ayna/ ‘examining’
/ðayir/ ‘he tolerated’ /m$ayra/ ‘toleration’
/ðarib/ ‘he fought’ /m$harba/ ‘fighting’

Defective verbs

/ðana/ ‘he suffered’ /m$ane/ ~ /m$ana/ ‘suffering’
/ðaʃa/ ‘he reconciled’ /m$raʃe/ ~ /m$raʃa/ ‘reconciliation’

Verbal noun patterns for Measure V are the same as those of Measure II.

Measure VI Patterns

For the verbal noun of Measure VI, the patterns of Measure III are normally used. However, the following pattern is also heard, although rarely.

A. Strong verbs: /tαFəL/

Examples:
Strong verbs Verbal nouns

/t̥aw̪n/ ‘he cooperated’ /t̥aw̪n/ ‘cooperation’
/tlašəb/ ‘he cheated’ /t̥ašəb/ ‘cheating’

Measure VII Patterns

The verbal noun patterns for Measure VII are the following:

A. Strong verbs: /nFəsəl/

Hollow verbs: /ʔFəsə/

Examples:

Strong verbs

/nsəʔəm/ ‘he got along well’ /nsəʔəm/ ‘getting along well’
/nəməs/ ‘he indulged’ /nəməs/ ‘indulgence’

Hollow verbs

/ʔnən/ ‘he was insulted’ /ʔnən/ ‘insult’
/nəʃa/ ‘it was broadcasted’ /ʔnəʃa/ ‘broadcast’

Measure VIII Patterns

Verbal noun patterns for verbs of Measure VIII are quite rare. Only

/ʔFəsəl/ is found. Examples:

/ʔstəməʃ/ ‘he listened to’ /ʔstəməʃ/ ‘listening’
/ʔntəsəb/ ‘he belonged to’ /ʔntəsəb/ ‘belonging to’
/ʔtaşəd/ ‘he got used to’ /ʔståsəd/ ‘getting used to’
/ʔxtəɾ/ ‘he chose’ /ʔståsəɾ/ ‘choosing’
Measure X Patterns

The verbal noun patterns for Measure X are as follows:

A. Strong verbs: /

Defective verbs:

Verbal nouns of all defective verbs of Measure X have /?/ as a final consonant.

Hollow verbs: /?istFa?

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Verbal nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/?istärža/ 'he got back'</td>
<td>/?istärža/ 'getting back'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/?istähmid/ 'he thanked (God)'</td>
<td>/?istähmad/ 'thanking (God)'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defective verbs

/?istāśla/ 'he felt superior' | /?istīśla/ 'feeling superior' |
| /?istātna/ 'he excepted' | /?istītna/ 'excepting' |

Hollow verbs

/?istāśan/ 'he asked the help of' | /?istīśana/ 'asking the help of' |
| /?istāśa/ 'he was able to' | /?istīśa/ 'being able to' |

Quadriliteral Verb Patterns

Simple and derived quadriliteral verbs have the following verbal noun patterns:

A. Sound verbs: /tFīśLīL/

Weak second radical verbs: /tFośLīL/
**Sound verbs**

/šālbīg/ ‘he splashed’ /tšālbig/ ‘splashing’
/zālbāh/ ‘he tricked’ /tzālbih/ ‘tricking’
/lāfli̯f/ ‘he wrapped’ /tlāflif/ ‘wrapping’
/bāšbi̯š/ ‘it sprinkled’ /tbāšbi̯š/ ‘sprinkling’

**Weak second radical verbs**

/torix/ ‘he dated (historically)’ /ttorix/ ‘dating’
/šogir/ ‘he insured’ /tšogir/ ‘insuring’
/txoxim/ ‘he became crazy’ /txoxim/ ‘becoming crazy’

Derivation of Instance Nouns

An instance noun is one that indicates a specification (or a specific instance) of the action described by the verbal noun from which it is derived.

Instance nouns may be derived from verbal nouns by the addition of the suffix /-a/. In verbal nouns ending in /-aC/, the vowel becomes short (i.e. /ā/) and occurs between the first and second radicals. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal noun</th>
<th>Instance noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/tškir/ ‘closing’</td>
<td>/tškirə/ ‘one closing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tššim/ ‘being shy’</td>
<td>/tššima/ ‘one embarrassment’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/bālʃ/ ‘swallowing’</td>
<td>/bāluʃa/ ‘one swallow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/skat/ ‘being silent’</td>
<td>/sakta/ ‘one period of silence’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derivation of Feminine Nouns

Feminine nouns may be derived from the corresponding masculine nouns by the addition of the suffix -a. Nouns included in this category are
those indicating human beings and some animals. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine nouns</th>
<th>Feminine nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/sādiq/ ‘friend’</td>
<td>/sādiqa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/fāllāh/ ‘farmer’</td>
<td>/fālāha/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/xdim/ ‘servant’</td>
<td>/xdima/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In stems that end in -ā the short vowel is usually dropped:

| /sāḥaḥb/ ‘an acquaintance’             | /sāḥba/                               |
| /sāmīl/ ‘worker’                       | /sāmla/                               |
| /mudārris/ ‘teacher’                   | /mudārrsa/                            |

If the stem ends in /-i/ the latter changes to /-y/. Examples:

| /mūḥāmi/ ‘lawyer’                      | /mūḥamya/                             |
| /gāḍī/ ‘judge’                         | /gāḍya/                               |

Derivation of Unit Nouns

Unit nouns are those that indicate a unit or a piece of substance, e.g.

| /zītun/ ‘olives’                       | /zītuna/ ‘one olive’                  |
| /dillaš/ ‘water melon’                 | /dillaša/ ‘a water melon’             |
| /lāḥm/ ‘meat’                          | /lāḥma/ ‘a piece of meat’             |

Occupational Nouns

Certain nouns referring to occupations may be derived from other nouns by the addition of /-ži/; e.g.

| /kundra/ ‘shoes’                       | /kundraži/ ‘shoe repairman’           |
| /gāhwa/ ‘coffee’                       | /gāhwaži/ ‘coffee maker’              |
| /saṣat/ ‘watches’                      | /saṣadži/ ‘watch repairman’           |
Inflection

Gender

Nouns in Libyan Arabic may be masculine or feminine. In general

feminine nouns are: (a) those that end in /-a/; e.g. /ṭāqiyya/ ‘hat’, /ṣunīyya/ ‘plate’, /džaža/ ‘chicken’, etc.; (b) those that have feminine referents; e.g. /ʔumm/ ‘mother’, /ʔuxt/ ‘sister’, etc.; (c) some parts of the body: e.g. /šen/ ‘eye’, /bāṭn/ ‘stomach’, /rīz/ ‘leg’, etc.; (d) some miscellaneous nouns such as: /šāms/ ‘sun’, /mṭār/ ‘rain’, /ʔārnīb/ ‘rabbit’, etc.

Masculine nouns are: (a) those that end in /-e/; e.g. /sme/ ‘sky’, /šē/ ‘supper’, /hbe/ ‘ashes’; (b) those that end in /-i/; e.g. /kwrsi/ ‘chair’, /šaskri/ ‘military man’, /krarši/ ‘carriage driver’. Included in this are those that end in /ži/, listed on page 71. (c) Those that end in /-u/; e.g. /žiru/ ‘puppy’, /fīlu/ ‘cold’, /dālu/ ‘leather bucket’; (d) those that end in a consonant, other than the feminine nouns in (b), (c), (d) above; e.g. /māktīb/ ‘office’, /fālāḥ/ ‘farmer’.

Number

There are three numbers in Libyan Arabic: singular, dual, and plural.

Singular. A singular noun is the one that refers to one person or object.

Dual. The dual number refers to two persons or objects. It is formed by the addition of the suffix /-en/ if the noun ends in a consonant and /-ten/ ___
if the noun ends in /-a/, the latter dropping. Other changes in the stem are as follows: In monosyllabic nouns ending in /-C/ the final consonant is doubled when the dual suffix is attached; e.g.

/dkār/ ‘male’ /dkārren/ ‘two males’
/bhār/ ‘sea’ /bhārren/ ‘two seas’
/žmāl/ ‘camel’ /žmāllen/ ‘two camels’

In other nouns ending in /-C/ the short vowel is dropped when the suffix is attached; e.g.

/Šuruf/ ‘branch’ /Šurfen/ ‘two branches’
/ḥābs/ ‘prison’ /ḥābsen/ ‘two prisons’
/ḥābr/ ‘rope’ /ḥāblen/ ‘two ropes’

When the noun ends in /-a/ the suffix is /-ten/ and that final /-a/ is dropped.

/saṣa/ ‘an hour’ /saṣten/ ‘two hours’
/sāyyara/ ‘a car’ /sāyyarten/ ‘two cars’
/ḥužra/ ‘a room’ /ḥužreten/ ‘two rooms’

When the noun ends in /-ya/ or /(-l)yya/ these are replaced by /-i/. If it ends in /-wa/ or /(-u)wwa/ these are replaced by /-u/.

/wlīyya/ ‘a woman’/wliten/ ‘two women’
/šārya/ ‘a buy’ /šāriten/ ‘two buys’
/ḥābwa/ ‘a lioness’ /ḥābuten/ ‘two lionesses’
/duwwa/ ‘a talk’ /duten/ ‘two talks’

When the noun ends in /-e/, the latter is replaced by /-a/ and a /-w/ is inserted before the suffix; e.g.

/šē/ ‘supper’ /šawen/ ‘two suppers’
/rde/ ‘kind of Libyan dress’ /rdawen/ ‘two dresses’
/šē/ ‘a period of mourning’ /šawen/ ‘two periods of mourning’
When the noun ends in /-i/ or /-u/, a /-y/ or /-w/ respectively, is inserted before the suffix:

/gađi/ ‘judge’ /gadiyen/ ‘two judges’
/tarzi/ ‘tailor’ /tarziyen/ ‘two tailors’
/fīlu/ ‘colt’ /fīluwen/ ‘two colts’
/dālu/ ‘leather bucket’ /dāluwen/ ‘two buckets’

Plural. The plural number in Libyan Arabic refers to more than two persons or objects. There are two types of plurals: sound plurals are formed by the addition of a suffix; broken plurals are formed by internal vowel changes, with or without suffixes.

Sound Plurals

A sound plural is formed by attaching one of three suffixes: /-in/, /-a/, or /-at/, each of which is used with a large variety of nouns.

The suffix /-in/. Plurals formed by this suffix are called masculine sound plurals because most of the nouns that take this suffix are masculine.

The following types of nouns and adjectives take this plural: (a) all adjectives (functioning like nouns) that are derived from proper nouns by the addition of /i/: /?urduni/ ‘Jordanian’, /?urdunyyin/, /māṣri/ ‘Egyptian’, /māṣriyyin/, etc. (b) Participles (except those of Measure I); e.g. /māzkum/-/māzkumin/ ‘having cold’, /mīslm/ ‘Moslem’-/mīslmin/. (c) Nouns that indicate behavior or profession; e.g. /bāwwab/-/bāwwabin/ ‘janitors’, /kāddab/ ‘liar’-/kāddabin/, /ṭābbax/ ‘cook’-/ṭābbaxin/.
The suffix -a. This forms plurals when it is added to human masculine nouns of the pattern CVCCaC, some of which may have alternative plurals ending in -in; e.g.

/fallah/ /fallaha/ ~ /fallahin/ ‘farmers’
/binnay/ /binnaya/ ‘builders’

It may also be added to certain human masculine nouns ending in /-i/, where /-yy/ is inserted before the suffix; e.g.

/gāhwaṣi/ ‘coffeemaker’ /gāhwaṣiya/
/snaṣi/ ‘artisan’ /snaṣiya/
/hrayri/ ‘silk weaver’ /hrayriya/

The suffix -at. Since this suffix is used mostly with feminine nouns, it is called the feminine sound plural suffix. It is normally attached to a great many singular nouns ending in -a (replacing this ending), regardless of whether the final -a is a result of a derivation process or original in the word; e.g.

/dārba/ ‘a hit’ /dārbat/
/wāzza/ ‘a goose’ /wāzzat/
/ṭhiba/ ‘lady doctor’ /ṭhibat/
/ḥuẓra/ ‘a room’ /ḥuẓrat/
/kaliba/ ‘female writer’ /kalibat/

This suffix is also attached to nouns ending in -e. When it is attached to these (singular) nouns its final vowel changes to -a and a /-w/ is inserted before the suffix; e.g.

/ṣde/ ‘lunch’ /ṣdāwat/
/sle/ ‘prayer’ /slāwat/
/ṣte/ ‘winter’ /ṣtawat/
Some masculine nouns of various patterns take the suffix -at for plural:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
/x\dot{t}\dot{a}b/ & /x\dot{t}\dot{a}bat/ \\
/\dot{h}l\dot{t}\dot{e}m/ & /\dot{h}l\dot{t}\dot{e}masat/ \\
/\ddot{h}\ddot{\alpha}\ddot{m}\ddot{m}/ & /\ddot{h}\ddot{\alpha}\ddot{m}\ddot{m}at/ \\
\end{array}
\]

**Broken Plurals**

Libyan Arabic has numerous patterns for broken plurals. But some broken plurals do not fall into any systematic pattern, and, consequently, the plurals of those nouns will have to be learned as individual items. Below are the most common patterns of broken plurals of Libyan Arabic.

(a) The plural pattern /Ft\alpha LiL/. This accounts for a great portion of plural nouns and corresponds to singular nouns of four consonants, regardless of whether that singular noun is from a quadriliteral root or a triliteral root plus suffix; e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/g\dot{r}\dot{d}i/  ‘torch’</td>
<td>/g\dot{r}\dot{d}i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/b\dot{r}wi\dot{t}a/  ‘wheel barrow’</td>
<td>/b\dot{r}wi\dot{t}a/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/\ddot{s}\ddot{\alpha}d\ddot{u}g/  ‘box’</td>
<td>/\ddot{s}\ddot{\alpha}d\ddot{u}g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k\ddot{\iota}\ddot{r}r\ddot{a}sa/  ‘note book’</td>
<td>/k\ddot{\iota}\ddot{r}r\ddot{a}sa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/br\dot{r}r\dot{a}k\ddot{a}/  ‘hut’</td>
<td>/br\dot{r}r\dot{a}k\ddot{a}/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) The plural pattern /Ft\alpha L\ddot{\iota}L/; e.g. 1

1The final short vowel of the plural is identical to the final short vowel of the singular noun; i.e. if the final vowel of the singular is /\iota/ the short vowel of the plural will be /\iota/.
(c) The plural pattern /F\$aL/. This corresponds to many singular noun patterns. Among them are the following:

**Singular pattern /F\$aL/**

/kuds/ ‘heap’ /kd\$s/
/kab\$/ ‘ram’ /kba\$s/
/bint/ ‘girl’ /bnat/
/wild/ ‘boy’ /vlad/

**Singular pattern /F\$\$\$aL/ - /F\$\$\$aL/**

/s\$\$\$ul/ ‘business’ /\$\$\$al/
/hufuk/ ‘good for nothing’ /hfak/
/r\$\$\$/ ‘quarter’ /rba\$/
/\$\$\$/ ‘finger’ /\$\$a\$/

**Singular pattern /F\$\$Li/**

/s\$\$ra/ ‘bundle’ /\$\$ra/
/\$\$ka/ ‘net’ /\$\$bak/
/g\$\$a\$/ ‘large plate’ /g\$\$af/

Miscellaneous singular patterns include:

/fil/ ‘elephant’ /fyal/
/naga/ ‘female camel’ /nyag/
/\$m\$/ ‘camel’ /\$mal/
/\$\$/ ‘friend’ /\$ab/

(d) The plural pattern /F\$aLi/. This is used for singular nouns of the pattern /F\$\$Li/:
The same plural pattern may be used for other miscellaneous singular nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/lela/ 'night'</td>
<td>/lyali/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sanya/ 'farm'</td>
<td>/swani/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/suriyya/ 'shirt'</td>
<td>/swari/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/holi/ 'Libyan dress for men'</td>
<td>/hwali/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(e) The plural pattern /Ful/. This is a very common pattern, used mainly for the singular patterns: /Fas/, /Fawl/, /FeI/, /Fas/.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/had/ 'luck'</td>
<td>/hduq/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/xasim/ 'nose'</td>
<td>/xshal/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zurf/ 'envelope'</td>
<td>/zruf/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/xet/ 'thread'</td>
<td>/xyut/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zeb/ 'pocket'</td>
<td>/zyub/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/simm/ 'poison'</td>
<td>/smum/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(f) The plural pattern /Fussal/. This is the pattern of many active participles of form I verbs referring to human beings (used as nouns):  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/hakm/ 'ruler'</td>
<td>/hukkam/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zahil/ 'uneducated'</td>
<td>/zuhhal/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zabit/ 'officer'</td>
<td>/zubbat/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/samal/ 'worker'</td>
<td>/summal/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(g) The plural pattern /Filan/. This is mainly the plural for the singular pattern /FVL/.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/goz/ 'sand dune'</td>
<td>/gizan/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/nar/ 'fire'</td>
<td>/niran/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/zar/ 'neighbor'</td>
<td>/ziran/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/heet/ 'wall'</td>
<td>/hitran/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sas/ 'wall'</td>
<td>/sisan/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The plural pattern /FuFLan/, /FI$UL/. These are plurals for the singular patterns /F$aL/, /F$uL/, /Fa$iL/ and /Fä$i/:

/dra$/ ‘arm’ /drrfan/
/xruf/ ‘lamb’ /xirfan/
 rahib/ ‘priest’ /rwhban/
/žäh/ ‘kid goat’ /židyan/

(i) The plural pattern /F$IL/: 

/ɦila/ ‘trick’ /hydr/
/ţasa/ ‘glass cup’ /fys/¹
/midra/ ‘a shovel’ /mdur/

(j) The plural pattern /Fu$La/: 

/ysir/ ‘prisoner of war’ /ywsra/
/bṣir/ ‘blind’ /bwsra/
/ɣrib/ ‘stranger’ /yurba/

Besides the previous patterns, Libyan Arabic has some rarer ones and has individual broken plurals that do not follow any consistent patterns. I have ignored all those in my treatment.

¹This is rare.
CHAPTER VI

ADJECTIVES

Derivation: Participles and Their Patterns

Participles are adjectives derived from verbs and closely related to them in meaning. There are two kinds of participles: active participles and passive participles. The first has the meaning of 'having done the action indicated by the verb'; the second means 'having undergone the action indicated by that verb'.

Libyan Arabic has the following participle patterns.

Measure I Participles

The pattern for strong verbs of Measure I is /FαL/ with slight variations. For doubled verbs the pattern is /Fζf/, while in defective verbs the final -ι is replaced by -i. In hollow verbs a /-y/ occurs as the second consonant of the pattern.

The passive participle patterns for Measure I verbs (Measures I, VIII, and X are the only measures that have distinct forms for the passive participle in Libyan Arabic) are /mαFζuL/ for strong, doubled, and hollow
verbs and /māFši/ for defective verbs;¹ e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Active participle</th>
<th>Passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/fāhām/ 'he understood'</td>
<td>/fahām/ 'having understood'</td>
<td>/māfhum/ 'understood'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/fāzām/ 'he invited'</td>
<td>/fāzām/ 'having invited'</td>
<td>/māfzūm/ 'invited'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doubled verbs

| /fādād/ 'he counted' | /fādād/ 'having counted' | /māfūd/ 'counted' |

Hollow verbs

| /fāzād/ 'he added' | /fāzād/ 'having added' | /māzūd/ 'added' |

Defective verbs

| /fārē/ 'he ground' | /fārē/ 'having round' | /mārē/ 'ground' |
| /fāfē/ 'he pardoned' | /fāfē/ 'having excused' | /māfī/ 'excused'² |

Measure II Participles

The patterns for Measure II are:

Strong verbs: /mFāʃʃĻ/³

Defective verbs: /mFāʃʃi/

¹In all other measures the passive participle is identical to the active participle.

²Some Measure I verbs do not have passive participles, e.g. /fat/ 'he passed', /šaf/ 'he saw', but these are very few.

³V in the pattern indicates a short vowel identical to the final short vowel of the verb to which the participle corresponds.
Strong verbs | Active/passive participle
---|---
/fàrrī/ 'he emptied' | /mfàrrī/ '(having) emptied'
/šallāh/ 'he repaired' | /mśallāh/ '(having) repaired'
/dārrīg/ 'he hid' | /mdārrīg/ '(having) hidden'

Defective verbs

/dāwwa/ 'he lighted' | /mdāwwi/ '(having) lighted'
/naḥḥa/ 'he removed' | /mnāḥḥi/ '(having) removed'
/ṭādda/ 'he offered lunch' | /mṭāddi/ '(having) offered lunch'

Measure III Participles

The patterns for Measure III are:

Strong verbs: /mFašīL/
Defective verbs: /Faši/

Strong verbs | Active/passive participle
---|---
/sašīd/ 'he helped' | /msašīd/ '(having) helped'
/šarāḥ/ 'he was frank with' | /mšarāḥ/ '(having) been frank'
/dawm/ 'he continued' | /mdawm/ '(having) continued'

Defective verbs

/masha/ 'he walked with' | /mmaši/ '(having) walked with'
/dawa/ 'he cured' | /mdawi/ '(having) cured'
/ḥaka/ 'he talked to' | /mḥaki/ '(having) talked to'

Measure V Participles

The patterns for Measure V are:

Strong verbs: /mṭFāṭĪL/
Defective verbs: /mṭFāṭī/
Strong verbs

/tmārin/ ‘he exercised’
/ṭhārrik/ ‘it moved’
/tsāwwug/ ‘he went to the market’

Active/passive participle

/mittmārin/ ‘(having) exercised’
/mitṭhārrik/ ‘(having) moved’
/mittsāwwug/ ‘(having) gone to the market’

Defective verbs

/tādda/ ‘he exceeded the limit’
/talšsáa/ ‘he dined’
/tamāšsa/ ‘he went for a walk’

/mittāddi/ ‘(having) exceeded the limit’
/mittalšși/ ‘(having) dined’
/mittamāšși/ ‘(having) gone for a walk’

Measure VI Participles

The patterns for Measure VI are:

Strong verbs: /mitFaṣyVL/

Defective verbs: /mitFaṣi/

Strong verbs

/tṣarrīk/ ‘he fought’
/tṣalāḥ/ ‘he reconciled’
/tnaṣṣi/ ‘he argued with’

Active/passive participle

/mitṣarrīk/ ‘(having) fought’
/mitṣalāḥ/ ‘(having) reconciled’
/mitnaṣṣi/ ‘(having) argued with’

Defective verbs

/thaṣa/ ‘he avoided’
/tmada/ ‘he exceeded the limit’

/mitthaṣi/ ‘(having) avoided’
/mitmadi/ ‘(having) exceeded the limit’

Measure VII Participles

The patterns for Measure VII are:

Strong verbs: /minFyL/
Doubled verbs: /mınFāğ/  

Hollow verbs: /mınFaL/  

Defective verbs: /mınFfi/  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Active/passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/nshān/ ‘it was crushed’</td>
<td>/mınshān/ ‘(having) been crushed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ntīlaj/ ‘it was freed’</td>
<td>/mınțilaj/ ‘(having) been freed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/nfiwāz/ ‘it was bent’</td>
<td>/mınfiwāz/ ‘(having) been bent’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doubled verbs  

| /nfişṣ/ ‘it was deflated’       | /mınfiṣṣ/ ‘(having) been deflated’    |
| /nsāll/ ‘it was pulled out’     | /mınṣāll/ ‘(having) been pulled out’  |
| /nfiğkk/ ‘it was dismantled’    | /mınfiğkk/ ‘(having) been dismantled’|

Hollow verbs  

| /nṣah/ ‘he moved aside’         | /mınṣah/ ‘(having) moved aside’      |
| /nhar/ ‘he collapsed’           | /mınhar/ ‘(having) collapsed’        |

Defective verbs  

| /nḥsei/ ‘it was stuffed’        | /mınḥsei/ ‘(having) been stuffed’    |
| /nīme/ ‘he became blind’        | /mınīmi/ ‘(having) become blind’     |
| /ntli/ ‘it was painted’         | /mınṭli/ ‘(having) been painted’     |

Measure VIII Participles  

The participle patterns for Measure VIII are:

**Strong verbs:** active participle: /mūFtāfiL/  

passive participle: /mūFtāfāL/  

**Doubled verbs:** /mūFtāff/  

**Hollow verbs:** /mīFtāʃ/
Defective verbs: /místʃi/  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong verbs</th>
<th>Active participle</th>
<th>Passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ḥtam/ ‘he considered’</td>
<td>/muḥtam/ ‘having considered’</td>
<td>/muḥtam/ ‘considered’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ḥtamb/ ‘he depended on’</td>
<td>/muḥtamb/ ‘having depended’</td>
<td>/muḥtamb/ ‘depended’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ḥtar/ ‘he confessed’</td>
<td>/muḥtar/ ‘having confessed’</td>
<td>/muḥtar/ ‘confessed’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doubled verbs

| /ḥtam/ ‘he paid attention’ | /muḥtam/ ‘(having) paid attention’ |
| /ḥtazz/ ‘he was proud of’ | /muḥtazz/ ‘(having) been proud of’ |
| /ḥtazz/ ‘he protested’ | /muḥtazz/ ‘(having) protested’ |

Hollow verbs

| /ḥtar/ ‘to get puzzled’ | /miḥtar/ ‘(having) got puzzled’ |
| /ṭad/ ‘to hunt’ | /miṣṭad/ ‘(having) hunted’ |

Defective verbs

| /ntse/ ‘to be forgotten’ | /miṃtsi/ ‘(having) been forgotten’ |
| /ntre/ ‘to be mentioned’ | /miṃtrı/ ‘(having) been mentioned’ |

Measure X Participles

The participle patterns for Measure X are as follows:

Strong verbs: /muṣṭfı́l/  

Doubled verbs: /muṣṭfı́l/ – /muṣṭfı́/  

Hollow verbs: /muṣṭfı́/ for active participles and /muṣṭfaʃ/ for passive participles

1In Measure X only hollow verbs have distinct forms for the passive participle.
Defective verbs: \textit{mistāfjī/}

### Strong verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active participle</th>
<th>Passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/mistārzīg/ ‘(having) looked for living’</td>
<td>/mistārzīl/ ‘(having) acted like a man’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Doubled verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active participle</th>
<th>Passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/mustābbādd/ ‘(having) prepared (himself)’</td>
<td>/mustābbādd/ ‘(having) become a dictator’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mustāhagg/ ‘(having) deserved’</td>
<td>/mustāhagg/ ‘(having) deserved’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hollow verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active participle</th>
<th>Passive participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/mustāfādd/ ‘(having) benefited’</td>
<td>/mustāfādd/ ‘benefited’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mustāshi/ ‘(having) underestimated’</td>
<td>/mustāshi/ ‘underestimated’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Defective verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/mistāswā/ ‘(having) belittled’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mistāwli/ ‘(having) dominated’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Simple Quadriliteral Verbs

The simple quadriliteral verbs have the following participle patterns:

**Strong verbs:** /mFaJLvl/

**Defective verbs:** /mFoJi/

**Sound verbs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/msārbī/ ‘(having) put in sequence’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mktarkī/ ‘(having) dragged’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mdāržāh/ ‘(having) swung’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Defective verbs

/hoha/ ‘to sing (the baby) to sleep’
/mhohi/ ‘(having) sung the baby to sleep’

Derived Quadriliteral Verbs

The derived quadriliteral verbs have the following participle patterns:

Strong verbs: /mitFāšLīL/
Weak second radicals: /mitFošL/

Strong verbs

/ddāhwur/ ‘he walked around’
/ťāfšif/ ‘it burned’

Active/passive participle

/middāhwur/ ‘(having) walked around’
/mitśāfšif/ ‘(having) burned’

Weak second radical

/tborīd/ ‘he showed dullness’
/tsogīr/ ‘it was insured’

/mtborīd/ ‘(having) showed dullness’
/mtṣogīr/ ‘(having) been insured’

Comparative Adjectives

Comparative forms of adjectives are derived from regular adjectives according to these patterns:

Sound roots: /āFīl/

/ndif/ ‘clean’
/smīn/ ‘fat’

/āndif/ ‘cleaner’
/āsmīn/ ‘fatter’
Doubled roots:  /אֶפֶּה/1

/bnin/ ‘tasty’  /אָבָנ/ ‘more tasty’
/יוּנ/ ‘kind’  /אָחָנ/ ‘kinder’

Hollow roots:  /אֶפֶּה/1L/

/ליֵי/ ‘fine’  /אָיִן/ ‘finer’
/שֶנ/ ‘ugly’  /אָשְׁנ/ ‘more ugly’

Defective roots:  /אֶפֶּה/1a/

/沣/ ‘empty, free’  /אֶפֶּה/1a/ ‘more empty’
/חֶמ/ ‘hot’  /אֶפֶּה/1a/ ‘hotter’

Nisba Adjectives

Nisba adjectives are derived from nouns (singular and plural), adjectives, and prepositions. The most common way to form a nisba adjective is by attaching the suffix /-i/, which may be added to the noun stem directly or may be preceded by some other elements and accompanied by a slight variation in the stem itself. The following are illustrations of such variations.

The suffix -i may be added directly to the stem, e.g.

/אֹדַב/ ‘literature’  /אֹדַבִּ/ ‘literary’
/פָּנ/ ‘art’  /פָּנְ/ ‘artistic’
/שָׂס/ ‘person’  /שָׂסְ/ ‘personal’

or it may cause the loss of the final -a, if it is added to a word ending in such a vowel; e.g.

1 An exception to this is /אָדְל/ which has /אָדְד/.
In still other cases /-w/ or /-aw/ is inserted before the nisba suffix; e.g.

- /rɪʔa/ ‘lung’ /rɪʔawi/ ‘belonging to lungs’
- /mɪʔa/ ‘hundred’ /mɪʔawi/ ‘centennial’
- /dɪrna/ ‘a town in Libya’ /dɪrnawi/ ‘belonging to Derna’
- /šaṛg/ ‘east’ /šaṛgawi/ ‘easterner’

A different, but rare, nisba suffix is –ani. What distinguishes this suffix from the preceding is that it is attached to many prepositions (and adverbs) as well; e.g.

- /tæħt/ ‘under, below’ /taḥtani/ ‘lower’
- /bærra/ ‘outside’ /bærrani/ ‘outsider’
- /ræb/ ‘God’ /ræbbani/ ‘original’
- /ruḥ/ ‘spirit’ /ruḥani/ ‘spiritual’

**Inflection**

Adjectives are inflected for gender and number. Like those of nouns, their plurals are divided into sound and broken plurals. Adjectives take the same suffixes as nouns, and their stems undergo the same changes when the suffixes are added.

Considering the masculine singular as the basic form, the inflectional suffixes for adjectives are as follows:

- -a to form feminine
- -in to form masculine sound plurals
- -at to form feminine sound plurals
When these suffixes are added the stem vowel, if short, is dropped:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine singular</th>
<th>Feminine singular</th>
<th>Masculine plural</th>
<th>Feminine plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/mšākkr/ ‘closed’</td>
<td>/mšākkr/ ‘closed’</td>
<td>/mšākkr/ ‘closed’</td>
<td>/mšākkr/ ‘closed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mšāllāh/ ‘repaired’</td>
<td>/mšāllāh/ ‘repaired’</td>
<td>/mšāllāh/ ‘repaired’</td>
<td>/mšāllāh/ ‘repaired’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/mlāwwn/ ‘colored’</td>
<td>/mlāwwn/ ‘colored’</td>
<td>/mlāwwn/ ‘colored’</td>
<td>/mlāwwn/ ‘colored’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the basic form ends in a long vowel followed by a consonant, no dropping of the vowel takes place:

| /māftūh/ ‘open’ | /māftūh/ ‘open’ | /māfilūḥ/ ‘open’ | /māfilūḥat/ ‘open’ |
| /fīryan/ ‘naked’ | /fīryan/ ‘naked’ | /fīryan/ ‘naked’ | /fīryan/ ‘naked’ |
| /lātīf/ ‘gentle’ | /lātīf/ ‘gentle’ | /lātīf/ ‘gentle’ | /lātīf/ ‘gentle’ |

If the basic form ends in /-i/, either a /-yy/ is inserted before the suffix:

| /mīgli/ ‘fried’ | /mīgliyya/ ‘fried’ | /mīgliyyin/ ‘fried’ | /mīgliyyat/ ‘fried’ |
| /qāwmī/ ‘national’ | /qāwmīyya/ ‘national’ | /qāwmīyyin/ ‘national’ | /qāwmīyyat/ ‘national’ |

or that final /-i/ is changed to /y/:

| /bāhi/ ‘fine’ | /bāhya/ ‘fine’ | /bāhyin/ ‘fine’ | /bāhyat/ ‘fine’ |
| /fādi/ ‘free’ | /fādyā/ ‘free’ | /fādyin/ ‘free’ | /fādyat/ ‘free’ |
| /wāti/ ‘ready’ | /wātyā/ ‘ready’ | /wātyin/ ‘ready’ | /wātyat/ ‘ready’ |

If the basic form ends in /-u/ that /-u/ changes to /-w/ before the suffix; e.g.

| /ḥīlu/ ‘sweet’ | /ḥīlwa/ ‘sweet’ | /ḥīlwin/ ‘sweet’ | /ḥīlwat/ ‘sweet’ |
| /sābu/ ‘strong’ | /sābwa/ ‘strong’ | /sābwīn/ ‘strong’ | /sābwat/ ‘strong’ |

---

1No masculine plural form of this adjective has been observed in Libyan Arabic.
Broken Plurals

The following adjective broken plural patterns are the most common ones and are by no means all of them.

1. /FŋaLa/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/šahrān/ ‘staying late in the night’</td>
<td>/šaːra/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/šukran/ ‘drunk’</td>
<td>/šukra/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/žāwfan/ ‘hungry’</td>
<td>/žawfa/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. /FŋaL/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/šiːd/ ‘thick’</td>
<td>/šaːd/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ṣīr/ ‘little’</td>
<td>/ṣar/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/bṣad/ ‘far away’</td>
<td>/bṣad/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/draf/ ‘small’</td>
<td>/draf/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. /FušāLa/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/fāqir/ ‘poor’</td>
<td>/fāqara/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/šārif/ ‘honest’</td>
<td>/šurṣa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/šubṭa/ ‘silly, stupid’</td>
<td>/šubṭa/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. /FḏL/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ḏdid/ ‘new’</td>
<td>/ḏdid/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ḏdim/ ‘old’</td>
<td>/ḏdim/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adjectives of Color and Defect

In Libyan Arabic there are adjectives that refer to colors and physical or mental defects. They have the patterns /AyI/ for the masculine singular, /FeLa/ for the feminine (/Fo/ or /Fe/ for hollow roots, and /FeLa/ for defective roots of the feminine). For plural the patterns are /fo/ or /FiI/; e.g.

**Singular**

/Arjs/ 'deaf' /ArS/ /ArS/ /ArS/
/Adim/ 'gloomy' /AdSma/ /AdSum/ /AdSmat/
/Azrig/ 'blue' /Azrga/ /Azrug/ /Azrgat/

**Hollow roots**

/Aswd/ 'black' /Soda/ /Sud/ /Sodat/
/Ahwil/ 'crosseyes' /Hol/ /Hol/ /Holat/
/Abyid/ 'white' /Bed/ /Bed/ /Bedat/

**Defective roots**

/Ama/ 'blind' /Armya/ /Armi/ /Armyat/

---

1. The plural pattern for defective roots, of which only one has been observed, is /FiI/.
CHAPTER VII

NUMERALS

From 1 Through 10

The numbers 1 through 10 in Libyan Arabic are as follows:

/waḥid/ ‘one’
/tnin/ → /ẓoz/ ‘two’
/tlata/ ‘three’
/ārbfa/ ‘four’
/xamsa/ ‘five’
/sātta/ ‘six’
/sāba/ ‘seven’
/tmanya/ ‘eight’
/tisfa/ ‘nine’
/šāra/ ‘ten’

The word /tnin/ ‘two’ is basically used in compound numerals and in counting. In other contexts the word /ẓoz/ is used instead; e.g. /ẓoz wlad/ ‘two boys’. Also the dual form of the noun itself may be used to indicate the two number; e.g. /wilデン/ ‘two boys’. When a noun follows one of the numbers three through nine (i.e. those that end in -a) the final vowel of the numeral is dropped and (if they have the same point of articulation) assimilation between the last consonant of the numeral and the first consonant of the noun takes place; e.g. /tlad-dyar/ ‘three rooms’, /xams ū swani/ ‘five plates’.

Numbers from 11 Through 19

Numbers from 11 through 19 are as follows:

/ḥdaš/ ‘eleven’
/tnas/ ‘twelve’
/tuwtaš/ ‘thirteen’
/ārbāṣtaš/ ‘fourteen’
/xamsṭaš/ ‘fifteen’
/šuttaš/ ‘sixteen’
When followed by a noun the suffix /-i/ is attached to each of these numbers; e.g. /xămșțašal kālb/ 'fifteen dogs'.
The thousands:

/ālf/ 'one thousand' /sit-ālf/ 'six thousand'
/ālfen/ 'two thousand' /sābīf-ālf/ 'seven thousand'
/tīlt-ālf/ 'three thousand' /tmanyā-ālf/ 'eight thousand'
/arbāf-ālf/ 'four thousand' /ṭisf-ālf/ 'nine thousand'
/xāms-ālf/ 'five thousand' /fāṣr-ālf/ 'ten thousand'

Larger Numbers

The word for million in Libyan Arabic is /mālyn/, with the plural /mlayn/ (or /mlayn/). Both words are treated as nouns. The numbers from one million to ten million are as follows:

/mālyn/ 'one million' /sit-mlayn/ 'six million'
/mālynun/ (/zoz mlayn/) /sābīf-mlayn/ 'seven million'
‘two million’ /ṭimn-mlayn/ ‘eight million’
/liat-mlayn/ ‘three million’ /ṭisf-mlayn/ ‘nine million’
/ARBAYA mlayn/ ‘four million’ /fāṣr-mlayn/ ‘ten million’
/xāms-mlayn/ ‘five million’

The Ordinal Numbers

One through 12 have independent ordinal forms. Except for ‘first’ and ‘second’, the forms have either the pattern /FALS/ (for third, fifth, sixth, eighth, tenth) or /FALS/ (for fourth, seventh, and ninth). The ordinals are as follows:

Masculine Feminine
/ʔæwəl/ ‘first’ /ʔæwəla/
/tani/ ‘second’ /tanya/
/talit/ ‘third’ /talta/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/rabāʕ/</td>
<td>/rabṣa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/xamīs/</td>
<td>/xamsa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sadās/</td>
<td>/sadsa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sabāʕ/</td>
<td>/sabṣa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tamīn/</td>
<td>/tamna/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tasāʕ/</td>
<td>/tasṣa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ṣaṣir/</td>
<td>/ṣaṣra/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ḥadīs/</td>
<td>/ḥadṣa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tamīs/</td>
<td>/tanṣa/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No ordinal forms for numbers above 12 are used in Libyan Arabic. Instead the cardinal numbers are used.

**The Fractions**

Except for ‘half’, fractions have the pattern /FusāL/ (for ‘fourth’, seventh’, and ‘ninth’) and /Fus1L/ for the rest. All forms are nouns in Arabic; they are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/nufs/ (also /nuṣṣ/) ‘half’</td>
<td>/susbāʕ/ ‘seventh’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/tulit/ ‘third’</td>
<td>/tumsa/ ‘eighth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/rubāʕ/ ‘fourth’</td>
<td>/tusāʕ/ ‘ninth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/xumīs/ ‘fifth’</td>
<td>/ṣusir/ ‘tenth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/sudīs/ ‘sixth’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The plural of all the fractions has the pattern /Fusal/; e.g. /nfas/ ‘halves’, /rabʕ/ ‘fourths’ and so on.

Fractions above tenth are indicated by mentioning the upper cardinal number followed by the preposition /ṣe/ ‘on’ followed by the lower cardinal of the fraction; e.g. /tnin ṣe sābsaṣ/ ‘two seventeenths’.
CHAPTER VIII

PRONOUNS

Pronouns in Libyan Arabic are divided into independent pronouns and
pronoun suffixes. Both categories include different forms for the first,
second, and third persons and for the plural and singular numbers. In the
third person singular both independent and suffix pronouns distinguish be-
tween masculine and feminine gender. Independent pronouns, besides, have
different masculine and feminine forms for the second person singular.

The pronouns in Libyan Arabic are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Pronouns</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>/ane/ 'I'</td>
<td>/hne/ 'we'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>/inta/ 'you'</td>
<td>/intum/ 'you'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/inti/ 'you'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>/huwwa/ 'he'</td>
<td>/humma/ 'they'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/hryya/ 'she'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Libyan Arabic does not have a pronoun for the dual. The plural form
is used whenever more than one person or object is referred to.
### Pronoun Suffixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person:</strong></td>
<td>-i, -y, -y, -ni</td>
<td>-na ‘us, our’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person:</strong></td>
<td>-1k, -k ‘you, your’</td>
<td>-kum ‘you, your’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person:</strong></td>
<td>&lt;br&gt;Masc. -âh, -h ‘his, him’</td>
<td>&lt;br&gt;Fem. -ha ‘her’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pronoun suffix -ni is used with verbs, while the suffix -yya is used with some prepositions, mainly those ending in vowels; e.g.

/ša/ ‘my pocket’
/lšak/ ‘my dinner’

/lšay/ ‘your pocket’
/lšak/ ‘your dinner’

/lšah/ ‘his pocket’
/lšah/ ‘his dinner’

The pronoun suffix -ni is used with verbs, while the suffix -yya is used with some prepositions, mainly those ending in vowels; e.g.

/lgani/ ‘he found me’
/lgani/ ‘on me’

When pronoun suffixes are used with nouns ending in -en (other than the dual ending), the final -n is usually dropped and the suffix -yya is used for the first person singular. Also the final /e/ changes to /a/ in the first person singular; e.g.

/yden/ ‘hands’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ydn/yya/ ‘my hands’</td>
<td>/ydena/ ‘our hands’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ydn/yya/ ‘your hands’</td>
<td>/ydena/ ‘our hands’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ydn/yya/ ‘his hands’</td>
<td>/ydena/ ‘their hands’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the suffixes are used with the prepositions /šle/ ‘on’, /fi/ ‘in’, /li/ ‘for, to’ the suffix -yya is used in the first person singular, with the /-e/ in /šle/ changing to /-a/; e.g.

/lšayya/ ‘on me’
/lšiya/ ‘for me, to me’
/lšiya/ ‘in me’

\[1\] Pronoun suffixes cannot be attached to dual nouns in Libyan Arabic.
When the suffix -i (or any vowel-initial suffix) is added to the preposition /min/ ‘from’ the final -n in the preposition is doubled; e.g.

/minni/ ‘from me’
/minnik/ ‘from you’
/minnah/ ‘from him’

For all other prepositions the first person singular ending is -i if they end in consonants, -y/ if they end in vowels.

There are suffixed prepositional forms that are attached to the verbs and become a part of the verb. They are as follows:

/dar-li/ ‘he did for me’
/dar-lik/ ‘he did for you’
/dar-lah/ ‘he did for him’
/dar-ilah/ ‘he did for her’
/dar-lna/ ‘he did for us’
/dar-lkm/ ‘he did for you’
/dar-lhum/ ‘he did for them’

The ending /-ıt/ of the third person feminine singular of the perfect tense becomes /-at/ before a pronoun suffix beginning with a vowel; e.g.

/ durbit/ ‘she hit’
/ durbatik/ ‘she hit you’
/ durbatah/ ‘she hit him’

Indefinite Pronouns

Libyan Arabic has only a few indefinite pronouns. Those that are commonly used, either alone or combined with each other, are as follows:

/wahid/ ‘someone’
/wahid ražil/ ‘a man’

Notice that /wahid/ functions as an indefinite pronoun only if it precedes a noun; if it follows it, it will function as a numeral; e.g. /wahid ražil/ ‘a man’ but /ražil wahid/ ‘one man’.
/kuIl/ ‘everyone, all’          /kuIl wahd/ ‘everyone’
/ba/dd/ ‘someone’              /ma hadd że/ ‘nobody came’
/ba’d/ (/lha/dd/) ‘somebody’   /žttt ḥaža/ ‘I brought something’
/haža/ ‘something’             /aš ma ddīr ma yanfäf/ ‘whatever you
do is useless’
/âš ma/ ‘whatever’             /ma fiš šây/ ‘there is nothing’
/šây/ ‘nothing’

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns in Libyan Arabic are the following:

/hada/ (Masc.) ‘this’           /hadak(a)/ (Masc.) ‘that’
/hadi/ (Fem.) ‘this’            /haḍik(a)/ (Fem.) ‘that’
/hadu(ma)(ya)/ (Pl.) ‘these’    /haduk(a)(ya)/ (Pl.) ‘those’

for the plural forms of the demonstratives a variety of the forms above are
used depending on individual preference.

The demonstrative /ha/ is used sometimes in place of all the near
demonstratives (masculine and feminine, singular and plural); e.g.

/ha-ssâyyara/ ‘this car F’
/ha-lhoš/ ‘this house M’
/ha-ššar/ ‘these children’

Interrogative Pronouns

The following interrogative pronouns are used in Libyan Arabic:

much, how many’. All these (except /šnu/) may be combined with prepc-
sitions to form compound question words; e.g.

/mâf a mânû/ ‘with whom’
/b-âš/ ‘with what’
'/l-ama/ ‘to which’
/b-giddas/ ‘for how much’

/aš/ ‘what’ is used mostly with verbal sentences where it may function as a subject, an object, or the first part of an equational sentence; e.g.

/aš ūdd/ ‘what is new?’
/aš dirt/ ‘what did you do?’
/aš āxbarr ī/ ‘how is everything?’

In the speech of most Libyans /aš/ is used interchangeably with /šmu/ and has the same function in the sentence.

/ama/ ‘which’ is often followed by a noun; e.g. /ama ktabs/ ‘which book’. It may function as the first element in an equational sentence or as the object of a verbal sentence; and in both cases it requires that the third person pronoun be placed immediately after it; e.g.

/ama huwwa ī-mudir/ ‘which one is the director?’
/tubbi ama huwwa/ ‘which one do you want?’

/giddas/ ‘how much/many’ may be used as a part of an equational sentence, as a direct object, or a subject of the verb; e.g.

/giddas is-safā/ ‘what is the time?’
/giddas xdet/ ‘how much did you take?’
/giddas fdul/ ‘how much remained?’

Relative Pronouns

The following are the most common relative pronouns in Libyan Arabic, with sentences illustrating their usage:

1. /illī/ ‘which, who, whom’
It may function as a subject or object; e.g.

/ʔl-hmar /ʔllî/ fi-ssanya/ ‘the donkey which is in the farm’
/ʔl-ʔárha蓝牙 ŕrenaha/ ‘the car we bought’

2. /ʔaθ ma/ ‘whatever’

/sallifni aθ ma šindāk min flus/ ‘lend me whatever money you have’
CHAPTER IX

PARTICLES

Under this heading prepositions, interrogatives, the relative marker and conjunctions will be dealt with.

Prepositions

The most common prepositions in Libyan Arabic are as follows:

1. /bi/- 'with': It has an instrumental meaning (by means of, by, with).

   It cannot stand by itself in a sentence; it is prefixed to the following word; e.g.

   /mšena bi-ṭṭāyyara/ 'we went by plane'
   /ftāhnah bi-lmīfthā/ 'we opened it by the key'

2. /li/- 'to, towards, for': It also is prefixed to the following word; e.g.

   /mšet li-lhoʃ/ 'I went to the house (home)'
   /lhoʃ li-liżar/ 'The house is for rent'

3. /ben/ 'between, among'

   /tfahmu benhum/ 'They settled it among themselves'
   /gsámha ben š-s̱ar/ 'he divided it among the children'

   When a plural suffix pronoun is attached, the stem may be /ben/ or /benat-/, e.g.

   /lbād ben(at)hum/ 'he hid among them'
4. /ʃle/ ‘on, over’

It may take the form of the prefix /ʃa-/ when it is followed immediately by a noun with the definite article.

/ʃl-wārqa ʃa-Infāktib/ ‘the paper is on the desk’
/ʃlāmlmt ʃleha/ ‘I shook hands with her’

5. /ʃān/ ‘about, away from’

This preposition is rare. Most Libyans use /ʃle/ (above) in this sense.

/ʃlāmlmt ʃānqa/ ‘he told me about the story’
/ʃān bʃid ʃānhum/ ‘he lived away from them’

6. /fi/ ‘in’

/ʃl-mwdārris fi ʃl-fās/ ‘The teacher is in the class’
/ʃl-wāna ʃl-afriqa/ ‘Libya is in Africa’

7. /mʃa/ ‘with’

/mʃe mʃay/ ‘he went with me’
/gʃād mʃa ʃummmāh/ ‘he stayed with his mother’

8. /mn/ ‘from’

/ʃl-ʃuwa mn surya/ ‘He is from Syria’
/ʃl-ʃrāha mn xuh/ ‘He bought it from his brother’

9. /fog/ ‘over, on top of’

/ʃl-ʃọʃ fog ʃl-ʃbāl/ ‘The house is on top of the mountain’
/ʃl-ktab fog ʃl-ʃandug/ ‘The book is on the box’

10. /li-/ ‘belongs to’. This is different in meaning from the /li-/ in number 2.

/ʃọʃ hada li-xali/ ‘This house is my uncle’s’
Relative Marker and Conjunctions

Relative Marker

/illi/ ‘who, that, which’
/hada l-xanib illi xnāb s-sāyyara/ ‘This is the thief who stole the car’

Conjunctions

/amta ma/} ‘whenever’
/kull ma/
/kull ma y zi yzurni/ ‘whenever he comes he visits me’
/amta ma tāfda tāla/ ‘Come whenever you have time’

/len/
/lhādd ma/} ‘until’
/srāb len/ lhādd ma sūr/ ‘He drank until he got drunk’

/gābi/ ‘before’
/riṣriha gābl l- ṭīṭfal/ ‘Buy it before the celebration’

/bāfd/ ‘after’
/mšena bāfd l- ṭīṭmaṣ/ ‘We went after the meeting’

/milli/ ‘as soon as’
/milli ʾīrftha ṭīrťtha/ ‘As soon as I saw her I recognized her’

/lāmma/ ‘when’
/kif ma/ ‘as’
/ṭamila kif ma ṭamila ṭoxrīn/ ‘Treat her as you treat the others’

/zāy ma/ ‘like, as’
/l- ṭīnīh zāy ma xālīnā/ ‘We found it as we left it’

/še xāṭīr/} ‘because’
/lī ṭaṭma/}
/ma ḥdāris še xāṭīr/ lī ṭaṭma ṭummah mrida/ ‘He did not attend because his mother is sick’
'if' /kan/
'law' /law/

'If I see him I will hit him' /law nṣufāh nwdrbāh/
'If you come you will find him' /kan žet tālgāh/

'but, except that' /bāss/
'in order to, for the purpose of' /baš/

'He went but I did not find anybody' /mset bāss ma lget hādd/

'He went to America to buy a car' /ṣafir li-āmrika baš yišri sāyyara/

'No matter what I told him he did not listen' /grd ma/ /grd ma qytla ma baš yis mà/

'I passed; as for him he failed' /kālla - ama/ /kālla/ama huwwa ṣgut/

'He will not come even if we go to him' /ma yziš ḥatta wkan mṣenalaḥ/

'He neither came nor apologized' /la... wla/ /la že wla ṣtāddār/

'He has to take the train since he lives far away' /mādam/ /lazim yaxīd il-ṭtār mādam yuskw bād/

'I did not go because I do not have time' /ṣle xatīr/ /ma mṣetš ṣle xatīr ma ẓmīš wāgt/

'and' /w/

'My sister and brother were in Egypt' /xuy w uxti kanu fi màṣr/
/wen - kull ma/ 'whenever'
/wen ma yšuf bint ykāllimha/ 'Whenever he sees a girl he talks to her'

/ya . . . ya/ 'either . . . or'
/ya tgāf miz ya tmši/ 'Either sit or go'

Interrogatives

The following interrogative words are used in Libyan Arabic. They all occur at the beginning of the sentence:

/škun/ 'who
/škun xāšš/ 'Who entered?'
/škun ha-r-ražil/ 'Who is this man?'

/šlaš/ 'why
/šlaš br ţ t s-sanya/ 'Why did you sell the farm?'

/kif(aš)/ 'how
/kif gdâr ysafr/ 'How did he manage to travel?'

/amta/ 'when
/amta wšilt/ 'When did you arrive?'

/wen/ 'where
/wen tuskun/ 'Where do you live?'

Under interrogatives also are included all interrogative pronouns dealt with on page 99.
PART III

SYNTAX
The following is a brief discussion of the tenses of the verb (perfect and imperfect), verb phrases, and the function and meaning of the active participle in a sentence.

The Perfect Tense

The perfect tense refers to an action that was completed in the past without any specific indication as to whether it was a recent or remote past. The usage of the perfect tense is equivalent to the English simple past tense except in a few minor cases when it may correspond to an English present although the form of the verb is past; e.g.

/ḥāmt wālla la? - ḥāmt/ ‘do you understand?; I understand’
/šuṭāh wālla la? - šuṭāh/ ‘do you see him?; I see him’

In all other cases it refers to a completed action in the past; e.g.

/ḥāṣṣīlt xidma fi l-ḥkuma/ ‘I got a job with the government’
/kāṭbu xāms šwabat/ ‘They wrote five letters’
/skānna ḏānb l-muṣṣālāt/ ‘We lived by the camp’
The Imperfect Tense

The imperfect tense refers to an action that has not been completed. A verb in the imperfect may be used to refer to a habitual action, progressive action, a future action, or to a timeless statement of fact.

1. In its simple form the imperfect form of a verb can be translated as either the English present simple tense or the present progressive. In the sentence /xuy yixdim fi l-wîrṣa/ 'my brother works/is working in the workshop', the meaning may be stating the fact that my brother works in the workshop or it may be an indication of what he is doing the moment the statement is uttered.

2. The imperfect is also used to indicate habitual behavior performed by the subject, e.g.

/nâgra šaḥṭen kâl lela gâbl n-nom/ 'I read two pages before sleeping everynight'

/ygâ 9mîz fi d-dûkkan fi l-ṣâliyya/ 'he sits in the shop in the afternoon'

3. A verb in the imperfect may refer to an action yet to take place; an adverb indicating future time is often used with the imperfect in this case; e.g.

/nwâllîlîk s-sâfîn tin/ 'I'll come back to you at 2 o'clock'

/yţâk ūadwa/ 'He'll come to you tomorrow'

4. In certain other instances, mainly in complex sentences containing dependent clauses introduced by /w/, the verb of the independent clause is
the imperfect but the meaning is past time and the implication is that of emphasizing the content of the dependent clause or calling the attention to it; e.g.

/że maši w yiftir fi rsada/ ‘As he was walking he hit a rock’
/šafāh mīn bfiḍ w yirī fi žwrtāh/ ‘He saw him from a distance and ran after him’

The Active Participle

Although the position of an active participle in a sentence is that of a predicate adjective (that, of course, makes it agree with the noun or pronoun to which it refers) and the sentence is necessarily an equational sentence, it may often be translated by a verb in English. The most common usages of the active participle are as follows:

(a) Equivalent to English progressive:

/ane rabāh/ ‘I’m winning’
/biyya mašya/ ‘she’s leaving’
/hūmma gaḍdin/ ‘they are staying’

(b) Equivalent to English future: (a future time adverb is required in this case):

/ane msafr rūdwa/ ‘I am leaving (will leave) tomorrow’
/huwwa mwālī š-shāhr ū-zay/ ‘he is coming back next month’

(c) Equivalent to English present perfect tense with the adverb ‘already’:

/ane dafāf ḥāgha/ ‘I have already paid for it’
/huwwa faṭir mīn bākri/ ‘He has already had breakfast’
Under this usage also included its usage in the sense of 'have you ever

... e.g.

/šayf l-qahira/? 'have you (ever) seen Cairo?'
/maši lil māṯif/? 'have you (ever) been to the museum?

Verb Phrases (Auxiliaries)

A verb phrase is a combination of two or more verbs having the same
subject.

Auxiliaries. The most common type of verb phrases is the sequence
of the auxiliary /kan/ 'to be' plus a verb in the perfect or imperfect depending
on the meaning intended. /kan/ and all other auxiliaries always precede the
main verb in a sentence. The following /kan/ structures are distinguished:

(a) In a structure that consists of the perfect tense of /kan/ and the
active participle the indication is that of an action completed in the past
before the occurrence of another action also in the past. It is the past
perfect meaning; e.g.

/lāmma šuftāh kan bayāf lḥos/ 'when I saw him he had (already)
sold the house'
/wen kālimthâ kanīt faṭra/ 'when I talked to her she had
(already) had breakfast'
/lāmma žena kanu šarbin š-šahi/ 'when we came they had
(already) drunk tea'

When the active participle of verbs involving some kind of motion, such as
/že/ 'come', /rfāf/ 'lift' and the like, is used, the structure may be
interpreted as past progressive; e.g.
When I met them they were carrying it on their shoulders.

When I entered she was holding a knife.

(b) When the perfect form of /kan/ and the imperfect form of another verb are combined together in a sentence the result is an ambiguous structure which may be translated as past progressive action or a habitual behavior; e.g.

We were fixing/used to fix (the) cars.
He used to drink, was drinking.
I used to see him/I was watching him.

(c) The imperfect form of /kan/, with the suffix /-š/ attached to it in a sentence indicates that the speaker is making and seeking confirmation for a guess that he has made. It may be translated as ‘couldn’t it be . . .’

Couldn’t it be that he cut it, do you think?
Couldn’t it be that they stole it?

Other auxiliaries. The following verbs function as auxiliaries and combine with other verbs forming verb strings:

(1) /gəd/ ‘he remained’. When it is followed by the imperfect form of the verb the meaning is one of duration of the action; e.g.

He kept crying (for) about two hours.
They kept chatting til the morning.

This auxiliary may also be used with the active participle:

We slept all day.
(2) The verb /be/ 'he wanted'. The peculiarity of this verb is that, in its perfect form, it never occurs in the affirmative; it has to be in the negative. In the imperfect it does. In both forms it is always followed by the imperfect form of the main verb; e.g.

/ma-baš yxällis l-hutel/ 'He didn't want to pay for the hotel'
/ma btiš tālisi mšay/ 'She didn't want to play with me'
/tibbu titāddu?/ 'Do you want to have lunch?'
/yibbi yixdim bmnay/ 'He wants to work (as) a builder'

In its imperfect form this auxiliary often implies intention to do something, e.g.

/yibbi yimši li-l màdrsa lṭam ẓ-ẓay/ 'He wants (intends) to go to school next year'
/yibbi yālšib mša fāriq l-ẓamīša/ 'He intends to play with the university team'
/yibbi yišri mākina ždida/ 'He intends to buy a new machine'

(3) The verb /bde/ 'he began'. This can only be followed by the imperfect form of a verb, and means that the action is in progress; e.g.

/bdēna nūmši li s-sināmā mārra kūl ẓušbu'/ 'We began to go (going) to the cinema once a week'
/bdet kūl mārra nitžānūb fih/ 'I started avoiding (to avoid) him every time'

(4) The verb /gdar/ 'he was able to'. This has perfect and imperfect forms and may be followed by a verb in the perfect or imperfect. When it is in the perfect and the main verb also is in the perfect the meaning is that of 'could have...'; e.g.

/gdarśa šrena wāhdā żdida/ 'We could have bought a new one'
/gdārt skánt fi l-mdina/ 'You could have lived in the city'
If the auxiliary is in the perfect and the main verb in the imperfect the meaning is that of ‘was/were able to...’; e.g.

/gdār yžibha fi lwāqt imunāsīb/ ‘He was able to bring it in the appropriate time’
/gdru ykāmlu l-mubahah/ ‘They were able to finish the match’

If both verbs are in the imperfect the meaning is that of ‘can’; e.g.

/ydgdr ykālim xuh fi-l māwduf/ ‘He can talk to his brother about the subject’
/ydgdr yāṣrāḥhum mawqīfah/ ‘He can explain his position to them’
/nugdr ndir ili nrbhh/ ‘I can do whatever I want’

(5) The motion verbs /mše/ and /že/. These indicate past tense when they are in the perfect followed by a verb also in the perfect form. They mean simple present when they themselves are imperfect and are followed by a verb in the imperfect; e.g.

/mše xāšš lī ẓ-žeš/ ‘He went and joined the army’
/že tzāwwiẓ mīn libya/ ‘He came and got married (to some girl) from Libya’
/ymšu yālḥdu kull yom/ ‘They go horse riding everyday’
/yžu yiṣru fi l-ḥlib mīn hne/ ‘They came to buy milk from here’

Other verbs of motion used in the same way include /tlāf/ ‘go out’, /zrāg/ ‘sneak out’, /xāšš/ ‘enter’, /tlāff[t/ ‘turn around’, and a few others that involve some kind of motion.

(6) The auxiliary /lazīm/ ‘must’. This has the meaning of obligation, equivalent to English ‘should, must, ought to’, when it is followed by a verb in the imperfect:
Someone should go and see him.
You should talk to him before the end of the month.

When it is followed by a verb in the perfect tense the meaning is that of ‘must have’;

He must have gone to work.
He must have met his brother.

(7) The auxiliary /ma-zal/ ‘still’. It indicates continuation of the action and is thus translated as a progressive tense. It may be followed only by the imperfect form of the verb. This verb consists of two parts; /ma/, a negative particle meaning ‘not’ and the stem /zal/ ‘vanished, disappeared’. Combined they mean ‘still, yet, etc.’ It only occurs in its negated form conjugated with the appropriate subject.

He still goes, he is still walking.
The student (F) is still working.

(8) The verb /nād/ ‘he began’. It may be used in both the perfect and imperfect, but may be followed only by the imperfect form of the verb; e.g.

When I saw him he started running.
Whenever you talk to him he starts to cry.
If he does not do it I will dismiss him.
After he ate he went to sleep.

Transitive verbs take objects; intransitives do not. Some verbs may take two objects; e.g.
/ʔallim wilḍah n-ʕuze/ ‘He taught his son carpentry’
/ʔe lbint sāyyartāh/ ‘He gave the girl his car’

Others may take an object and a noun complement, e.g.

/ʔayym ʕahbak musārid mdır/ ‘He appointed your friends assistant manager’

Verbs may also take complements; e.g.

/tban ʕira/ ‘she looks young’
/yban mrid/ ‘he looks sick’
CHAPTER XI

THE NOUN

Modification Structures

A noun plus a modifier is called a noun phrase. The modifier may be a demonstrative, a numeral (cardinals and ordinals), a particle, a noun or an adjective (including comparatives).

Demonstratives

A noun may be modified by any of the demonstratives listed on p. 99. The demonstrative often precedes the noun if it is in the form of a prefix (i.e. /ha-/ and follows if it is independent. ¹ It also agrees with it in gender and number; e.g.

/ha-lktab mis bāṭtal/ ‘This book is not bad’
/ha-lxubza šxuna/ ‘This bread is fresh’

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¹ This is not, however, an invariable order. Independent demonstrative pronouns may (rarely) occur before the noun; e.g. /hada l-wiḏ mriḏ/ ‘this boy is sick’, /haduka l-ḥyās ūḏḏî/ ‘Those houses are new’.
When the noun is modified by a demonstrative the noun is necessarily definite, i.e. takes the definite article, if the demonstrative precedes the noun, and the article or a pronoun suffix if it follows the noun.

**Numerals**

A cardinal numeral may modify a noun and occurs commonly before it and rarely after it.\(^1\) When the definite article or a demonstrative is to be added to the phrase the article is attached to the numeral itself and the demonstrative precedes it. If an adjective is to be added to modify the noun, it is placed at the end of the whole phrase; e.g.

/s-sürwal hada mīs mtəffî/ ‘These trousers are not mine’
/l-wrág haduka lî-lmuşallîm/ ‘Those papers belong to the teacher’

/xb̪ narrow hada mīs / ‘five cars’
/l-x̄̄ams krahîb/ ‘the four cars’
/ha-l-x̄ams krahîb l-kbar/ ‘these ten big cars’

The numeral /waḥad/ ‘one’ always occurs after the noun it modifies and is, therefore, an exception; e.g.

/lktâb waḥad/ ‘one book’
/dar wâḥda/ ‘one room’

Ordinal numbers modify nouns and occur before or after the noun they modify if it is singular but only after it if it is plural. When the ordinal occurs before, it has the article, and the noun does not. Ordinals agree with the

\(^1\)When numerals occur after the nouns they modify, they agree with them in gender and number.
nouns they modify in gender, number, and definiteness when they follow them but they are in the masculine singular if they precede, regardless of the gender of the noun; e.g.

/\l-mra r-rabî'氱a/ \{ 'the fourth woman'
/r-rabî'氱 mra/
\{ 'the fourth woman'
/d-durţat r-rabicat/ 'the fourth steps'
/\t-tullab l-āwlin/ 'the first students'

Particles

The following particles function as noun modifiers. Some of them may have more than one function and may have been listed previously under a different grammatical category.

(a) The particle /hâlba/ 'much, many, very'. When it modifies a noun it may occur before it or after it and means 'much, a lot of'. The noun must be a collective or mass noun.\(^1\)

/\hâlba nas/
/nas hâlba/
/šûkkur hâlba/ 'too much sugar'

(b) The particle /šwâyya/ 'little, few'. It modifies nouns and precedes them. When it is annexed to a noun the final /a/ is replaced by the suffix /-a/.

\(^1\)Including comparative adjectives in which case the particle follows the comparative adjective; e.g. /\t-wîl hâlba/ 'a lot taller', /\t-âsmin hâlba/ 'a lot fatter'.

/šwāyyit fāhm/ ‘a little understanding’
/šwāyyit mlḥ/ ‘a little (bit of) salt’
/šwāyyit bnat/ ‘few girls’

(c) The particle /ama/ ‘which, what’. It modifies a noun and occurs immediately before it. The noun it modifies is necessarily indefinite; e.g.

/šāt ak ama ḫsān?/ ‘Which horse did he give you?’
/ama mādṛsā?/ ‘what school, which school?’
/ama bld?/ ‘which, what country?’

(d) The particle /kwll/ ‘each, every, all’. It modifies a noun and precedes it; e.g.

/kwll ?wstād/ ‘every professor’
/kwll māẓmuḥa/ ‘each group’
/kwll l-bant/ ‘all the girls’

If it is to be placed after the noun it modifies, which is quite possible, a pronoun suffix referring to the noun is attached to it and the noun itself becomes definite. In this position it means ‘all’ or ‘the whole’; e.g.

/l-ʃela kwllh/ ‘The whole family’
/l-lāzhnā kwllh/ ‘The whole committee’

Annexion Structures

An annexion structure, in its simplest form, is a noun phrase consisting of two nouns in which the first noun is modified by the second. It may be simple or complex depending on the number of elements involved. It exceeds three constituents only rarely. The two-element annexion is the most common.
The simple annexion has two elements: the first term, which may be a noun or an adjective and the second term which may be a noun or a pronoun (usually demonstrative pronoun). The first term never has the definite article and cannot take a pronoun suffix, although in terms of meaning it may be definite. The second may be definite or indefinite and can take a pronoun suffix;

/kâlb s-suwwag/ 'the driver's dog'
/srîr l-bînt/ 'the girl's bed'
/hoš kînnas/ 'a garbage-man's house'
/dârbit âfsma/ 'a blind man's hit'

When the first term is modified by an adjective (or any other element functioning like an adjective), that adjective is placed at the end of the whole structure; e.g.

/miftâh darna l- ?âbyîd/ 'the white key of our room'
/sâyyarî l-mûdir l-âmmra/ 'the director's red car'

If the two terms of the annexion are of the same gender an ambiguity may result; e.g.

/wûld žarna ñ-šîr/ 'our neighbor's small boy/our small neighbor's boy'
/dûkkân xuy l-khir/ 'my eldest brother's shop/my brother's big shop'

The first term of a simple annexion may be an adjective (or an active participle functioning as an adjective) in which case the whole structure functions like an adjective; e.g.
The second term may be a demonstrative pronoun in a less common structure; e.g.

/ða ʕit hada/ ‘this one’s merchandise’
/ʔaʃt hadi/ ‘this one’s (F) glass’

**Complex Annexion**

A complex annexion consists of three (or rarely more) terms of which the middle element is called the ‘middle term’. It functions as a second term of the first and as a first-term for the third. In such a structure only the last term may take the definite article or a pronoun suffix; e.g.

/hoš wild n-niżżar/ ‘the carpenter’s son’s house’
/ḥkayt xanib ʔ-ʔanta/ ‘the suitcase thief’s story’
/māwduʕ hārāt l-bādu/ ‘the subject of beduin migration’

Only rarely does a four-element structure occur; e.g.

/ḥkayt wāqf tādāxxul l- ṣāţanib/ ‘the story of stopping foreign intervention’
/ṭlag bint wild ʔammāh/ ‘the divorce of his cousin’s daughter’

**/mtaʕ/-Construction**

One structure that is considered similar in meaning to annexion is introduced by the particle /mtaʕ/ ‘belonging to’ between the terms of the annexion. This particle may be used in its independent form or as a stem for a pronoun suffix. In both cases it indicates possession; e.g.
There is no difference in meaning between the direct annexion and the construction using /mta/. As a matter of fact many structures of the first type may be put together in the second type; e.g.

/l-ārd l-ḥkuma/ 'the government's land'
/l-ārd mta l-ḥkuma/ 'the government's land'

In a /mta/-structure, however, the first element may or may not take the definite article (e.g. /ārd mta ḥkuma/ 'a government's land') while in the direct annexion the first element never takes the article. When /mta/ is used in its independent form it occurs between the two nouns (or noun phrases); e.g.

/l-wrag mta l-muḥāndis/ 'the engineer's papers'
/l-hurkā l-kbirā mta žarna/ 'our neighbor's big robe'
/l-ḥut mta l-mmāyya l-ḥĪlwa/ 'sweet water fish'

The Vocative /ya/

The particle /ya/ is used with proper nouns and nouns that indicate titles or kinship relations. It is a form of calling the attention of the person spoken to; e.g.

/telay ya ġli gāfīmez/ 'Hey, Ali, come and sit'
/yā'axx min faḍlīk ma d-dāxxmīs/ 'Brother, please don't smoke'
/yā sāyyīd hadā māmnufl/ 'Sir, this is prohibited'
Use of /nafs/ and /ruh/

The nouns /nafs/ and /ruh/ ‘self, soul, character’ combined with a possessive pronoun suffix function like English reflexive pronouns; e.g.

/gtal nafsah/ ‘He killed himself’
/rme ruhah/ ‘He threw himself down’
/hurmit nafsah/ ‘She deprived herself (of)’

Use of /(w)bud/ and /sen/

The nouns /(w)bud/ ‘character, personality’ and /sen/ (literally means ‘eye’ but the implication is that of the whole character) preceded by the preposition /b-/ ‘with may be used in the sense of ‘personally or in person’; e.g.

/zhani huwwa budah/ ‘He came to me in person’
/softah huwwa fenah/ ‘I saw him in person’

The Adjective

Adjectives as Modifiers

Adjectives are placed after the nouns they modify and agree with them in gender, number, and definiteness as we will see below under Agreement.

If the noun is definite the adjective is definite; e.g.

/lu- ‘atat l-gdim/ ‘the old furniture’
/l-muwa‘ada z-zaida/ ‘the new (F) employee’
/‘ardha s-sira/ ‘our small land’

If the noun is indefinite the adjective is indefinite too; e.g.
Comparative Adjectives

The comparative forms are used in superlative usages in many different ways. One is when they occur followed by a noun to which they are attached in an annexion relationship; e.g.

/ākbr h tel fi l-mdina/ 'the biggest hotel in the city'
/āsfr wa r d fi l- māzmuqa/ 'the youngest one in the group'
/āzml bnt fi l-mādlsa/ 'the prettiest girl in the school'

Another way of indicating the superlative is by attaching the definite article to a regular adjective and placing an independent pronoun, agreeing with the subject, before it; e.g.

/sāyyarti hyya l-mliha/ 'my car is the best'
/šli hwwa l-kbr/ 'Ali is the eldest'
/1-bnt hyya s-siya/ 'the girl is the youngest'

Still a third way of making superlative is by using the comparative form of the adjective followed by a definite plural noun; e.g.

/xuh āhsmr r-rizžala/ 'his brother is the best of men'
/fatma hyya ākbr l-bnat/ 'Fatma is the eldest of the girls'
/humma asžaf l-zunud/ 'they are the bravest (of soldiers)'

Comparatives as Modifiers

When a comparative modifies a noun it either precedes it or follows it.

If the comparative precedes it is normally indefinite and constitutes with its
noun an annexion structure. The meaning of such a structure is that of a
superlative, e.g.

/ʔəflāh wil-da/ 'the cleverest boy'
/ʔawʕir dār-s/ 'the most difficult lesson'

If the noun is made definite (and this is less common in Libyan Arabic) it has
to be changed into plural and the meaning will be that of superlative of
excellence, i.e. showing the excellence of a certain thing among other
equals.

When the comparative follows, the noun modified is often indefinite; e.g.

/ʔuda ʔagšir/ 'a shorter stick'
/buγra ʔasm-n/ 'a fatter cow'
/flus ʔakt-r/ 'more money'
CHAPTER XII

AGREEMENT

Adjectives agree with the nouns they modify; a verb agrees with its subject, and a pronoun agrees with its referent. This syntactic relationship is normally called agreement. Agreement involves not only considerations of gender and number, but other considerations as well.

Nouns and Adjectives

Adjectives agree in certain ways with nouns in gender, number, and definiteness. If the noun is masculine singular it takes a masculine singular adjective; if it is feminine singular it takes a feminine singular adjective.

In Libyan Arabic, as in all other dialects and in Standard Arabic, the adjective follows the noun it modifies; e.g.

/dukkan šir/ 'small shop'
/xēt rgi/'thin string'
/rošin gdim/ 'old window'
/gaša wasqa/ 'wide yard (F.)'
/xiṭṭa mlha/ 'good plan (F.)'

If the noun is dual (feminine or masculine, human or nonhuman) the adjective is in the broken plural form if it has one; e.g.

/daren kbar/ 'two big rooms'
/kursyyn šah/ 'two strong chairs'
/ktaben humur/ 'two red books'
If the adjective has no broken plural form, however, the feminine sound plural form of the adjective is used with the dual; e.g.

/nagten šarfat/ ‘two old female camels’
/kālmten gw̯iyat/ ‘two strong words’
/šâḥṭen milyanat/ ‘two full pages’
/māktben faṭyat/ ‘two empty (vacant) offices’

If the noun is plural and has nonhuman referents the adjective is feminine (singular or plural; both are heard) or broken plural; e.g.

/brarīk kbar/ ‘big huts’
/radywat ždid/ ‘new radios’
/mdāris gdima/ ‘old schools’
/dyar milyānat/ ‘full rooms’

If the noun is masculine plural with human referents it takes masculine plural or broken plural adjectives. If the noun is feminine plural with human referents it takes feminine plural adjectives or broken plural adjectives; e.g.

/fāllāḥin našṭin/ ‘energetic farmers’
/wlād ŋwāl/ ‘tall boys’
/bāwwaɓin rāsmiyyin/ ‘official janitors’
/xīddamat smān/ ‘fat maids’
/tibat faḥḥat/ ‘clever doctors’
/bnāt kbar/ ‘big girls’

Comparative forms do not agree with the noun they modify. They are invariable in form; e.g.

/l-mādrsa akbīr min l-mālīb/ ‘The school is bigger than the stadium’
/l-bnāt aṣṣir min l-ulād/ ‘The girls are younger than the boys’
/l-ḥyaas awṣāf min l-villāt/ ‘The houses are wider than the villas’
Definiteness

A noun is considered definite if:

a. It is a proper noun; e.g. /maḥammid/, /salāḥ/, etc.

b. It has the definite article /il/\(^1\) attached to it, e.g. /il-ṭaw/ ‘the weather’, /il-ṭalṭa/ ‘the mistake’.

c. It has a pronoun suffix attached to it, e.g. /ktabi/ ‘my book’

/dūkkanik/ ‘your shop’, etc.

d. It is a first term of an annexion construction the second term of which is definite by means of any of the above-mentioned ways, e.g.

/dūkkan šalāḥ/ ‘Salah’s shop’
/dūkkan šadiqāḥ/ ‘His friend’s shop’
/dūkkan il-mra/ ‘The woman’s shop’

An adjective modifying a definite noun is made definite by attaching the definite article to it; e.g.

/tunis il-xādra/ ‘Green Tunisia’
/il-māthīf t-tərəxi/ ‘the historical museum’
/sirwālāḥ ẓ-ẓidid/ ‘his new trousers’
/hoʃ il-mra ẓ-ẓidid/ ‘the woman’s new house’

When the adjective functions as a predicate of an equational sentence, it takes no definite article regardless of whether the noun (or pronoun) it refers to in the subject is definite or indefinite; e.g.

\(^1\)Collectives are also treated as masculine singulars or feminine singular, and pronouns and verbs agree accordingly.
There is no distinction in gender in the first person pronoun; gender can only be understood from the context; e.g.

/ane ğāfan/ ‘I am hungry (M)’
/ane ğāfan/ ‘I am hungry (F)’
/ḥne ğāfanin/ ‘We (M) are hungry’
/ḥne ğāfanat/ ‘We (F) are hungry’

If the first person plural pronoun includes males and females it is always treated as masculine.

A clue to whether the speaker is a male or a female is the form of the modifier used with the pronoun or noun. There is a distinction in number, of course, between first person singular and the first person plural, where the first refers only to the speaker and the second refers to more than one (including the speaker) of either sex.

The second person pronoun has feminine or masculine, singular or plural forms depending on the sex and number of person(s) addressed. The plural form is used to refer to more than one of either sex; the singular refers only to one person.

/inta bāṭal/ ‘you (M) are a champion’
/inti māznūma/ ‘you (F) are crazy’
/intum ihtkālmu źārbi/ ‘do you (Pl.) speak Arabic?’
In both the first and second persons if the pronouns are joined together by 
/w/ 'and' to function as a subject in a sentence, the verb is usually in the 
third person plural; e.g.

/ane w intum näliṣbu karṭa/ 'I and you (Pl.) play cards'
/inti w ḫne b-ḥmṣu lmāṣr/ 'you (F) and we will go to Egypt'

In the third person if the subject is feminine singular the pronoun 
that refers to it, and also the verb, are in the feminine singular; if the 
subject is masculine singular, they will be in the masculine singular, e.g.

/ibni ṭāwawṣit swwag/ 'The girl got married to a driver'
/xalti zarit māṣr/ 'My aunt visited Egypt'
/l-bab ṭālili/ 'The door opened'
/lḥṣan ṭlā ṣārra/ 'The horse went out'

If the subject is plural or dual with human referents, the verb (and the pro- 
noun) is plural; if it does not have human referents, the verb is either plural 
or feminine singular; e.g.

/šuna sāyyarten mṭābyat/ 'We received two car loads'
/l-biban nkrsru/ 'The doors broke'
/1-ṭāxbar ṭulṣit fi 1-blad/ 'The news spread in the country'
/1-mādaris šākkrīt bākri/ 'The schools closed early'
CHAPTER XIII

SENTENCE TYPES

Sentences in Libyan Arabic may be divided into simple, compound, and complex. The first consists of one independent clause; the second of two or more independent clauses joined together with a conjunction; the third of two or more clauses of which only one is independent, the others subordinate.

Simple sentences may be subdivided into equational sentences, verbal sentences, and topic and comment sentences. Each of these subdivisions has characteristics that distinguish it from others.

The Simple Equational Sentence

A declarative equational sentence consists of a subject and a verbless predicate in juxtaposition. The subject slot may be filled by a definite noun (with or without modifiers), a pronoun or a demonstrative. The predicate may be a noun, a pronoun, an adjective, an adverb, or a prepositional phrase. There is no linking copula between the two parts but it is implied in the semantics of the sentence; e.g.

/ḥṣaḥn šār/ ‘the horse is young’
/š-šebāni mištažās/ ‘the old man is not feeling well’
/hada wridi/ ‘this is my son’
/hadi hyya/ ‘this is it/she’
In a simple equational sentence the subject comes first except when the sentence begins with an interrogative word, or when the predicate is a preposition with a pronoun suffix attached to it; e.g.

/minu l-qris/ 'who is the groom?'
/šīnu ha-ddāwša/ 'what is this noise?'
/māk xāms nfar/ 'five persons are with you'
/ffiha sīt dyar/ 'It has six rooms'

The Verbal Sentence

A declarative verbal sentence is one that contains a verb. It may also contain an expressed subject, an object, and various modifiers. If not expressed, the subject may be indicated by the inflection of the verb; as a matter of fact, a verbal sentence may consist of only one word, i.e. a verb in which the subject is signaled by inflection and an optional object, in the form of a pronoun suffix, attached to it, e.g.

/ʕzāmtha/ 'I invited her'
/lāzzuhm/ 'They sent them out'

If the subject is expressed, it may be a noun or pronoun or a combination of a noun or pronoun plus the inflection of the verb; e.g. /l-wild (hʊwwa) drāb l-kālb/ 'the boy hit the dog'. The subject may precede or follow the verb; e.g.

/ˈuwɓu  n-nsawin/ 'The women got out'
/n-nsawin ˈuwɓu/
of emphasis and contrast, e.g.

/\wa\ma\ h\su\ l\ka\ra/ 'They played football (not the others)'
/\w\wa\ h\r\b\ m\l\-\h\bs/ 'He escaped from jail (not others)'

**Sentence Negation**

Sentence negation in Libyan Arabic is expressed by attaching prefixes and/or suffixes or by introducing certain negation particles. An equational sentence is negated by introducing the particle /mi\$/ 'is not' between the subject and the predicate; e.g.

/\-\w\m\-\w\h\1d/ 'the weather is not nice'
/\-\h\-\h\s\ m\i\-\b\r/ 'the house is not big'

A verbal sentence is negated by prefixing /ma/ and suffixing /-\$/ to the verb if it ends in a vowel and /-\$/ if it ends in a consonant.

/\-\1\-\l\\a\-\s\ b\r\r/ 'I didn't go out'
/\-\1\-\y\-\w\s\r\b\h\1\ f\ l\-\g\h\w/ 'he doesn't drink coffee'
/\-\1\m\s\ a\l\-l\h\f/ 'he did not go to the party'

In place of, or together with, the suffix /-\$/ other particles such as /\1\ /, /\la/, /\-\k\a/, may be used with verb forms. In this case they will mean 'nothing but, only' and they are often interchangeable; e.g.

/\-\1\-\1\-\-\a\l\-\l\a/ 'we only bought one'
/\-\1\-\k\1\-\l\m\i\-\l\-\m\r/ 'he only spoke to the woman'
/\-\1\-\f\-\a\l\-\k\a\-\l\m\-\d\r/ 'she only knows the manager'

The prefix /\-\1\-/ may be combined with other elements to express negation in different ways; e.g.
/ma-ţa(ş) ḥaḍḍ/ ‘nobody came’
/ma-lgaş ḥaţa/ ‘he found nothing, he didn’t find anything’

If the verb has an auxiliary, the prefix and the suffix are attached to the auxiliary, not to the main verb; e.g.

/ma-ţumriš rgāšt/ ‘I never did’
/ma-yibbiš yurğud/ ‘he doesn’t want to sleep’
/ma-yigdruš yugďu/ ‘they can’t stay’

If the verb form is imperative the second person (singular or plural) form of the imperfect tense of that form is used in negation; e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/?mšu/ ‘Go (Pl.)!’</td>
<td>/matmšuš/ ‘Don’t go (Pl.)!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/?ugďu/ ‘Stay!’</td>
<td>/matugďudš/ ‘Don’t stay!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kuli/ ‘Eat (F.)!’</td>
<td>/matakliš/ ‘Don’t eat (F.)!’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In rare examples when the prefix-suffix combination is attached to prepositions and adverbs, the helping vowel /i/ is added to the suffix /š/ and the /š/ becomes doubled, e.g.

/ma fiš haţa/ ‘There is nothing’
/ma fišši šaţi/ ‘There is nothing in it’
/l-ḥet ma ğlešši ša’y/ ‘The wall has nothing on it’
/l-mâktib ma wrašši ša’y/ ‘The desk has nothing behind it (in its behind)’

A sentence containing the particle /şind/ ‘at, to have’ may be negated by either attaching the /ma-ş/ combination or by introducing the negative particle /miş/ and in each case it has a different meaning, e.g.

/1-flus miš şind/ ‘I don’t have the money (somebody else may have it)’
/ma şind miş flus/ ‘I don’t have money (at all)’
Interrogation

Questions are formed by either: (a) rising intonation, or by (b) using a question word, i.e. by using one of the interrogative pronouns or adverbs; e.g.

/smāʾt l-ḥkayaʔ/ ‘Did you hear the story?’
/amta ḥāwwālītuʔ/ ‘When did you move?’
/šmu ḥāṣṣiʔ/ ‘What did he get?’

Questions that are made by rising intonation usually require a ‘yes-no’ type of answer. Those made by introducing a question word are answered by giving a specific body of information. The interrogative word (or phrase) is usually placed at the beginning of the sentence, although there are instances where it occurs at the end, e.g.

/ţeṭ mʕa škunʔ/ ‘who did you come with?’
/srethā bgiddašʔ/ ‘you bought it for how much?’

The Topic-Comment Sentence

A topic-comment sentence is one that consists of two parts: a topic, usually a noun, pronoun, or a demonstrative, and a comment, normally an equational or verbal sentence, in which there is a pronoun referring back to the topic, serving as a comment on the thing talked about. Examples in which the comment is a verbal sentence:

/d-dūkkan, sākk Johnny min zman/ ‘I closed the shop a long time ago’
/hāne, ma ngdryš nimšu/ ‘we cannot go’
/hada/ ma nṯāmlaš/ ‘I cannot tolerate this’
In these examples the topics are placed at the beginning of the sentences and separated by a pause from the verbal sentences that serve as comments for those prestated topics. Also the topics correspond to the underlined pronouns in the comment sentences. Examples in which comment is an equational sentence:

/žarna, xuḥ mrid/ 'our neighbor's brother is sick'
/Ali, ʔummāḥ mudārsā/ 'Ali's mother is a teacher'

The topic-comment sentence can be freely negative, passive, imperative, and interrogative. It is treated as any other verbal sentence.

**Compound Sentences**

A compound sentence is one that consists of two independent clauses joined by a conjunction. The clauses are independent in the sense that if the conjunction is removed each clause can stand as a major sentence; e.g.

/yḥibb l-bnt lakm ma-yigdrš yirtzāwwizha/ 'He loves the girl but he can't marry her'

/tsallif flus ml-bānk w šre sāyyara/ 'He borrowed money from the bank and bought a car'

The two clauses joined together in a compound sentence may be only two words, each with the subject signaled by inflection and the object (if any) attached to it in the form of a suffix; e.g.

/šafni lakšin tžānnibtāh/ 'He saw me but I ignored him'
Complex Sentences

A complex sentence is one that consists of two or more clauses one of which is independent and the others dependent or subordinate. The dependent clause may function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

Noun Clauses

A noun clause is one that does the work of a single noun in a sentence. It may function as a subject, as an object, or as an object of a preposition (usually /illa/ 'except'). The conjunctions that introduce a noun clause are: /kawn-/ followed by a pronoun suffix,¹ and /illī/ 'that who, which'. /kawn-/ cannot be left out in a sentence while /illī/ may be when its clause functions as an object; e.g.

As a subject

/illī ْزِرْبَتُه مَا سَأَّدِهُ/ 'What you brought was not enough'
/illī ْيَفِسُلُه يَعَرْفُهُ/ 'Whatever he gets he spends'
/kawnāh mruḍ hada mīš ُودر/ 'that he got sick is not an excuse'

As an object:

/nset kawnha mitzāwza/ 'I forgot that she is married'
/smārt illī hawwa yīxnb/ 'I heard that he steals (he is a thief)'
/nāhsab(āh) l-hōs nbaʔ/ 'I thought the house was sold'

If the verb takes two objects only the second object can be a clause; e.g.

/qālim wīldāh yəsālāh l-kraḥib/ 'He taught his son how to fix (he fixes) cars'.

¹The pronoun usually agrees with the subject of the clause.
As an object of preposition:

/gulli  šyy  haža  illa  l-hoš  nba⁵/  ‘tell me anything except (tʰat) the house was sold’
/sāddīgt  kull  šāyy  illa  ḥkayt  buh  mat/  ‘I believed everything except that his father died’

A noun clause may function as an object with no conjunction introducing it; e.g.

/smā́t  ʕ-ʕar  yālībū/  ‘I heard the children playing’

In this sentence the word /ʕ-ʕar/ functions not only as an object of the verb /smā́t/ but also as a topic for the clause /yālībū/ as well.

The conjunction /illī/, when used to introduce the noun clause, usually specifies the thing talked about. It may, however, be used to indicate general matters; e.g.

/illī  y̱̲ifiš  ya  ma  y̱̲ṣuf/  ‘he who lives sees a lot’
/illī  y̱̲hilbbik  ḥibbāh/  ‘Love the one who loves you’

A different kind of noun clause is the interrogative. Interrogative noun clauses are those that are introduced by interrogative pronouns or adverbs. All the pronouns and adverbs listed on pages 99 and 106 may introduce such clauses; e.g.

/ma  ʕ̱̲raftis  kif  ṯ̲arbgt/  ‘I did not know how it exploded’
/kən  tibbiha  gulli  gidās  ṯ̲dfs/  ‘If you want it tell me how much you want to pay’
/tmānnetāh  šṟ̲âhi  ama  wāḥda/  ‘I wish he had explained to me which one’

A yes-no question may be incorporated into a sentence as a subordinate
clause by introducing the conjunction /kan... wàlla la/ which translates as 'whether or not', e.g.

/ma-ndriś kan hāllha wàlla la/ 'I don't know if he opened it or not'
/lazīm nāfīru kan xdahum wàlla la/ 'we have to know whether he took them or not'

In some situations the first part of the conjunction (i.e. /kan/) is left out and only /wàlla la/ is used; e.g.

/ma galitiś tībbihà wàlla la/ ‘She didn’t tell me (whether) she wants it or not’

Adjectival Clauses

Adjectival clauses are mainly relative clauses modifying a nominal in the independent clause and containing a pronoun (or a verb) referring back to that nominal and agreeing with it. Adjectival clauses are introduced by the relative pronoun /illi/ 'that, who, whom, which', e.g.

/r-raziś illi yuskm hne mat/ 'The man who lives here died'
/šāddu l-xamb illi xnāb s-sāfìa/ 'They arrested the thief who stole the watch'

If the noun modified by the adjectival clause is indefinite the relative clause is not usually introduced by /illi/; e.g.

______________________________________________________________

1When the clause is introduced by /illi/ it is necessarily of the defining type, i.e. specifies what is talked about. Incidentally /illi/ here is the same as that which introduces the noun clause but here it has a defining function.
I want a motorcycle (that) runs two hundred kilometers
I am looking for a pair of shoes that lives long

Adverbial Clauses

An adverbial clause is one that modifies the verb of the main clause. It may be an adverbial clause of time, manner, reason or place, depending on the type of conjunction used.

(a) Clause of time. The conjunctions are as follows: (the particle /ma/ following many of them is close in meaning to the English ‘ever’ in whenever, whatever, etc. The conjunctions may be used with or without /ma/):
/millī/ ‘as soon as’, /lāmma/ ‘when’. Some of these conjunctions are synonymous and interchangeable. Interchangeability is indicated below by the alternation sign ~, e.g.

/nsafru amta ma dżi zożti/ ‘We will travel when my wife comes’
/kull ma yakuł ymrud/ ‘Whenever he eats he gets sick’
/rażena len(-liḥḥadd)ma žu kullhom/ ‘We waited until they all came’
/šretha gābl ma tišri l-ḥoš/ ‘I bought it before she bought the house’
/šrābtha bāfd ma tʃaššet/ ‘I drank it after I had supper’
/mādam ma mšaš lazim ykun mriḍ/ ‘As long as (since) he didn’t go he must be sick’
/millī ʃuʃṭah ʃraftah/ ‘As soon as I saw him I recognized him’
(b) **Clauses of manner.** The conjunctions are: /kif(ma)/ 'as', /zā(yma)/ 'like'. These two conjunctions are interchangeable, e.g.

/jār zāy ma(- kif ma)yāzri l-ḥṣan/ 'He ran like a horse (as the horse runs)
/dār kif ma(- zāy ma)gūnnałah/ 'He did as we told him (to do)'

(c) **Clauses of reason.** The conjunctions are: /qle xāṭir/ 'because', /ln ?ānna/ 'because', e.g.

/rāwwāh qle xāṭir kāmmil šulāh/ 'He went home because he finished his work'
/sīwā qle xāṭir ma xās l-ʾimṭīḥān/ 'He failed because he didn’t take the exam'
/baḥa li ?ānnā ma gdārš yusghā/ 'He sold it because he couldn’t drive it'
/ḥdār t-muḥadra li ?ānnha muḥimma/ 'I attended the lecture because it is important'

(d) **Clauses of place.** These are introduced by the conjunction /wen ma/

/lgaha wen ma ḥāṭtha/ 'he found it where he (had) put it'
/lwāḥid yqiš wen ma yālga rizgāh/ 'One lives wherever he finds his living.

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**Conditional Clauses**

A conditional clause consists, in Libyan Arabic, of two parts: the main clause, usually the one that includes the conditional particle, and the

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1This is an overlapping in the usage of the conjunction /wen/. It may be used in the sense of 'when', e.g. /wen ma nṣufah nsallīm qleḥ/ 'whenever I see him I greet him'; or in the sense of 'where' as in /mṣetlāh wen ma l-yṛxda / 'I went to where he works'.

result clause, the one that tells what the result would be, had that condition been fulfilled.

The conditional particles that introduce the conditional clause are: /kan/, /lukan - wkan/ and /lāw/, the last less common. They all mean 'if'.

Although the determination of whether the condition indicated is real or unreal can only be achieved by understanding the overall context. The following generalizations hold to a certain extent for Libyan Arabic, although, admittedly, they are not invariable.

Conditional clauses may indicate unreal (impossible to fulfill) conditions or real conditions (those that are possible to fulfill). Clauses expressing unreal conditions are introduced by /kan/ and /lukan/ (which is sometimes abbreviated as /wkan/); those expressing real condition by /lāw/.

Unreal condition. This is indicated in Libyan Arabic by putting the verbs of the main clause and the result clause in the perfect tense and introducing the particle /ra/ plus a pronoun suffix before the verb of the result. This particle has the meaning ‘would/might have’, e.g.

/lukan ūnani ṣṭeṭeq flus/ ‘If he had come to me I would have given him money’
/wkan mše rahu ḥassilha/ ‘If he had gone he would have gotten it’
/kan smaṭha rahu galli/ ‘If he had heard it he would have told me’

1Or /kan/ plus a pronoun suffix.
Real condition. This is indicated by the introduction of /lāw/. The verb of the main clause may be in the perfect or imperfect but the verb of the result is necessarily in the imperfect. In this case the clause refers to a present or future condition depending on the context; e.g.

/lāw tži nāgištahalik/ 'If you come I'll give it to you'
/lāw ma žaš nacha/ 'If he does not come I'll sell it'


