Changes in conjunction usage in Abha Arabic dialect: A sociolinguistic study(*)

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Abstract

The usage of particles in Abha dialect, which is spoken in southwest Saudi Arabia, is changing rapidly as a result of greater access of the new generation to education and communication. Many conjunctions seem to be in danger of being lost forever. As part of an investigation into the presence of conjunctions in Abha dialect, a total of 80 native speakers of the dialect, randomly selected, have been asked to complete a questionnaire with the objective of tracing shifts and patterns in the usage of conjunctions. The questionnaire consisted of two sections covering the use of conjunction in sentences based on scenarios. The participants were asked to choose the sentence they use regularly. The results showed that there is a kind of levelling of usage which is shown in the low rate of using some conjunctions for others. The use of conjunctions in Abha dialect varies between the older and younger generations and also between educated and uneducated speakers. This variation implies that the conjunctions preferred by the older generation will fall into disuse and may be lost completely in the coming years. This is particularly evident where there is more than one particle with the same sense and function.

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1. Introduction

A wide range of particles are present in the Abha dialect of today as a result of dialect contact (Al-Azraqi, 2014; 2016). People from villages in various parts of the southwest Arabian Peninsula, with different spoken dialects, began to migrate and settle in the valley of Abha from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Communication among these different peoples has resulted in a distinctive dialect in Abha Valley; a number of linguistic variants that were features of these other dialects have become part of the mix that is the present-day Abha dialect. Some of these variants are syntactic and include, for example, the use of demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, question words, and particles (Al-Azraqi, 1998).

Britain and Trudgill (1999) point out that when mutually intelligible but distinct dialects of the same language come into contact, items from each dialect may be incorporated into the other, in a process of linguistic accommodation. They add that, when this contact is long-term, such as when English speakers from different dialect areas of the United Kingdom became resident in Australia and New Zealand, or when dialect contact results from the development of new towns, linguistic accommodation can become permanent and a new dialect can emerge. This process of “koineization”, as Kerswill (2002) refers to it, can take place relatively swiftly; it may take only two or three generations to complete, see also (Kerswill, 2006; Kerswill & Williams, 2005). Siegel (1985) claims that the development of a ‘koine’ is characterized by reduction and simplification, which are processes that lead to a decrease in the referential or non-referential potential of a language.
There is evidence to suggest that particles in Abha dialect such as coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (coordinators and subordinators), response particles, negative particles, and even articles, are becoming simplified which may be an indication of koineization. For instance, Al-Azraqi (2014) found that gid, which is one of the particles used in Abha dialect in various syntactic forms, has lost some of its functions. In some cases, particles have even disappeared. Al-Azraqi (2016) concludes that Koineization seems to be occurring in this dialect, leading to levelling and simplification of some features. In her study, it has been shown that the negator mā substitutes the other negators lis, lim and lā in some contexts in both verbal and non-verbal predications, particularly among the younger generation.

The case seems to be similar for conjunctions; some subordinators and coordinators seem to be less frequently nowadays, and some are even disappearing from everyday speech. In particular, young educated speakers who are third-generation immigrants, seem to be limiting their use of some conjunctions. The changes that appear to be taking place in Abha dialect have not been documented formally, this study, therefore set out to examine these changes regarding the use of conjunctions.

Hinskens (1998) researched dialect levelling in the Dutch province of Limburg. Based on his findings, he argues that dialect levelling does not necessarily lead to convergence with the Standard language and, in some cases, there is even divergence. There is a common assumption that the direction of change seen in modern Arabic dialects, which is towards Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), can be explained by the social prestige of MSA in addition to people’s greater exposure to it as a result of its use in the media and education (Gibson, 2002). In Gibson’s study on dialect levelling in Tunisian Arabic, which focused on four variables, he found that the behaviour of Tunisian speakers concerning the use of /q/ is consistent with this hypothesis, whereas the other three cases he investigated are changing towards another dialect rather than MSA. Trudgill (1986) suggests that the situations that involve transplantation and contact between mutually intelligible dialects lead to the development of new dialects. The specific qualities
that distinguish the variants of the different dialects are reduced until only one variant, remains. This one variant often contains some of the qualities of each of the original dialects. Al-Azraqi (2014; 2016) conclude that Abha dialect is through simplification and levelling processes. Before moving on to the explicit aim of this study in relation to the usage of conjunctions in Abha dialect, some historical background on the city and its people is provided.

1.1. Abha, the city and its people

Before the nineteenth century Abha was not a city but a collection of villages within Abha Valley. As this collective became concentrated in one area, Abha began to be known as a city and in AH1242/AD1827, Abha was selected as the capital of the government of Asīr, led by Ali al-Muġēḏī. After that time, Abha grew in size and population, particularly during the Ottoman period (AH1289/AD1872 to AH1336/AD1918), and it continued to increase during the Saudi period (from AH1338 AH1920 to the present day) (Jrais, 1997); (Al-Azraqi, 2014,2016).

As in other parts of Saudi Arabia, as Abha developed, many people from nearby and distant villages have migrated to the city aiming jobs and better services, bringing with them their own local dialects. The early settlers in Abha came from nearby tribes such as the Banī Muġēḏ, Alkam, Rabī‘ah w-Rfēdah, and Banī-Mālik as well as from tribes and villages further afield such as Qaћṭān, Shahrān, Rijāl ‘alma’ and others (An-Ni‘mī (n.d); Shākir, 1981; Hamzah, 1968), see also (Al-Azraqi, 1998; 2014; 2016).

In Abha, people of different tribal origins do not usually live in separate groups. Many of them retain strong communicative ties with their relatives in their villages, but this does not translate into separate communities in Abha itself. The various groups do not have closed neighbourhoods; any neighbourhood might be home for people of different tribal origins. People communicate at work, at school, and in public places. The different tribal groups and Abha community as a
whole appear to be well-integrated. This usually causes mixing and levelling of the dialects (Chambers & Trudgill, 1980). Indeed, it is not always possible to determine a speaker’s tribal origin, especially when the individual is a third-generation immigrant, not least because of the unified dialect that Abha speakers tend to use nowadays, see (Al-Azraqi, 2014; 2016).

1.2. Conjunctions in Standard Arabic and Abha dialect

In the standard Arabic and Abha dialect, subordinators and coordinators are particles that do not exhibit morphological contrast, i.e., they do not inflect. They do not take the definite article. They have no complete meaning in themselves, so they depend on other parts of speech to complete their meaning (Eid, 1991). Az-Zamaxsharī (1859) defines the particle as that which indicates a meaning in other parts of speech and always requires a verb or a noun. The main feature of these conjunctions, which distinguishes them from all other parts of speech, is that they never function as the subject, object, predicand, or predicate. They mainly conjoin. Badawi et al. presents a detailed analysis for the structure of coordination and subordination in Written Arabic which shows the wide range of subordinators and coordinators in Arabic (Badawi et al., 2004: 295-303; 539-574; 575-634). There is a wide range of conjunctions in Abha dialect as well. They are used in everyday speech by speakers of Abha dialect. Each set of conjunctions constitutes a closed system (Al-Azraqi, 1998).

2. Aim of the Study: An assessment of the Usage of Conjunctions in Abha Dialect

As we have seen above, the mixing of the dialects due to the influx over time of various tribal and village groups into Abha introduced many particles into the local dialect. However, as a result of changes to life style and greater communication and modernization, some of those conjunctions seem to have disappeared, whereas others have survived.

The present study considers age and education level as factors that
may be important in language change. Age reflects language contact. Old people retain their original dialect more than younger ones. Level of education, on the other hand, manifests the effect of education on dialect change. It is hypothesized that level of education and age both play a role in explaining the shifts in and extent of conjunction usage, specifically of subordinators and coordinators. Today, most of the youth and young to middle-aged adults are educated at least until high school level. Older people, however, are more likely to be uneducated because the provision of formal education in Abha only began when the first school opened in 1936 (Jrais, 1995).

3. Methodology

A total of 80 participants were involved in this study. They were randomly selected. Four assistants distributed a questionnaire in their schools, universities, and neighbourhoods, to local people only. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire, which consisted of a section covering the use of coordinators and a section covering the use of subordinators in sentences based on scenarios. For each item, the participants were asked to choose the sentence they use regularly. Some of the sentences were part of the data that were collected for the researcher’s PhD in 1998 and for other following studies on this dialect. The questionnaires were returned by e-mail, via the online survey tool, Survey Monkey, and in person. The data were analysed using MS Excel 2010.

Some of the participants were interviewed personally by the researchers or by one of the assistants, and this was especially for those who could not read. The interviews were recorded using Olympus LS11 and the data were saved in WAV lossless format (44,000 Hz, 16 Bit). The same questionnaire was used during the interview. There was a good distribution of participants with different levels of education and of different ages.

The potential influence of two social variables was investigated in this study. Age was considered, on the basis of the claim that looking at
linguistic differences between speakers of different ages facilitates the study of linguistic change. The 80 participants in this study were aged from 20 to 70 years. For analysis, they were divided into five groups, as shown in Table 1. A range of 10 years was considered suitable because this range seems to capture the common features of the different age groups.

### Table 1: Age of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20–31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–60</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–70</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants were also grouped according to their level of education into (i) educated (those who have finished at least high school); (ii) semi-educated (those who could read and write fluently, regardless of whether or not they had any formal education); and (iii) uneducated (those who could not read or write, or could read but only poorly). The breakdown of these groups is shown in Table 2.

### Table 2: Educational level of participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educated</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-educated</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Saudi Arabia, differences in people’s educational levels are
reflected in many patterns of social behaviour, including their use of language. Hence, level of education is an important indicator when studying dialects in Saudi Arabia. Semi-educated and uneducated people are likely to use a very local dialect that is unaffected by the standard variety of Arabic because people are exposed to standard Arabic almost exclusively through education, as explained above. Table 3 shows the symbol used to transliterate the examples in this study.

Table 3: Consonants and vowels in Abha Dialect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants/Vowels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{b} )</td>
<td>voiced bilabial stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{f} )</td>
<td>voiceless labiodental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{t} )</td>
<td>voiceless alveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{t} )</td>
<td>emphatic alveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{θ} )</td>
<td>voiceless interdental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{d} )</td>
<td>voiced alveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{ð} )</td>
<td>voiced interdental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{ḍ} )</td>
<td>emphatic voiced interdental fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{s} )</td>
<td>voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{ṣ} )</td>
<td>emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{z} )</td>
<td>voiced alveolar fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{ʃ} )</td>
<td>voiceless alveo-palatal fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{j} )</td>
<td>voiced alveo-palatal affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{g} )</td>
<td>voiced velar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{k} )</td>
<td>voiceless velar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{q} )</td>
<td>voiceless uvular stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{ɣ} )</td>
<td>voiced uvular fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{x} )</td>
<td>voiceless uvular fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \textit{l} )</td>
<td>voiced alveolar lateral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Results and Discussion

The numerous conjunctions used in Abha dialect conjoin words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Sometimes, they conjoin more than one syntactic item depending on the kind of coordinator used, as discussed in Sec. 4.2. Subordinators precede independent clauses or sentences. They indicate time, place, manner, cause and reason, and concession, as discussed in detail below. Some sets have variants and are used differently depending on social variants as age and education level.

The results of the study are presented in the following sections; first coordinators, and then subordinators, including those indicating time, place, manner, concession, and cause and reason.
4.1 Coordinators

Some coordinators such as wa, ṭaw/walla, ṭamma....aw/walla and hem/hum, conjoin words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, while others such as f/fa/fġē r, bass, and lākin conjoin only clauses or sentences. Table 4 provides an English translation of these coordinators.

Table 4: Coordinators in Abha dialect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinators</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>w/wa/wu</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṭaw/wallā</td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṭamma.... ṭaw/walla</td>
<td>either ... or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f/fa, fġēr/ġēr/himġēr</td>
<td>then, so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baṭlēn, xalf, ṭawwad, ūmmān</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lākin, bass, ġēr</td>
<td>but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>him/hem/hum</td>
<td>then, after that (to conjoin sentences when telling a story or relating an event in sequence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha/haw</td>
<td>and (in relating an event or story, to talk about something that should have been mentioned before)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some coordinators have no variables and are used therefore by most Abha speakers. The coordinators w and ṭaw/walla are used almost equally. They syntactically conjoin items such as syntactically equal words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. wa coordinates parallel notions, whereas ṭaw/walla conjoins contrastive or alternative notions. Consider the following examples:

ʔaxaḍ kutubah       “he took his his books and
w ṭaɣrādah kullahā   all his stuff.”
ruh luhum wallā ʔugšud “go to them or stay with us.” mašnā

Other coordinators are equivalent in meaning and are used in similar contexts. These are the focus of our investigation. In the present-day, these coordinators are used differently depending on social variables such as age and level of education as discussed below. First, let us look at ʔammā....‘aw/wallā, which usually conjoins two items. It implies alternation. It can coordinate words, phrases, clauses, or sentences (Al-Azraqi, 1998). Consider the following examples:

ruh fid bīlāgī ʔammā Ghazi wallā Ahmad “go, you will see either Gazi or Ahamd.”

ʔxtār ʔammā l-madrasah wallā l-warfāh “choose either the school or the workshop.”

There is variation in the level of usage of ʔaw and wallā among speakers of different ages and education levels, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Average percentage of responses in which ʔaw and wallā are used according to age group.
Figures 1 and 2 show that both wallā and aw are used by most speakers, however, wallā is less frequently used among younger and educated speakers.

On the other hand, the conjunctions ffa and ġēr are used to conjoin clauses or sentences. Both can be combined as one word as ġēr and sometimes ġēr can be preceded by him as in himġēr. They imply sequence and consequence. ffa is still used widely among Abha speakers for both purposes, as shown in the examples below:

\[
\text{matā xalaṣat f aţīhā il-} \text{waraghah} \quad \text{“..when she finishes, then give her the paper.”}
\]

\[
\text{saţalatī} \text{ f gult lhā šalā} \quad \text{“she asked me, then I told her everything.”}
\]

ġēr/ġēr/himġēr are mostly used in telling stories or in relating the details of long events. Their usage is intended to carry the sense of
suddenness and surprise:

\[ \text{daxal ʕalēnā bağta(h) fgerät gumū} \]
\[ \text{ya n-niswān yitfūradūn} \]
\[ \text{yōm fāf il-bint gid hī bitīh, himgerät gum w msakhū} \]

“he came in suddenly, so the women ran away.”

“when he saw the girl going to fall, he jumped up and caught her.”

An analysis of the data shows that older and less educated people tend to use ġer/fgerät/himgerät more than younger people. Younger speakers use the short form f/fa instead, see Figures 3 and 4.

![Figure 3: Average percentage of responses in which f/fa and fgerät/himgerät/gerät are used according to age group.](image)

![Figure 4: Average percentage of responses in which f/fa and fgerät/himgerät/gerät are used according to level of education.](image)
Similar to šša and ġēr/ġēr/himgēr above, bašdēn, xalf, sawwad, and umman usually denote sequence. They are often used to synchronize sentences when telling stories or describing long events. They carry the sense of sequence and are usually used to refer to things that happened later\(^1\). Consider the following examples:

... sawwad rāhaw \quad “then they left”

... bašdēn kallamtaḥā wʕawwad kallamtaḥā w싼amtuhā \quad “then (later) I called her and I invited her.”

... bašdēn \quad ṭattafagnā maḥum \quad “then we had a deal with them.”

The results show that bašdēn is used the most by people in general, whereas umman is used the least, despite its sound which is closer to the standard Arabic as shown in Figures 5 and 6.

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\(^1\) baš dēn and xalf can sometimes function as adverbs in the sense of ‘later’, as in lahōnā ġlMHammad baš dēn (The Mohammad followed us later).
**Figure 6:** Average percentage of responses in which *baḍān*, *xalf*, *awwad*, and *umman* are used according to level of education.

*bass*, *lākin* and *ğēr* conjoin contrastive clauses. It should be noted that *bass* can also be used as an adverb with the meaning of ‘only’. Watson (1993) describes this particle as a conjunct. Cowell (1964) also considers it to be a conjunct. Consider the following examples of the coordinators *bass* and *lākin*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hiyyah mā hī zīnah} & \quad \text{“she is not very beautiful, but} \\
\text{marrah } & \text{bass } \text{innahā } \text{magbūlah} \\
\text{mā yīrifah } & \text{zīn } \text{lākin} \\
\text{biyisāl } & \text{ṣunnah} \\
\text{wallāh } & \text{in ṭādnī kasl, } \text{ğēr} \\
\text{efṭāsawwē?}
\end{align*}
\]

*ğēr*, in this sense, is used the least among young educated speakers, whereas, it is still used among older uneducated and semi-
educated speakers. *bass* is common in this dialect and is used commonly among the speakers. *lākin* is used more among the young educated speakers as shown in figures 7 and 8.

![Figure 7](image)

**Figure 7:** Average percentage of responses in which *bass, lākin* and *ġēr* are used according to age group.

![Figure 8](image)

**Figure 8:** Average percentage of responses in which *bass, lākin* and *ġēr* are used according to level of education.

*him/hem/hum* and *hal/haw* show no major change. This is probably because they are used in specific meanings and functions.
him/hem/hum which is used to imply sequence and to conjoin sentences when telling stories are shown in the following examples:

ruhnā id-dīrah hum gablnā “we went to [our] the village then we met our grandparents there...”

jidānī hnāk..
durnā fi s-sūg mā xallēna “we searched in the market [and] we did not leave any shop, and then at the end, we found it in in my father’s shop”

mahall him in hin fī l-
āxīr nlāgīhā fī mahall ēn ābūyah

It should be noted here that him/hem/hum can be attached to lē which is a presentational particle that functions in a similar manner to the standard idā bi. They are used to express surprise or to describe something that has happened unexpectedly. lē often occurs after the conjoins wa and him/hem/hum and gives the sense of ‘suddenly there was...’, (see Watson, 1993 for ēnn in Ṣan’ānī Arabic and Al-Azraqi (1998) for Abha Arabic). hummalē is found in the ‘Ajmī dialect according to Johnstone (1961). hummalē also has an equivalent in the Murra dialect, i.e., timmilāy or timmilē, according to Ingham (1994). I would suggest that the Murra particle consists of the conjoin tim, which is equivalent to the standard tumma (then) plus the presentational particle lē which occurs in the Abha, ‘Ajmī, and the Murra dialects. Consider the following examples of hummalē in the Abha dialect:

daxalnā l-majlis nabgā nagfūd “we entered the sitting room to sit, but [surprisingly] it was full.”

hummalē gid hū malyān ruhnā lah ūlā mawfīdnā “we went according to our appointment [with him] but [unexpectedly] he was not there”
halhaw is used to recall something that the speaker should have mentioned earlier. It is often used in telling stories. What is mentioned in the second clause, is introduced by ha/haw (Al-Azraqi, 1998). This particle is still in use among most of the Abha dialect speakers. Consider the following examples:

ʔanā wəsiḥt ʔarbaʕah, “I arrived at four o’clock, and
ha/haw həm ɡid ɡālō li they had told me [before]
ʔnn ʔlli yōsəl that those who arrive late
mitʕaxqir lāziɣ should enter by the back
yudxul miʃ il-bāb il-
xalʕī
door.”

huwwah ṭul il-waqt “he has been trying to convince me about his
yihāwil yigninī b idea all the time, and I
fikratah ha/haw anā have always been aware
kunt ʕarfin hadafah of his goal.”

4.2. Subordinators

Abha dialect has a good variety of subordinators that are still used variably. They are discussed in the following sections with a focus on their usage according to the social factors of age and level of education. They are grouped according to their functions in the sentence, namely to denote time, place, manner, concession, and cause and reason.

4.2.1. Time

In Abha dialect, there are different subordinators to indicate the time of an action or event. Each one usually carries a specific meaning and function; however, some share similar meanings and functions, which means that there is a possibility that some
subordinators may be replaced by others due to sociolinguistic
environment (al-Azraqi, 1998). Table 5 provides a list of the
subordinators that are used in Abha dialect and the English
translation:

**Table 5: Subordinators of time in Abha dialect.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinator</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sāʕatmā</td>
<td>when (lit. the time (hour) of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wagtma</td>
<td>when (lit. in the time of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hazzatmā</td>
<td>in the moment of, when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gablmā</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baʕilmā</td>
<td>after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lēn/ilēn</td>
<td>until/till</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yōm</td>
<td>in the time (lit. in the day of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minyōm/minyōmā</td>
<td>since, when (lit. from the day of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḥawwalmā</td>
<td>as soon as (lit. from the beginning)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the analysis of the data, it is evident that hazzatmā is not
used commonly among younger and educated speakers, whereas
sāʕatmā is used commonly among most speakers. wagtma is used
slightly less by older and uneducated speakers, as shown in Figures 9
and 10. All indicate similar meanings and can function similarly. They
introduce the independent clause that indicates what happens
immediately before the action that is mentioned in the main clause.
Consider the following examples:

- **sāʕatmā ʃafathum ʃāhat**
  “when she saw them, she cried.”

- **kunnā hnāk wagtmā waʃlō**
  “we were there when they arrived”

- **hiyyah mā kānat ʃindah yōm**
  “she was not with him when
  gālatt lah maryam”
  “Maryam told him”
“she collapsed in the moment she heard him”

Figure 9: Average percentage of responses in which sāʕatmā, wagtmā, and ħazzatmā are used according to age group.

Figure 10: Average percentage of responses in which sāʕatmā, wagtmā, and ħazzatmā are used according to level of education.
Some subordinators mentioned in table 5 are not changing probably because they do not have equivalent words with the same meanings and functions. These subordinators are minyōm/minyōmmā, ḥawwalma, gablmā and lēn/ilēn.

minyōm/minyōmmā means “since” and it is the only subordinator that indicates an event or action that happened before or at the time of the action expressed in the main clause. It is still used in the same sense.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{mīdād } & \text{ faštahā } \text{ minyōm} & \text{ “I have not seen here since she graduated.”} \\
\text{wallāh } & \text{ innahā } \text{ marđat} & \text{ “by God, she became sick once she knew about the news”}
\end{align*}
\]

ḥawwalma introduces an event or action and relates it to another event or action that happened at the same time or very shortly after. It denotes the beginning of the event or action in the independent clause. gablmā, which means ‘before’, indicates an event or action that happened after the action expressed in the main clause. On the other hand, baḍmā indicates an event or action that happened before the action occurring in the main clause. Consider the following examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ḥawwalma } & \text{ tallāš } \text{ ruxṣāta } \text{ “as soon as he got his license, he had an accident”} \\
\text{kuul } & \text{ gablmā } \text{ yubrud} & \text{ “eat before it gets cold”} \\
\text{kānatt } & \text{ mā } \text{ tīrīfah } \text{ zēn} & \text{ “she did not know him well before getting married to him”} \\
\text{baḍmā } & \text{ katabat } \text{ mazzagat} & \text{ il- waragah “after she wrote, she torn the paper”}
\end{align*}
\]

lēn/ilēn, which means ‘until’ introduces a clause that concludes
the event indicated in the main clause. Consider the following examples:

- \textit{ma flēn takasar} \quad “he walked till he (lit. was broken)”
- \textit{daggēt ilēn xadatt īdī} \quad “I knocked till my hand became insensitive”
- \textit{mā širiftahā lēn jarrabtahā} \quad “I did not know it till I tried it”

### 4.2.2. Place

\textit{makānmā} and \textit{mahallmā} are subordinators that indicate place. They introduce a clause that indicates the position or the place of the event expressed in the main clause. Consider the following examples:

- \textit{ħin ruhnā mahllmā galō lnā} \quad “we went to where they told us.”
- \textit{ʔālah hnāk makānmā haʔatah} \quad “it is there where she put it.”
- \textit{ʔugūd mahallmā tibgā} \quad “stay wherever you want.”

According to the results of present analysis, the variation between them in terms of usage is negligible. They are both still used, however, there is an indication that \textit{makānmā} is used slightly more frequently than \textit{mahallmā} by educated and younger speakers, as shown in Figures 11 and 12.
Figure 11: Average percentage of responses in which *makānmā* and *mahallmā* are used according to age group.

![Graph showing percentage of responses for age groups](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>makānmā (%)</th>
<th>mahallmā (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educated</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-educated</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Average percentage of responses in which *makānmā* and *mahallmā* are used according to level of education.

4.2.3. Manner

The set of subordinating conjunctions *miqilmā*, *zayymā*, and *ʕalāmā* introduce clauses that indicate a comparison with the ideas expressed in the main clause. They have similar meanings and can be used interchangeably in many contexts, as shown in the examples below:

\[ \text{ʔanā rasamtah zayymā gult} \quad \text{“I drew it as you said”} \]
\[ \text{ʔabğāk tʕānī miqlmā ʕānēt} \quad \text{“I want you to suffer as I did”} \]
\[ \text{maʃat il-umūr ʕalāmā fi xāṭrah} \quad \text{things have gone as in his heart (i.e. as he hoped)”} \]

Although *ʕalāmā* has the same sense as *miqilmā* and *zayymā*, the results of the analysis show that it is less frequently used and tends to be used mostly by older and uneducated people as shown in
Figures 13 and 14.

**Figure 13**: Average percentage of responses in which *mişilmā, zayymā* and *ʕalāmā* are used according to age group.

**Figure 14**: Average percentage of responses in which *mişilmā, zayymā* and *ʕalāmā* are used according to level of
education.

4.2.4. Concession

The subordinators in this set usually introduce clauses that contrast with the ideas in the main clause. They carry the sense of contradiction. Table 6 shows the concession subordinators along with an English translation.

Table 6: Concession subordinators in Abha dialect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinator</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maʕān(n)</td>
<td>although/even though</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birrağem min in(n)</td>
<td>although/in spite of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maʕā ðālik/maʕā kiðah</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fōg in(n)/fōg hadā</td>
<td>moreover/over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that/although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minswā in(n)</td>
<td>moreover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

maʕān and birrağem min in are derived from standard Arabic without major changes. They convey the meaning of ‘although’ or ‘even though’, as shown in the following examples:

\[ \text{mā gid jahazaw il-awrāg maʕā innaḥā jathum min badrī} \]  

“They have not finished the papers even though they received them earlier.”

\[ \text{birrağem min inn il-kutub ṣahā jadīdah illā inn il-manhaj nafṣah} \]  

“although the books are a new edition, the curriculum is the same.”

The results show that maʕā in and birrağem min in are used by
educated and younger speakers. However, while *maʃā in* is commonly used by most of the speakers, it seems to be preferred much more by older speakers whereas there is little difference between the two choices for the younger generations, as shown in Figures 15 and 16.

**Figure 15:** Average percentage of responses in which *maʃā in* and *birrağem min in* are used according to age group.

**Figure 16:** Average percentage of responses in which *maʃā in* and *birrağem min in* are used according to level of
education.

$fōg\ in(n)/fōg\ hāḍā,$ and $\text{minswā}$ mean ‘moreover’ as in the following examples:

\begin{align*}
\text{aʕtāh min ʕindah w fōg hāḍā} & \quad \text{“He gave him from his [money] moreover, he is asking for more”} \\
\text{Minswā innah mirād} & \quad \text{“although he was sick they made him more sick”}
\end{align*}

Based on the results, $\text{minswā}$ is the form used more frequently by older and uneducated speakers, whereas younger and educated speakers use $fōg\ in(n)/fōg\ hāḍā$ more frequently, as shown in Figures 17 and 18.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Average percentage of responses in which $fōg\ in(n)/fōg\ hāḍā$ and $\text{minswā}$ are used by age group.}
\end{figure}
Figure 18: Average percentage of responses in which \textit{fōg in/fōg hādā} and \textit{minswā} are used according to level of education.

4.2.5. Cause and Reason

Clauses that provide the purpose of, or the reason for, the actions or the events indicated in the main clause in Abha dialect are introduced by the particles as indicated in Al-Azraqi (1998). See Table 7.

Table 7: Cause and reason subordinators in Abha dialect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinators</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>šālaʃān/šulaʃān in(n), minʃān</td>
<td>for, in order to, because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šulaʃīr/šalaʃīr in(n)/minʃīr</td>
<td>for, in order to, because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bsabab, bsibb/bsibbat, šalāsibb/šalasibbat, fisibb/fisibbat</td>
<td>because of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liʔan(n)/lin(n)/lan(n)</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hattā</td>
<td>thus, so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common particles of this set are šalaʃān/ šulaʃān in and minʃān. Morphologically, they comprise the prepositions šalā and
min added to the word fān, which means ‘the concern of’. They can be used in all cause and reason contexts. Similarly, ʿalaṣīr/ʿalaṣīrin (n)/minṣīr consist of the prepositions ʿalā and min beside the word ʿṣīr which cannot occur freely. They mean ‘for’, ‘in order to’ or ‘to’. ʿalaṣīr/ʿalaṣīrin (minṣīr) are the least common now and they are used in the sense of ‘in order to’ by older people, see Figures 19 and 20.

bsabab, bsib/bsibbat, ṣalāṣib/Ṣalāṣibbat, and fisib/fisibbat have the same sense. They are derived from the standard stem noun sabab preceded by the preposition b, ʿalā, or fī. The stem particle varies between sabab, sib, and sib + the feminine suffix at. Consider the following examples:

anā zurtahā ṣalāfān Ṣannahā ʿalā ʿṣān ʿinnahā bintah.
“I visited her because she is his daughter”

anā mā sawētah illā ṣalāṣīrk “I only did it for you”

ēsh tibḡānī ṣasawwī? ṣaskut lik ʿalāṣīr innik waladī? “what do you want me to do keep quiet because you are my son?”

bsibbat da l-kūrah maṣūf xēr “because of this football, he did not do well [in his daily life]”

il-jaww hārr bsabab gurb if ġams li l-ard “the weather is hot because the sun is near to the earth”

According to the results shown in Figures 19 and 20, the particles, ṣalāfān is the form which is often used by younger and educated people and less frequently by older and uneducated people.
Lastly, hattā in Abha dialect indicates cause in different ways to the other particles. That is why it is not in the chart above. The
subordinating clause does not express the reason for the action in the main clause; on the contrary, the main clause carries the reason for the action in the subordinating clause. Consider the following examples:

ʔiŋlis muʔaddab hattā mā ʔazifik minnik “stay polite so that I do not become upset with you”

ʔi g̱ silah zēn hattā innah ʔirūḥ bsurūḥ “wash it well, so it will go quickly”

hattā also has the sense of “and”, “too” or “even” and can be considered as a coordinator or adverb in this case. Consider the following examples:

ti̱sī lhum hattā l walad baʃlah “she prays for them including her stepson”

mā tiʃrif hattā tuslug bēdah “she does not even know how to boil an egg”

hatta is still used by all speakers regularly because it is the only particle used in the above sense.

5. Conclusion

As revealed by the analysis, the results in this study show that the use of conjunctions in Abha dialect varies between the older and younger generations and also between educated and uneducated speakers. This variation implies that the conjunctions preferred by the older generation will fall into disuse and may be lost completely in the coming years. This is particularly evident where there is more than one particle with the same sense and function. The preference for certain particles among the younger generation seems to be influenced by their level of education; as compared to the over 60s, most of the younger generation are educated. Because the medium of instruction is modern...
If we look at specific examples, with respect to coordinators, ḡēr is used less frequently by younger and educated speakers, who tend to replace it with ḥa fa with the meaning of then. Also, baʿādīn, which denotes sequence and is often used to synchronize sentences in telling stories or long events, is used by the same group of speakers more than other coordinators to replace xalaf, ʕawwad and ʕumman. Some coordinators, and despite being used in standard Arabic are not often used among younger and educated speakers such as ḡēr which is used to conjoin contrastive clauses. bāss, on the other hand, is a particle used in the same meaning but is used more frequently by the same group of speakers although it does not have an equivalent in standard Arabic. However, lākin is used in standard Arabic more frequently and younger and educated speakers prefer to use it more.

As for subordinators, it is clear from the results that ḥāzātmā is not frequently used among younger and educated speakers, unlike sāʿatmā and waqtmā. We should mention here that ḥazat which means ‘a period of time’ is not used widely in standard Arabic, but it does occur in other dialects in Najd and Al-Ahasa. Although malā in and birrağem min in are used mostly by educated younger speakers, and mostly in formal speech, malā in is common as well among most of the speakers. fōg in /fōg hādā and minswā in mean ‘moreover’. It was found that minswā is the form more frequently used by older and uneducated speakers, whereas educated and younger speakers tend to use fōg in/fōg hādā more.

Conjunctions that provide the purpose of, or the reason for, the actions or the events indicated in the main clause in Abha dialect are introduced by ʕalaʃān/ ʕalaʃānin and minʃān , ʕalaṣīr in/ minṣīr , bsabab, bsib/bsibbat, ʕalāsib/ ʕalasibbat, and fisib/fisibbat. The results show that bsabab is the form used mainly by younger educated people.
ʕalaṣīr/ ʕalaṣīr in/ minṣīr and li’an and lin seem to be the least used particles in this sense among the same group of speakers.

The new generation usually leads the way in terms of change on the linguistic level. This appears to be the case in the Abha-speaking community too. Simplification and levelling processes are taking place in this dialect (Al azraqi, 2016). Education plays a major role in the evolution of language, and in Saudi Arabia, the education sector usually focuses on a specific form of Arabic. Therefore, it would be useful to examine the content of school books as there may be inherent limitations in the Arabic used in those texts that minimizes and reduces the Arabic lexicon. To conclude, we seem to be losing a range of vocabulary such as conjunctions, even though some of their roots are related to standard Arabic. However, because they are not used widely in standard Arabic nowadays, for instance in books or other forms of media, they are becoming lost to the younger, educated generation.
References


