

**Changes in conjunction usage in Abha Arabic  
dialect: A sociolinguistic study<sup>(\*)</sup>**

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**Abstract**

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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-Muġēdī. 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 Muġēd, Alkam, Rabī'ah w-Rfēdah, and Banī-Mālik as well as from tribes and villages further afield such as Qaḥṭān, 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**

Age	No. of participants
20–31	18
31–40	18
41–50	17
51–60	13
61-70	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>

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.**

Education	No. of participants
Educated	30
Semi-educated	31
Uneducated	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>

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**

<b>Consonants/Vowels</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>b</i>	voiced bilabial stop
<i>f</i>	voiceless labiodental fricative
<i>t</i>	voiceless alveolar stop
<i>t̤</i>	emphatic alveolar stop
<i>θ</i>	voiceless interdental fricative
<i>d</i>	voiced alveolar stop
<i>ð</i>	voiced interdental fricative
<i>d̤</i>	emphatic voiced interdental fricative
<i>s</i>	voiceless alveolar fricative
<i>ʃ</i>	emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative
<i>z</i>	voiced alveolar fricative
<i>f</i>	voiceless alveo-palatal fricative
<i>j</i>	voiced alveo-palatal affricate
<i>g</i>	voiced velar stop
<i>k</i>	voiceless velar stop
<i>q</i>	voiceless uvular stop
<i>ġ</i>	voiced uvular fricative
<i>x</i>	voiceless uvular fricative
<i>l</i>	voiced alveolar lateral



<i>r</i>	voiced alveolar flap
<i>m</i>	voiced labial nasal
<i>n</i>	voiced alveolar nasal
<i>w</i>	voiced labio-velar approximant
<i>y</i>	voiced palatal approximant
<i>ʕ</i>	voiced pharyngeal fricative
<i>ħ</i>	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
<i>ʔ</i>	glottal stop
<i>h</i>	voiceless glottal fricative
<i>a</i>	open low vowel
<i>i</i>	closed high front vowel
<i>u</i>	closed high round back vowel
<i>ā</i>	Long open low vowel
<i>ē</i>	Long mid front vowel
<i>ī</i>	Long closed high front vowel
<i>ū</i>	long closed high round back vowel

#### 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*, *ɫaw/walla*, *ɫamma....aw/walla* and *hem/hum*, conjoin words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, while others such as *f/fa/fġēr*, *bass*, and *lākin* conjoin only clauses or sentences. Table 4 provides an English translation of these coordinators.

**Table 4: Coordinators in Abha dialect.**

Coordinators	Gloss
<i>w/wa/wu</i>	and
<i>ɫaw/wallā</i>	or
<i>ɫammā.... ɫaw/walla</i>	either ... or
<i>f/fa, fġēr/ġēr/himġēr</i>	then, so
<i>baɫdēn, xalf, ɫawwad, ɔumman</i>	then
<i>lākin, bass, ġēr</i>	but
<i>him/hem/hum</i>	then, after that (to conjoin sentences when telling a story or relating an event in sequence)
<i>ha/haw</i>	and (in relating an event or story, to talk about something that should have been mentioned before)

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

<i>ɫaxað kutubah</i>	“he took his his books and
<i>w ɫaġrāðah kullahā</i>	all his stuff.”

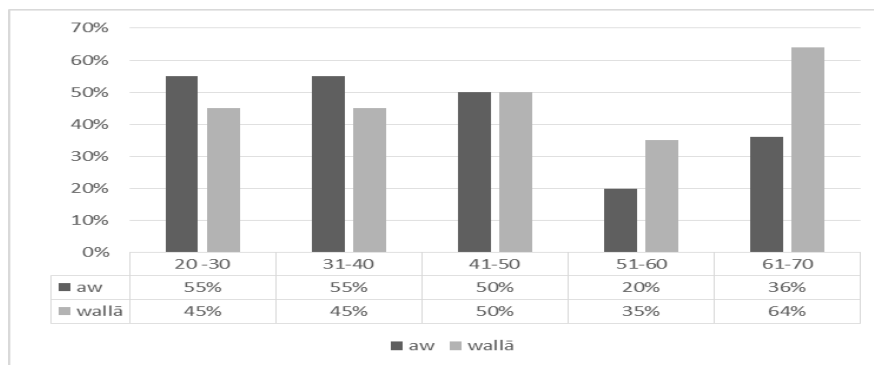
*ruh luhum wallā lughud* “go to them or stay with us.”  
*maḥnā*

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 *lammā...’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:

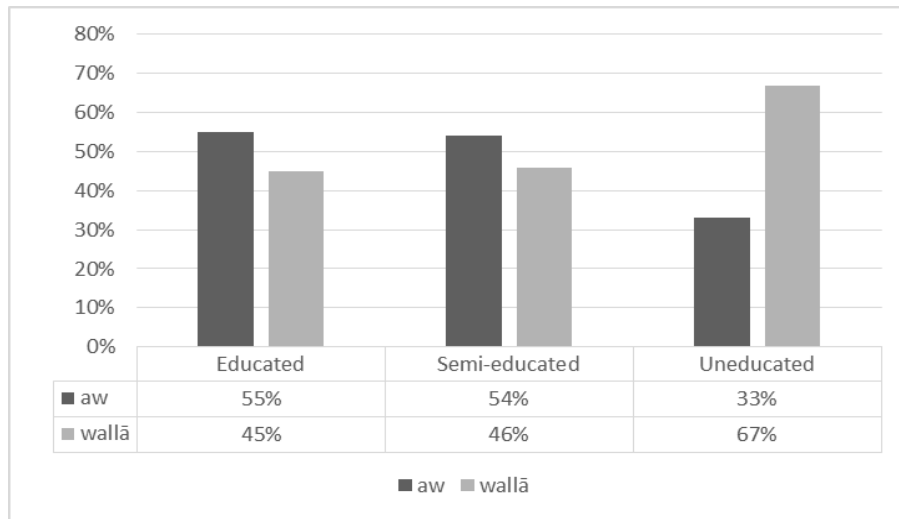
*ruh fuf bitlāgī lammā Ghazi* “go, you will see either Gazi  
*wallā Ahmad* or Ahmad.”

*lxtār lammā l-madrasah* “choose either the school or  
*wallā l-warḥāh* the workshop.”

There is variation in the level of usage of *lāw* 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 *lāw* and *wallā* are used according to age group.**



**Figure 2: Average percentage of responses in which *aw* and *wallā* are used according to level of education.**

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 *f/fa* and *gēr* are used to conjoin clauses or sentences. Both can be combined as one word as *fġēr* and sometimes *gēr* can be preceded by *him* as in *himġēr*. They imply sequence and consequence. *f/fa* is still used widely among Abha speakers for both purposes, as shown in the examples below:

*matā xalaṣat f aṭṭhā il-* “..when she finishes, then  
*waragah* give her the paper.”

*saḥalatnī f gult lhā ṣalā* “she asked me, then I told  
*kull fay* her everything.”

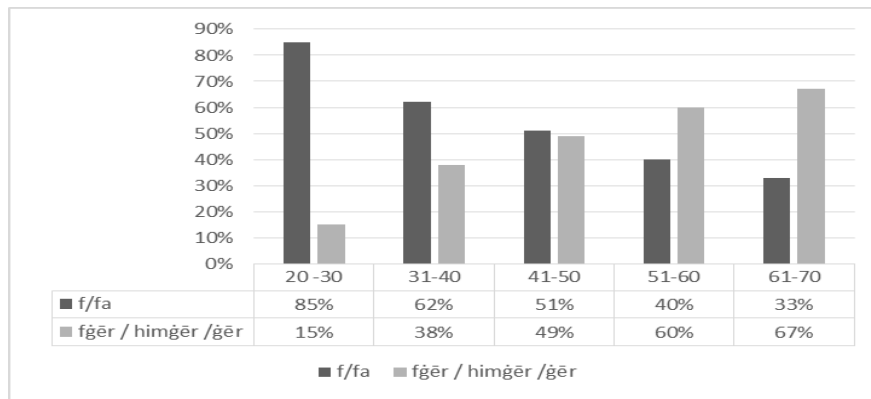
*gēr/fġēr/himġēr* are mostly used in telling stories or in relating the details of long events. Their usage is intended to carry the sense of

suddenness and surprise:

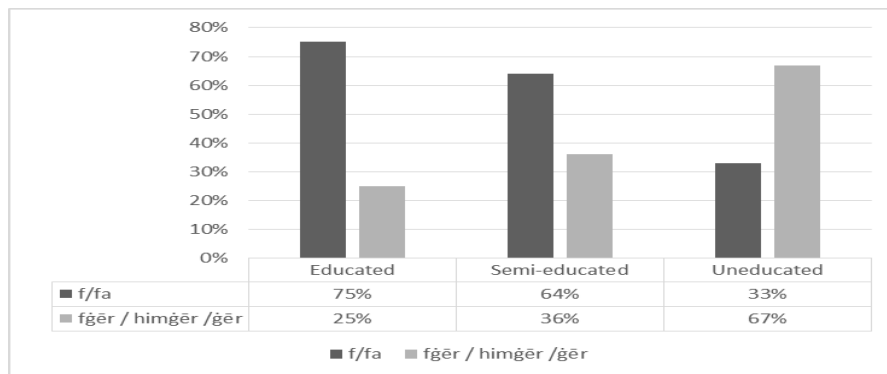
*daxal šalēnā baġta(h) fġēr gumū* “he came in suddenly, so the  
*ya n-niswān yitfāradūn* women ran away.”

*yōm fāf il-bint gid hī bitṭh,* “when he saw the girl going to  
*himġēr gum w msakhā* fall, he jumped up and caught her.”

An analysis of the data shows that older and less educated people tend to use *ġēr/fġēr/himġēr* 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 *fġēr/himġēr/ġēr* are used according to age group.**

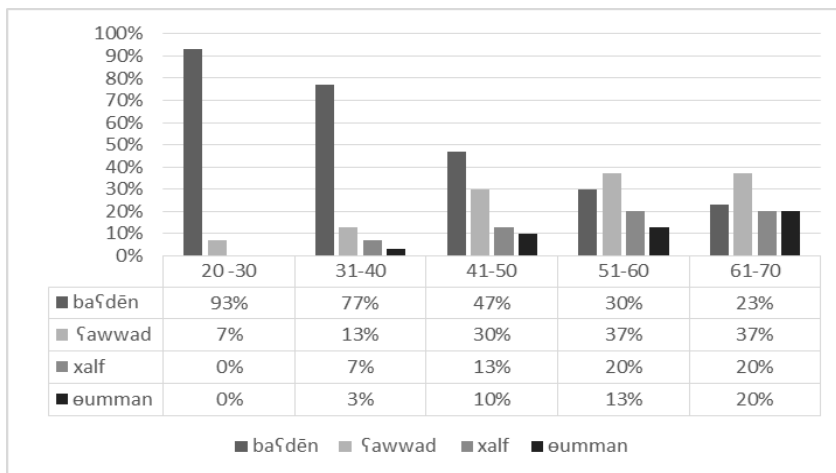


**Figure 4: Average percentage of responses in which *f/fa* and *fġēr/himġēr/ġēr* are used according to level of education.**

Similar to *f/fa* and *ġēr/fġēr/himġēr* above, *baʕdēn*, *xalf*, *ʕawwad*, and *əumman* 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<sup>1</sup>. Consider the following examples:

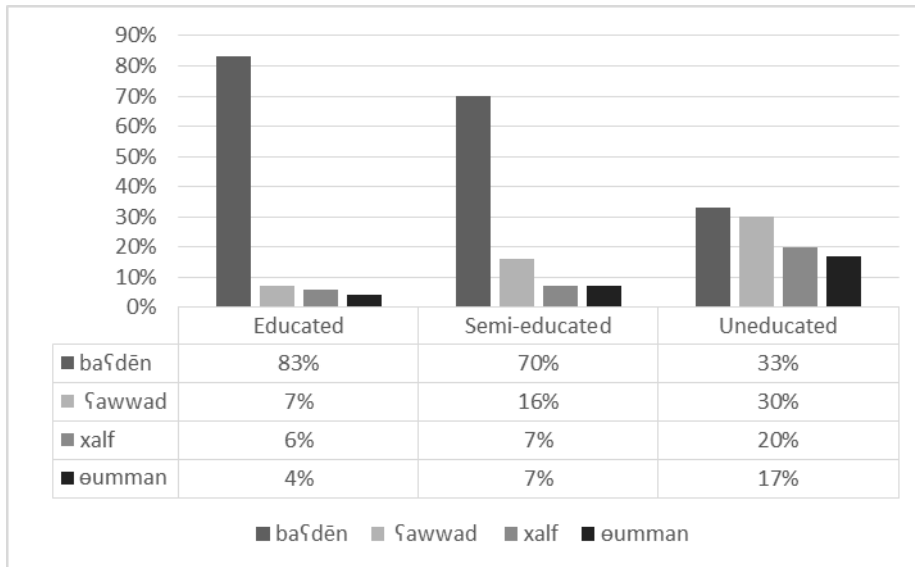
- ... *ʕawwad rāħaw* “then they left”  
 .. *baʕdēn kallamtahā w ʕazamtuhā* “then (later) I called her and I invited her.”  
 ...*baʕdēn ʔattafagnā maʔhum* “then we had a deal with them.”

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



**Figure 5: Average percentage of responses in which *baʕdēn*, *xalf*, *ʕawwad*, and *əumman* are used according to age group.**

<sup>1</sup> *baʕ dēn* and *xalf* can sometimes function as adverbs in the sense of ‘later’, as in *lahġōnā āl MĤammad baʕ dēn* (The Mohammad followed us later).



**Figure 6:** Average percentage of responses in which *baʕdēn*, *xalf*, *ʕawwad*, and *ʕumman* are used according to level of education.

*bass*, *lākin* and *ġēr* 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*:

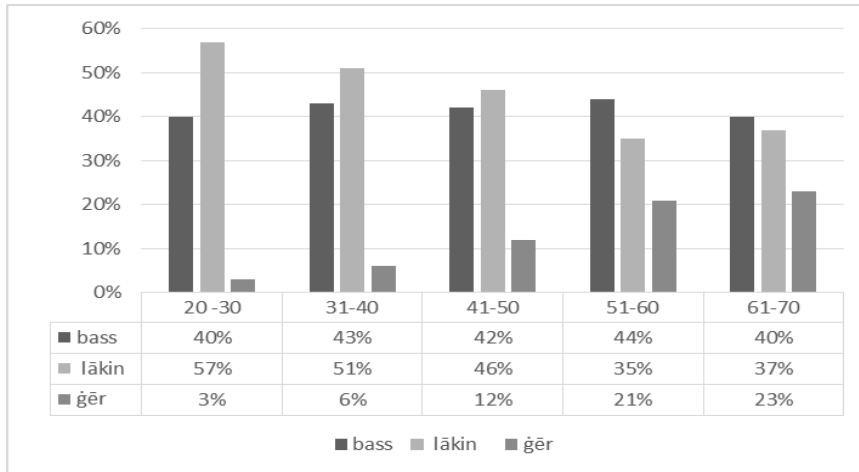
*hiyyah mā hī zīnah* “she is not very beautiful, but  
*marrāh bass innahā* she is acceptable”  
*magbūlah*

*mā yiʕrifah zīn lākin* “he does not know him, but  
*biyisʕal ʕannah* he will ask about him.”

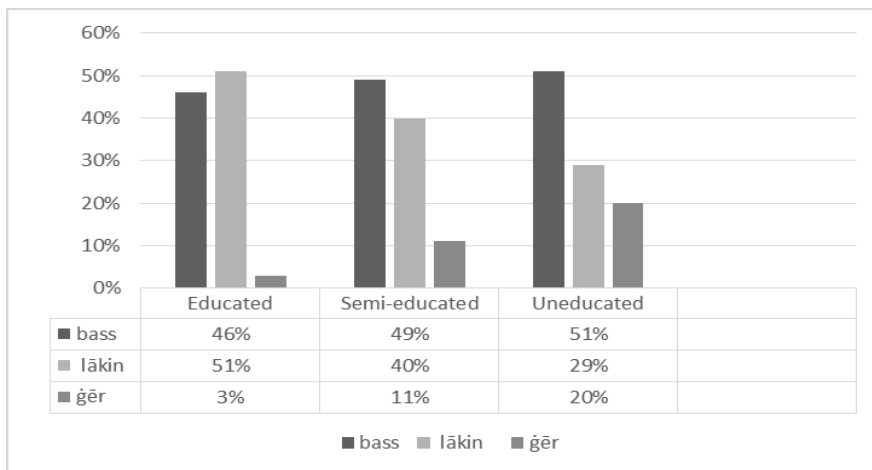
*wallāh in ʕādnʕ kasl, ġēr* “by God, I am still tired, but  
*ēʕʕasawwī?* what can I do?”

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



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

*him/hem/hum* and *ha/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:

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

*durnā fi s-sūg mā xallēna* “we searched in the market  
*maĥall him in ĥin fī l-* [and] we did not  
*ḥaxīr nlāgīhā fī maĥall* leave any shop, and  
*ḥabūyah* then at the end, we  
found it in in my  
father’s shop”

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 *ānn* in Ṣan`ānī Arabic and Al-Azraqi (1998) for Abha Arabic). *hummalē* is found in the Ṣajmī dialect according to Johnstone (1961). *hummalē* also has an equivalent in the Murra dialect, i.e., *ṭimmilāy* or *ṭimmilē*, according to Ingham (1994). I would suggest that the Murra particle consists of the conjoin *ṭim*, which is equivalent to the standard *ṭumma* (then) plus the presentational particle *lē* which occurs in the Abha, Ṣajmī, and the Murra dialects. Consider the following examples of *hummalē* in the Abha dialect:

*daxalnā l-majlis nabgā nagḥud* “we entered the sitting room  
*hummalē gid hū malyān* to sit, but [surprisingly]  
it was full.”

*ruĥnā lah ṣalā mawḥdnā* “we went according to our  
*hummalē mā hū fīh* appointment [with him]  
but [unexpectedly] he  
was not there”

*ha/haw* 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:

<i>ʔanā wiṣilt ʔarbaʕah,</i>	“I arrived at four o’clock, and
<i>haw hum gid gālō lī</i>	they had told me [before]
<i>ʔinn ʔllī yōṣal</i>	that those who arrive late
<i>mitʔaxxir lāzim</i>	should enter by the back
<i>yudxul min il-bāb il-</i>	door.”
<i>xalfī</i>	

<i>huwwah tūl il-wagt</i>	“he has been trying to
<i>yihāwil yigniṣnī b</i>	convince me about his
<i>fikratah haw anā</i>	idea all the time, and I
<i>kunt ʕarfin hadafah</i>	have always been aware
	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.**

Subordinator	Gloss
<i>sāḥatmā</i>	when (lit. the time (hour) of)
<i>wagtmā</i>	when (lit. in the time of)
<i>hazzatmā</i>	in the moment of, when
<i>gablmā</i>	before
<i>baḥdmā</i>	after
<i>lēn/ilēn</i>	until/till
<i>yōm</i>	in the time (lit. in the day of)
<i>minyōm/minyōmā</i>	since, when (lit. from the day of)
<i>ḥawwalmā</i>	as soon as (lit. from the beginning)

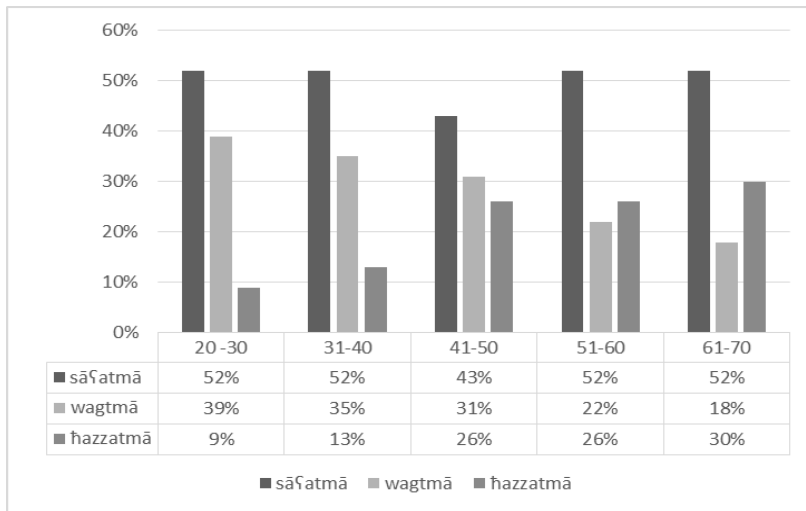
From the analysis of the data, it is evident that *hazzatmā* is not used commonly among younger and educated speakers, whereas *sāḥatmā* is used commonly among most speakers. *wagtmā* is used slightly less by older and uneducated speakers, as shown in Figures 9 and 10. All indicate similar meanings and 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:

*sāḥatmā ḥafathum ṣāḥat* “when she saw them, she cried.”

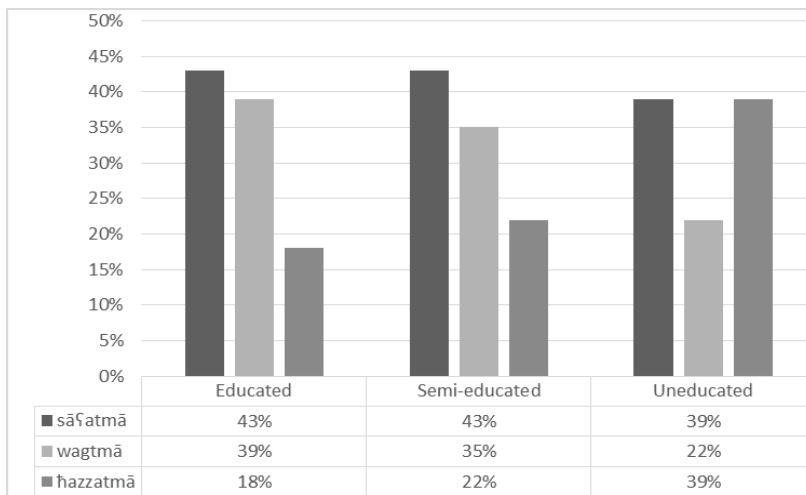
*kunnā hnāk wagtmā waṣlō* “we were there when they arrived”

*hiyyah mā kānat ḥindah yōm* “she was not with him when  
*gālatt lah maryam* Maryam told him”

*tāhatt* *hazzatmā* *samfatt* “she collapsed in the moment  
*hissah* she heard him”



**Figure 9:** Average percentage of responses in which *sāfatmā*, *wagt mā*, and *hazzatmā* are used according to age group.



**Figure 10:** Average percentage of responses in which *sāfatmā*, *wagt mā*, and *hazzatmā* 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*, *ḷawwalmā*, *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.

<i>mḷād</i>	<i>fuftahā</i>	<b><i>minyōm</i></b>	“I have not seen here since
	<i>taxarajat</i>		she graduated.”
<i>wallāh</i>	<i>innahā</i>	<i>marḍat</i>	“by God, she became sick
	<b><i>minyōmmā</i></b>	<i>ḷarfatt b il-</i>	once she knew about the
	<i>xabar</i>		news”

*ḷawwalmā* 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, *baḷdmā* indicates an event or action that happened before the action occurring in the main clause. Consider the following examples:

<b><i>ḷawwalmā</i></b>	<i>tallaḡ ruxṣatah</i>	“as soon as he got his license,
	<i>ṣār lah ḥādiḋ</i>	he had an accident”

<i>kuūl</i>	<b><i>gablmā</i></b>	<i>yubrud</i>	“eat before it gets cold”
<i>kānatt mā</i>	<i>tiḡrifah</i>	<i>zēn</i>	“she did not know him well
	<b><i>gablmā</i></b>	<i>tizawwajah</i>	before getting married to
			him”

<b><i>baḷdmā</i></b>	<i>katabat mazzagat</i>	“after she wrote, she torn the
	<i>il- waragah</i>	paper”

*lēn/ilēn*, which means ‘until’ introduces a clause that concludes

the event indicated in the main clause. Consider the following examples:

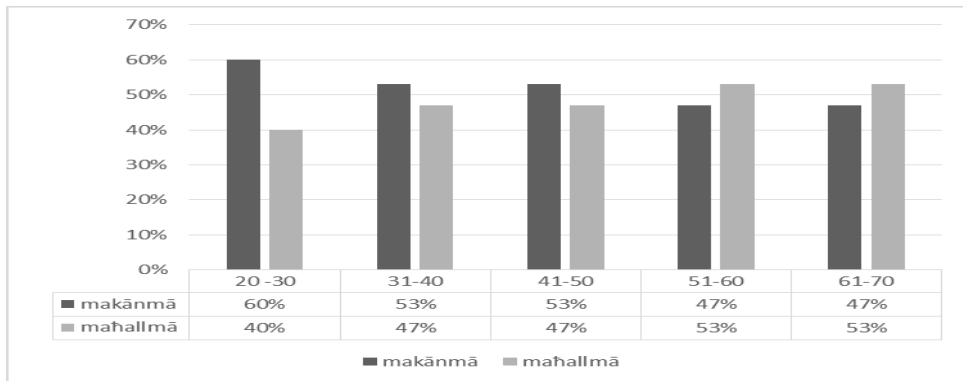
<i>ma flēn takasar</i>	“he walked till he (lit. was broken)”
<i>daggēt ilēn xaḍatt īdī</i>	“I knocked till my hand became insensitive”
<i>mā ūriftahā lēn jarrabtahā</i>	“I did not know it till I tried it”

#### 4.2.2. Place

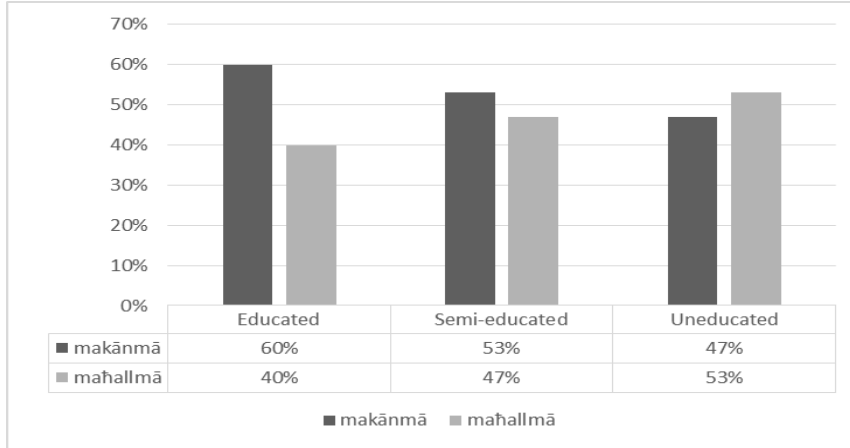
*makānmā* and *maḥallmā* are subordinators that indicate place. They introduce a clause that indicates the position or the place of the event expressed in the main clause. Consider the following examples:

<i>hin ruhṇā maḥllmā galō lnā</i>	“we went to where they told us.”
<i>ṯālah hnāk makānmā haṭatah</i>	“it is there where she put it.”
<i>Ṭugṣud maḥallmā tibgā</i>	“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 *makānmā* is used slightly more frequently than *maḥallmā* by educated and younger speakers, as shown in Figures 11 and 12.



**Figure 11: Average percentage of responses in which *makānmā* and *maḥallmā* are used according to age group.**



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

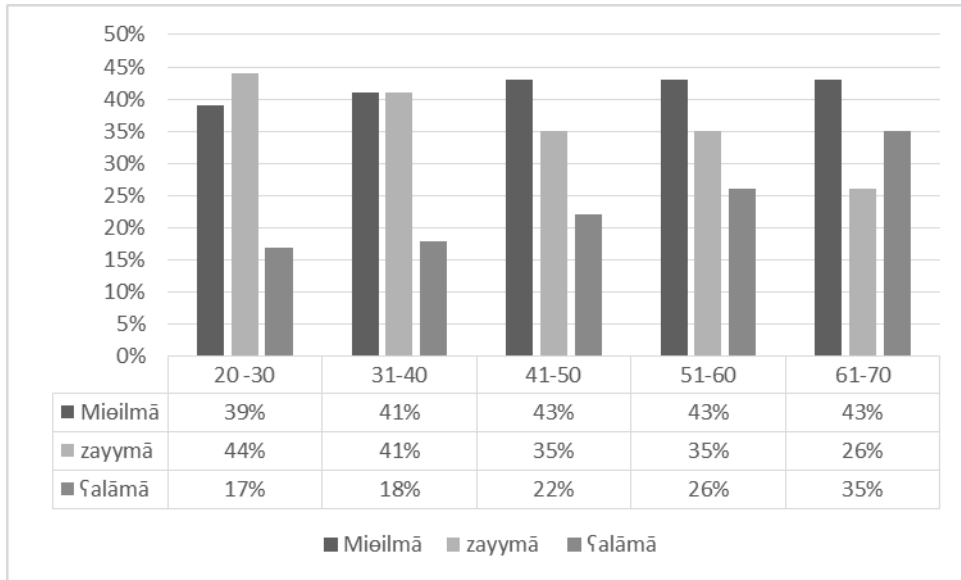
#### 4.2.3. Manner

The set of subordinating conjunctions *miḥilmā*, *zayymā*, and *ṣalāmā* 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:

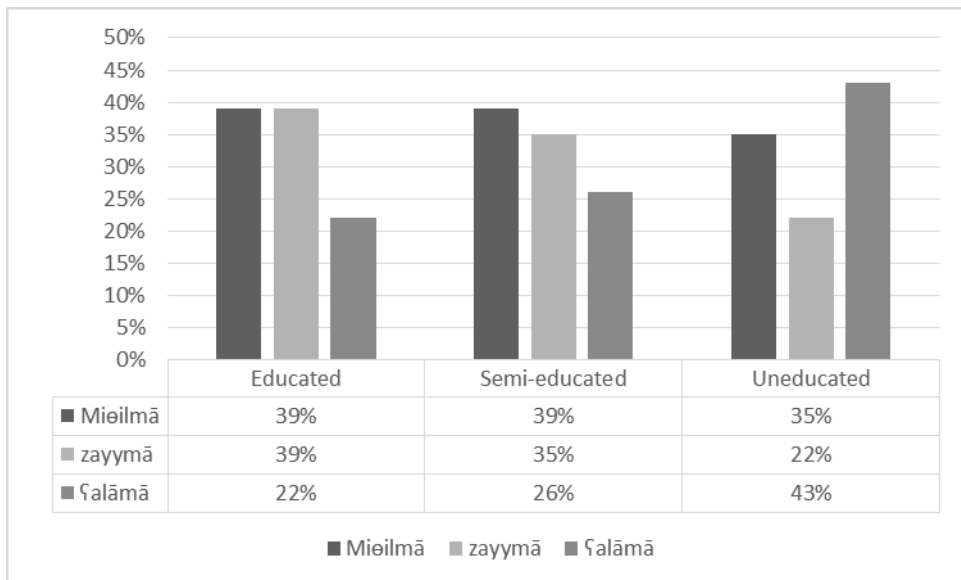
<i>ʔanā rasamtah zayymā gult</i>	“I drew it as you said”
<i>ʔabgāk tʕānī miḥilmā ʕānēt</i>	“I want you to suffer as I did”
<i>maʕat il-umūr ṣalāmā fi xātrah</i>	things have gone as in his heart (i.e. as he hoped)”

Although *ṣalāmā* has the same sense as *miḥilmā* 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 *miəilmā*, *zayymā* and *ʕalāmā* are used according to age group.



**Figure 14:** Average percentage of responses in which *miəilmā*, *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.**

Subordinator	Gloss
<i>maṣāʾin(n)</i>	although/even though
<i>birraġem min in(n)</i>	although/in spite of
<i>maṣā ʾālik/maṣā kiḏah</i>	however
<i>fōg in(n)/fōg haḏā</i>	moreover/over that/although
<i>minswā in(n)</i>	moreover

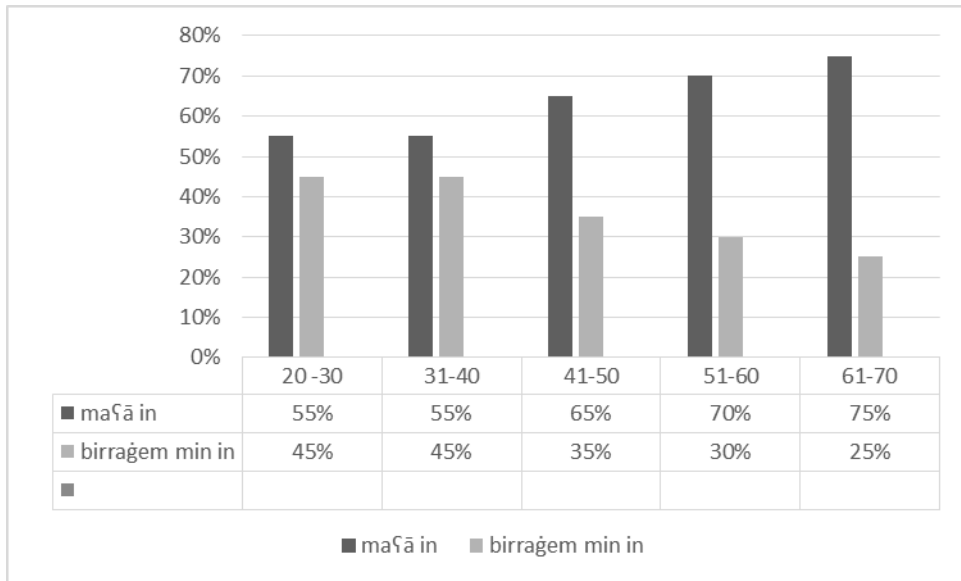
*maṣāʾin* and *birraġem min in* are derived from standard Arabic without major changes. They convey the meaning of ‘although’ or ‘even though’, as shown in the following examples:

*mā gid jahazaw il-awrāg maṣāʾin* “they have not finished the  
*innahā jathum min badrī* papers even though  
they received them  
earlier.”

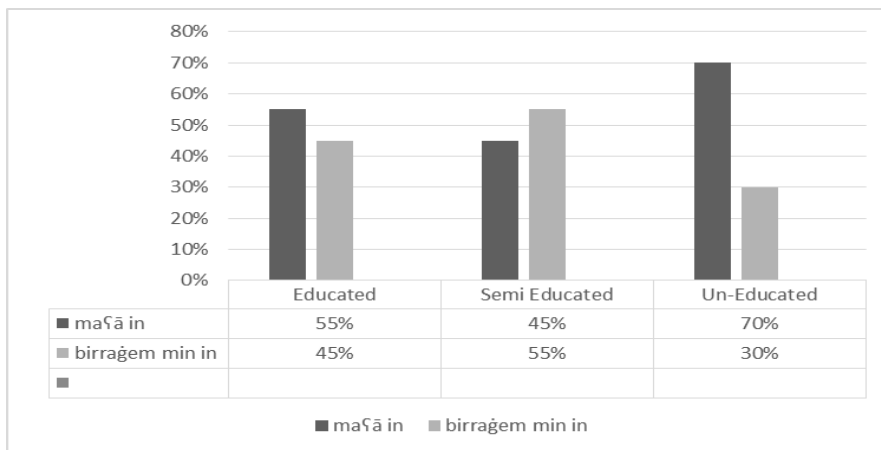
*birraġem min inn il-kutub tabṣah* “although the books are a  
*jadīdah illā inn il-manhaj* new edition, the  
*nafsah* curriculum is the  
same.”

The results show that *maṣāʾin* and *birraġem min in* are used by

educated and younger speakers. However, while *maṣā 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 *maṣā in* and *birraḡem min in* are used according to age group.**



**Figure 16: Average percentage of responses in which *maṣā in* and *birraḡem min in* are used according to level of**

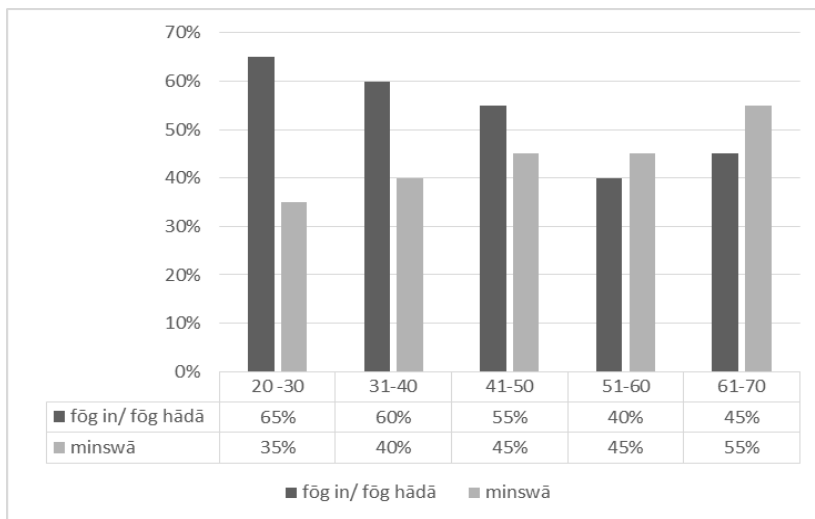
**education.**

*fōg in(n)/fōg hādā*, and *minswā in* mean ‘moreover’ as in the following examples:

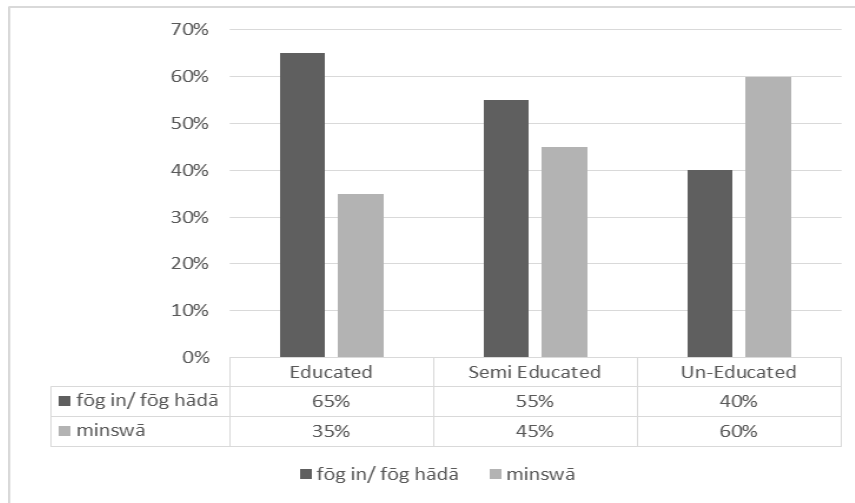
*aṭtāh min ṡindah w fōg hādā* “He gave him from his [money]  
*yitfarrat* moreover, he is asking for  
 more”

*Minswāinnah mirīd* “although he was sick they made  
*zād lamradūh* him more sick”

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



**Figure 17: Average percentage of responses in which *fōg in(n)/fōg hādā* and *minswā* are used by age group.**



**Figure 18: Average percentage of responses in which *fōg in/fōg hādā* and *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.**

Subordinators	Gloss
<i>ʕalaʕān/ʕalaʕān in(n), minʕān</i>	for, in order to, because
<i>ʕalaʕīr/ʕalaʕīr in(n)/minʕīr</i>	for, in order to, because
<i>bsabab,</i> <i>bsibb/bsibbat,</i> <i>ʕalāsibb/ʕalasibbat,</i> <i>ʕīsibb/ʕīsibbat</i>	because of
<i>li ʕan(n)/lin(n)/lan(n)</i>	because
<i>hattā</i>	thus, so

The most common particles of this set are *ʕalaʕān/ ʕalaʕānin* and *minʕān*. Morphologically, they comprise the prepositions *ʕalā* and

*min* added to the word *ḡān*, which means ‘the concern of’. They can be used in all cause and reason contexts. Similarly, *ḡalaṣīr/ ḡalaṣīr in(n)/min.ṣīr* consist of the prepositions *ḡalā* and *min* beside the word *ṣīr* which cannot occur freely. They mean ‘for’, ‘in order to’ or ‘to’. *ḡalāṣīr/ḡalāṣīrin /min.ṣīr* 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*, *ḡalāsib/ḡalasibbat*, and *fīsib/fīsibbat* have the same sense. They are derived from the standard stem noun *sabab* preceded by the preposition *b*, *ḡalā*, or *fī*. The stem particle varies between *sabab*, *sib*, and *sib* + the feminine suffix *at*. Consider the following examples:

*anā zurtahā ḡalaḡān ḡannahā* “I visited her because she is  
*bintah.* his daughter”

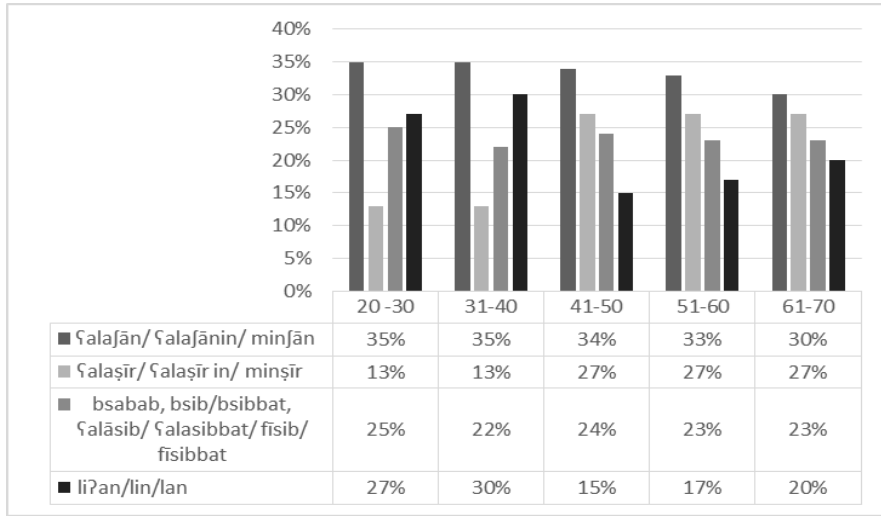
*ḡanā mā sawētah illā ḡalāṣīrik* “I only did it for you”

*ēsh tibḡānī ḡasawwī? ḡaskut lik* “what do you want me to do  
*ḡalāṣīr innik waladī?* keep quiet because you  
are my son?”

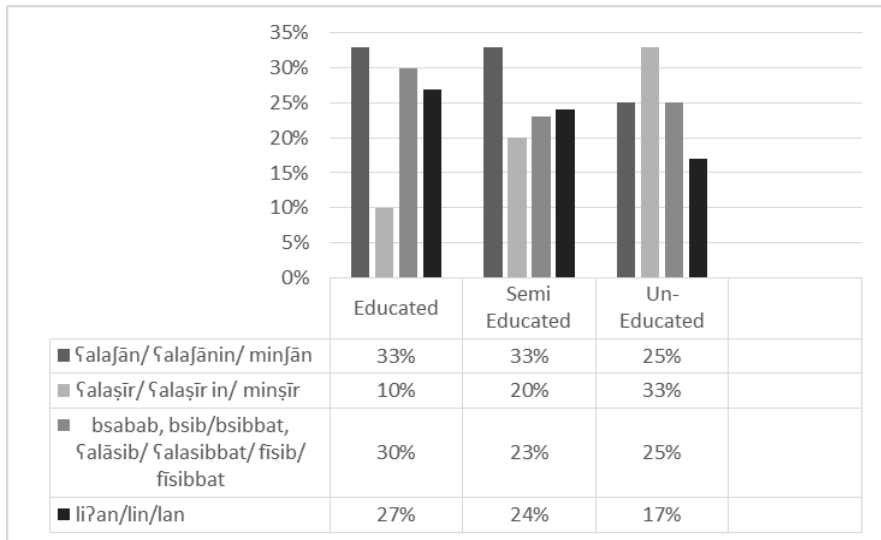
*bsibbat ḡa l-kūrah maḡāf xēr* “because of this football, he  
did not do well [in his  
daily life]”

*il-jaww ḡārr bsabab gurb if* “the weather is hot because the  
*ḡams li l-arḡ* sun is near to the earth”

According to the results shown in Figures 19 and 20, the particles, *ḡalaḡān* is the form which is often used by younger and educated people and less frequently by older and uneducated people.



**Figure 19: Average percentage of responses in which cause and reason particles are used according to age group.**



**Figure 20: Average percentage of responses in which cause and reason particles are used according to level of education.**

Lastly, *ḡattā* 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:

*ʔjlis muʔaddab hattā mā ʔazʔal minnik* “stay polite so that I do not become upset with you”

*ʔ ǧ silah zēn hattā innah yirūh bsurʔah* “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:

*tidʔi lhum hattā l walad baʔlahā* “she prays for them including her stepson”

*mā tiʔrif 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

standard Arabic, the younger generation tend, sometimes, to limit their usage of the multiple variants of conjunctions and instead use those closest to modern standard Arabic.

If we look at specific examples, with respect to coordinators, *ġēr* is used less frequently by younger and educated speakers, who tend to replace it with *f/fa* with the meaning of then. Also, *baṣḍēn*, 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 *xalf*, *ṣawwad* and *əumman*. Some coordinators, and despite being used in standard Arabic are not often used among younger and educated speakers such as *ġēr* which is used to conjoin contrastive clauses. *bass*, 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 *ḥazzatmā* is not frequently used among younger and educated speakers, unlike *sāṣatmā* and *wagtmā*. 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 *maṣā in* and *birraġem min in* are used mostly by educated younger speakers, and mostly in formal speech, *maṣā in* is common as well among most of the speakers. *fōg in* /*fōg ḥādā* 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 ḥādā* more.

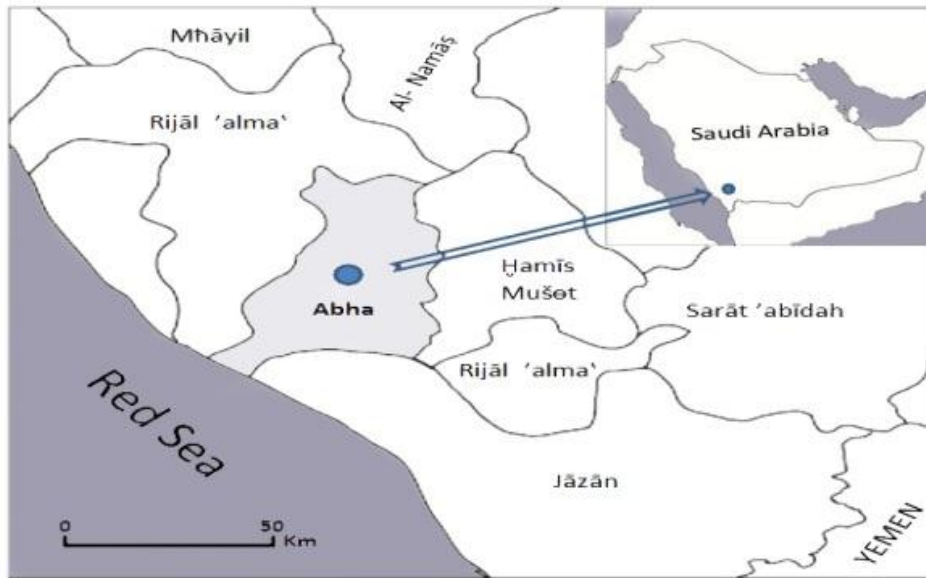
Conjunctions that provide the purpose of, or the reason for, the actions or the events indicated in the main clause in Abha dialect are introduced by *ṣalaṣān/ ṣalaṣānin* and *minṣān* , *ṣalaṣīr in/ minṣīr* , *bsabab*, *bsib/bsibbat*, *ṣalāsib/ ṣalasibbat*, and *fīsib/ fīsibbat*. The results show that *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.

Notes



Map (1). Illustration of Abha district in relation to neighbouring districts. The inset map shows the position of Abha within Saudi Arabia. (From *al-maṣh al-maydānī lil-mawāqī' wal-ḥadamāt: al-minṭaqa al-'idāriya al-'ulā: Abha* (1991). Emirate of 'Asīr, Ministry of Interior. Reproduced by the author using Adobe Illustrator CS5).

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