

## **The Verb in Abha Arabic**

**Munira A. Al-Azraqi**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Foreign Languages,  
College of Education, King Faisal University,  
Al-Hofuf, Saudi Arabia*

(Received 16/2/1424H.; accepted for publication 16/6/1425H.)

**Abstract.** This study investigates some morphological and phonological features of verbs in the Abha dialect, which is spoken in the southwest of Saudi Arabia. It clarifies the changes in verb vowels in the process of inflection in the perfect, imperfect and imperative aspects. It studies the patterns of the verbs from Forms I to X, with the exception of IX, provides semantic analysis where necessary and examines the passive verb in this dialect. This is a descriptive study that deals with everyday usage of the dialect

### **1. Introduction**

Most dialectal and sociolinguistic studies on Saudi dialects focus mainly on dialects spoken in Najd and Hijaz, whereas eastern and southwestern dialects have not received sufficient attention. Abha is one such dialect, and requires extensive study. This urban dialect is spoken in the city of Abha, in the southwest of Saudi Arabia. The speakers of this dialect are originally from different tribes, who settled in this city in the hope of finding a better standard of living. A large proportion of the inhabitants came from three tribes; namely, the Asir, Qahtan and Shahrān. Such a multi-lingual provenance has engendered a distinctive dialect with a variety of features.

The Abha dialect has been studied extensively at the syntactic levels. These studies have yielded some important morphological and phonological information <sup>(1)</sup>. Nakshabandi also studied the phonology and morphology, but his study lacks a detailed analysis of Abha verbs <sup>(2)</sup>. The present study undertakes to contribute to the task begun by Nakshabandi by analyzing, specifically, the morphological features of Abha verbs.

---

<sup>(1)</sup> Al-Azraqi, Munira. *Aspects of the Syntax of the Dialect of Abha (South West Saudi Arabia)*, PhD Thesis, University of Durham, Durham, UK, (1998).

<sup>(2)</sup> Nakshabandi, Anwar. *A Descriptive Study of the Morphology and Phonology of Abha Dialect*, PhD Thesis, University of Washington, D.C., USA, (1988). A review of Nakshabandi's study is in press.

The data of this paper come from a previous study <sup>(3)</sup>, and the rest was collected from fresh interviews. Eight men between the ages of 23 and 65; and six women between the ages of 31 and 53 participated in these interviews. The interviews focused on education, cooking, marriage ceremonies and teenagers' problems. All the interviewees had lived in Abha for at least 28 years. Their parents had the same origins. One of the men had left Abha for three years. Two ladies had left Abha for four years for study. However, all of them settled in Abha at the time of the interview.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the perfect and imperfect stems and inflection of the imperfect form in Form I. Section 3 describes Forms II to X, excluding Form IX. Section 4 describes the imperative; its formation and inflection. Section 5 describes the passive, including the perfect and imperfect stems. Section 6 concludes.

## 2. Form I

### 2.1. The perfect stem

There are two types of verb in this form in Abha dialect. These types are in two patterns: cacac (Type I) as daΞal "entered", faΞat "scratched", tabaΞ "cooked", ma@at "pulled"; and cacic (Type II) as Σarb "drank", labs "dressed" Ξasr "lost", Ξarb "expired", @arg "drowned", @alt "mistook", far□ "felt happy", Σαλμ "knew". Verbs of both types can be transitive or intransitive and can denote actions. However, the result of the action may affect merely the agent himself in the case of Type II more than in the case of Type I. Verbs in Type II usually denote bodily movements and attitudes beside emotional states, the results of which refer to the agent himself. These two types occur in most Saudi dialects, as stated by Prochazka <sup>(4)</sup>. They were also found in Najdi Arabic, which is spoken in Majma'ah, by Abboud <sup>(5,6)</sup>. They were reported in Meccan Arabic by Ingham <sup>(7)</sup> too. For more details on the distinction between the different types in Classical Arabic see Holes <sup>(8)</sup>.

Verbs having the cacac pattern (Type I) keep the same stem vowels when inflecting, as in:

3m.s. daΞal <sup>(9)</sup> "entered"

3m.p. daΞalo: <sup>(10)</sup>

<sup>(3)</sup> See M. Al-Azraqi, (1998)

<sup>(4)</sup> Prochazka, Theodore Jr. *Saudi Arabian Dialects*. London: Kegan Paul International, 1988.

<sup>(5)</sup> Abboud, Peter F. "The Vowel of the Imperfect Prefix in Najdi Arabic." In: *Linguistic and Literary Studies*. M. A. Jazayery et al. (Eds.). Mouton Publishers, 1978 (2), pp. 129-138.

<sup>(6)</sup> Some other dialects have cicac pattern as the spoken Arabic of Hail (See Peter F. Abboud, "The Verb in Northern Najdi Arabic." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 42, No. 3 (1979), 467-499).

<sup>(7)</sup> Ingham, Bruce. "Some Characteristics of Meccan Speech." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 34, No. 2 (1971), 273-297.

<sup>(8)</sup> Holes, Clive. *Modern Arabic: Structure, Functions and Varieties*. New York: Longman, 1995.

<sup>(9)</sup> IPA system is used in this paper to transcribe Arabic examples. The software used here was obtained from SIL International, 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas TX 75236-5699, USA.

3f.s. daʕalat	3f.p. daʕalo:
2m.s. daʕalt	2m.p. daʕaltu:
2f.s. daʕalti:	2f.p. daʕaltu:
1s. daʕalt	1p. daʕalna:

This occurs in most cases, regardless of the location at which the first or second consonant is articulated. It seems to be a feature of Abha dialect in addition to Hijazi dialect <sup>(11)</sup>. Abboud did not report this feature in Hail; neither did other researchers who studied Bedouin, Eastern or Najdi dialects.

The second vowel is usually deleted at the third person in catic verbs (Type II). When inflecting, the first vowel is raised to /i/ where the subject pronoun is a consonantal initial. The second vowel is also deleted when the subject pronoun is vowel initial, as in:

3m.ʕarb “drank”	3m.p. ʕarbo:
3f.s. ʕarbat	3f.p. ʕarbo:
2m.s. ʕiribt	2m.p. ʕiribtu:
2f.s. ʕiribti:	2f.p. ʕiribtu:
1s. ʕiribt	1p. ʕiribna:

## 2.2. The imperfect stem

Imperfect prefix vowels in Abha Arabic are /a/, /u/ and /i/. These vowels usually show vowel harmony with verb stem vowels. The prefixal vowel /u/ is used when the verb stem vowel is /u/, whereas /i/ is used when the stem vowel of the verb is /a/ or /i/. /a/ is a variable that is used in most cases. These variations occur in Abha Arabic because the speakers originally come from different geographical areas <sup>(12)</sup>. People from Qahtan (70 km south of Abha) and Qahtan’s surrounding toward Najd use /a/; whereas people from Tihamah of Asir (50 km northwest of Abha) and the areas closer to Hijaz (50 km north of Abha) use /i/ or /u/, instead, depending on the stem vowel of the verb. In Meccan Arabic, it seems from Ingham’s data that /i/ can be used as a prefixal vowel <sup>(13)</sup>. Some other dialects in the east of Arabia show /a/ as the vowel of the prefix in most cases, including Mutair, Harb, Dawasir, Utaibah, Rashaydah, Awazim and some other parts of Qasim. This differs from the dialects of the Gulf and Sudair, which seem to use /i/, instead, according to Ingham’s data <sup>(14)</sup>. Abboud studied prefixal vowels in Najdi Arabic, which is specifically spoken in Al-Majma’ah <sup>(15)</sup>. However, this feature needs to be studied further.

<sup>(10)</sup> /o:/, /at/, /tu:/, /ti:/, /t/ and /na:/ are suffixes which usually attach to the verb to refer to/or function as the subject. They show gender, number and person. They are subject-bound pronouns, which are used in the perfect case to denote the past tense. See Notes 4 & 7.

<sup>(11)</sup> See B. Ingham (1971).

<sup>(12)</sup> See M. Al-Azraqi (1998).

<sup>(13)</sup> See B. Ingham (1971).

<sup>(14)</sup> Ingham, Bruce. “Notes on the Dialect of the Mutair of Eastern Arabia”. *Journal of Arabic Linguistics*, 2 (1979), 23-35.

<sup>(15)</sup> See P. F. Abboud (1978).

The first vowel in the cacac pattern (Type I) is usually deleted in the case of the imperfect verb. There are three patterns of imperfect verb: ccac, ccuc and ccic. In other words, the stem vowel can be /a/, as in the perfect, or raised to be /i/, or /u/ in some specific cases as explained below:

The stem vowel is /a/ if C2 or C3 is guttural as (Ξ, @, □, Ⓝ, h), e.g.:

-fΞat “scratches”, -tbaΞ “cooks”, -m@at “pulls”, -sra□ “goes”, -gra□ “explodes”, -fgaⓃ “bombs”, -σf□at “slips”, -bhar “astonishes”.

The stem vowel is /u/ in some intransitive verbs when C3 is an emphatic, stop or liquid. If the verb is transitive, the stem vowel is /a/, e.g.:

<u>Transitive</u>	<u>Intransitive</u>
-lⓃat “licks”	-d@ur “surprises”
-m@at “pulls”	-gⓃud “stays”
-f□aσ] “examines”	-dΞul “enters”
-bhat “accuses”	

Imperfect verbs with /i/ or /u/ differ according to their state and quality, as is the case with some verbs of classical Arabic <sup>(16)</sup>. Verbs with the /i/ vowel usually do not denote action, unlike verbs with /u/, e.g.:

<u>Verbs with /i/</u>	<u>Verbs with /u/</u>
-Ⓝris “marrying”	-Ξtub “proposing”
-□rig “burns”	-□ruk “stirs”
-kniz “hoards”	-knus “sweeps”
-Ξrib “destroys”	-Ξrut “welds”
-□bis “jails”	-□rus “guards”
-sZin “jails”	-srug “steals”

If C3 is a glide or nasal, a verb takes the /i/ even if it denotes an action, e.g.; -ⓃZin “kneads”, -ksir “breaks”, -@sil “washes”, -@fir “forgives”.

Verbs in Type II usually lose the stem vowel to be –ccac in the imperfect aspect, as in:

-Σραβ “drinks”, -lbas “dresses”, -lⓃab “plays”, -Ξrab “expires”

### 2.3. Imperfect verbs inflection

Stem vowels of imperfect verbs show different kinds of changes when verbs are inflected and attached to suffix pronouns. This is illustrated in detail below:

#### 2.3.1. -ccuc

The stem vowel of imperfect -ccuc usually does not change when the verb inflects, as in:

<sup>(16)</sup> See C. Holes (1995).



clarified for each <sup>(18)</sup>. Vowels in perfect verbs usually do not change in the process of inflection. Conversely, in imperfect verbs, vowels show some changes, as illustrated in detail below.

### 3.1. Form II

Form II verbs have the pattern  $c_1ac_2c_3ac_3$  in the perfect as: *kallam* “talked”, *labbas* “dressed”, *ʕallam* “taught”, *wakkal* “authorized”, *haddam* “destroyed”. Verbs in this form are usually transitive. They indicate that more than one agent is performing the action denoted by the verb. These verbs indicate an extensive meaning more than verbs in Form I (cf.2). For example, the verb “*hadam*” means that someone destroyed something, while “*haddam*” indicates the same meaning but the action of the verb requires a longer time and more effort on the part of the agent.

We should note that some verbs could have extra or different meanings in Form II. For example, the verb *ʕalm* in Form I means “someone knew a piece of information”, whereas *ʕallam* in Form II means “taught” besides the meaning of “informed”. The intransitive verb *ʕadag* “told the truth”, on the other hand, has a slightly different meaning than the transitive verb *ʕaddag* “he believed someone”. This is similar to other Arabian dialects regarding the pattern and usage. But, if we consider Egyptian Arabic, for example, we will find verbs as *haddim*, *kallim*, *ʕallim* used in the same way although they have different patterns

Morphologically, verbs in this form do not change when inflecting in the perfect case.

3m.s. <i>kallam</i>	3m.p. <i>kallamo</i> :
3f.s. <i>kallamat</i>	3f.p. <i>kallamo</i> :
2m.s. <i>kallamt</i>	2m.p. <i>kallamtu</i> :
2f.s. <i>kallamti</i> :	2f.p. <i>kallamtu</i> :
1s. <i>kallamt</i>	1p. <i>kallamna</i> :

In the imperfect, the second vowel is raised to /i/ except when the suffix pronoun is /u:n/, in which case it is raised to /u/.

3m.s. <i>jikallim</i>	3m.p. <i>jikallumu:n</i>
3f.s. <i>tikallim</i>	3f.p. <i>jikallumu:n</i>
2m.s. <i>jikallim</i>	2m.p. <i>tikallumu:n</i>
2f.s. <i>tikallimi:n</i>	2f.p. <i>tikallumu:n</i>
1s. <i>?akallim</i>	1p. <i>nikallim</i>

### 3.2. Form III

The short vowel in this form is lengthened between C1 and C2. The pattern of this

<sup>(18)</sup> For more details about verbs derivations, see Abdoh Ar-Rajhi, *AttaTbi:q ʕ-Sarfi*, dar an nahDah al-Narabiyah, Lebanon, (1984); Holes (1995) or Zein Al-Khwaiski, *Az-zawa:ʕid fi AS-Siyaghah fil-luḡyah Al-Narabiyah fil-ʕaḡḡal*, dar al-maʕrifah al-jamiʕiyah, Alescandaria, Egypt, (1985).

form is  $c_1a:c_2ac_3$  as in:

$\chi a:sam$  “fought”,  $la:zam$  “accompanied” and  $wa:nas$  “escorted”.

The verb in this form indicates that the action denoted by the verb involves the participation of an element besides the agent. For example, the verb *lazm* in Form I (cf. 2) means “kept” or “hold”, but in Form III, it is *la:zam* which means “accompanied someone or something.” It indicates a participation between the subject and the object.

In the imperfect, the second vowel is usually raised to /i/; but when the suffix pronoun is /u:n/ or /i:n/, it is deleted, as:

3m.s. $j\dot{i}\chi a:sim$	3m.p. $j\dot{i}\chi a:smu:n$
3f.s. $ti^{(19)}\chi a:sim$	3f.p. $j\dot{i}\chi a:smu:n$
2m.s. $ti\chi a:sim$	2m.p. $ti\chi a:smu:n$
2f.s. $ti\chi a:smi:n$	2f.p. $ti\chi a:smu:n$
1s. $?a\chi a:sim$	1p. $ni\chi a:sim$

### 3.3. Form IV

Perfect verbs in Form IV take the prefix /ʔa/ and have the pattern  $?ac_1c_2ac_3$  as:  $?a\Xi raZ$  “got someone/something outside”,  $?as\aleph af$  “aided”,  $?abla\Sigma$  “annoyed”,  $?andar$  “got someone/something outside”,  $?ad\Xi al$  “got someone/something in”.

Verbs in this form are usually transitive. They can be bitransitive. There are some verbs in this form that are used only in this pattern as the verb  $?as\aleph af$  “aided”, whereas other verbs have equivalents in Form I and/or II. The difference in meaning among verbs of these forms is minimal. Consider the verb *nadar* in Form I, II and IV in the following examples:

Ahmad *nadar* min l-be:t “Ahmad went out of the house”.

This verb is in Form I (cf. 2.). It is an intransitive verb.

Ahmad *naddar*  $?ahlah\ yima\S\S i:hum$  “Ahmad took his family on a (short) trip”

This verb is in Form II (cf. 3.1.). It is a transitive verb that takes an object and denotes an action that takes a long time to be finished.

$?andaru:h\ barra:$  “they got him out”

This verb is in form IV. It has a factitive meaning that has two objects. In this context, this verb could convey the meaning of “dismiss” or just get something out for some reason.

---

<sup>(19)</sup> /i/ is very short after the plosive /t/.

In fact, it is not easy to draw an accurate distinction in the usage of these forms in the present study. Matters of usage require detailed semantic analysis, which is beyond the scope of the present study.

Morphologically, there is an elision of the first vowel of the stem, Form I. In the imperfect, both of prefixal and stem vowels are raised to /i/ as in:

3m.s. φiΞriZ γετσ σομεβοδψ/τηινγ ουτ	3m.p. φiΞriZu:n
3f.s. tiΞriZ	3f.p. φiΞriZu:n
2m.s. tiΞriZ	2m.p. tiΞriZ
2f.s. tiΞriZi:n	2f.p. tiΞriZu:n
1s. ?aΞriZ	1p. niΞriZ

### 3.4. Form V

Verbs in Form V have the pattern of Form II (cf 3.1.) plus the prefix /ta/ to be tac<sub>1</sub>ac<sub>2</sub>c<sub>2</sub>ac<sub>3</sub> as:

taΞarraZ “graduated”, talawwan “became colored”, taΞarraZ “recognized”.

Verbs of this form are usually intransitive, although few verbs could be used as transitive according to the meaning and the context, as shown below:

taΞallam id-dars “he got (learned) the lesson”  
tafahham il-mishkilah “he understood the problem”

These verbs denote that the agent expended a lot of effort in achieving the results for himself/itself. The prefix /ta/ is an element that is used before the verb to add a reflexive sense.

In the imperfect, there is an elision of the prefixal vowel. The subject suffixal vowel /u:/ is lowered to /o:/:

3m.s. φitΞallam	3m.p. φitΞallamo:n
3f.s. titΞallam	3f.p. φitΞallamo:n
2m.s. titΞallam	2m.p. titΞallamo:n
2f.s. titΞallame:n	2f.p. titΞallamo:n
1s. ?atΞallam	1p. nitΞallam

### 3.5. Form VI

Verbs in Form VI have the pattern of Form III (cf.3.2.) plus the prefix /ta/ to have the pattern tac<sub>1</sub>a:c<sub>2</sub>ac<sub>3</sub> as:

ταΞα:war “consulted”, taΞa:raf “get to know each other”, taga:sam “shared”, tara:wad “gave it a second thought”, taΞa:lam “chatted”.



These verbs have the meaning of Form III, which is participation of more than one agent, besides the reflexivity that is conveyed by the prefix /ta/ as in Form V (cf.3.4.). Two persons or more, in most of the cases, are involved in the action of the verb in Form VI. The difference between verbs of Forms V and VI is slight, as shown in the sentences below:

il-Ṣuwā:λ taṢallamo: bsurṢah “The boys learned quickly”

The verb here is in Form V, which means that two or more persons expended effort to learn some information. But, in a context such as:

gid taṢa:lamo: “they have already told each other what had happened”

The verb here means that two or more persons exchanged some of their information.

Form VI imperfect verbs have the same changes of the imperfect verbs of Form V (cf.3.4.). The prefixal vowel is deleted and the subject suffixal vowel /u:/ is lowered to /o:/

3m.s. φitna:wab	3m.p. φitna:wabo:n
3f.s. titna:wab	3f.p. φitna:wabo:n
2m.s. titna:wab	2m.p. titna:wabo:n
2f.s. titna:wabe:n	2f.p. titnawabo:n
1s. ?αtna:wab	1p. nitna:wab

### 3.6. Forms VII and VIII

Verbs in Form VII have the pattern of Form I plus /ʔan/ to have the pattern ?anc<sub>1</sub>ac<sub>2</sub>ac<sub>3</sub>. For example: ?ankasar “broken”, ?anfaZar” “burst”, ?angahar “ailed”. This form is used to denote the passive voice (c.f. 5.).

Verbs in Form VIII take /t/ after c<sub>1</sub> beside the addition of the prefix /ʔa/ to have the pattern ?ac<sub>1</sub>ta<sub>c</sub>ac<sub>3</sub> as:

?aftata “opened”, ?antagad “criticized”, ?aṢtaraf “confessed”, ?aḌtalaf “differed”. These verbs denote reflexivity and time in processing the action.

In the imperfect, the prefixal vowel /a/ is raised to /i/ and the glottal stop is deleted. The first and second vowels are also raised /i/. When suffix pronouns are /u:n/ or /i:n/, the first vowel remains /a/ but the second vowel is deleted, as in:

Form VII

3m. φinkisir “break”	3m.p. φinkasru:n
3f.s. tinkisir	3f.p. φinkasru:n
2m.s. tinkisir	2m.p. tinkasru:n
2f.s. tinkasri:n	2f.p. tinkasru:n
1s. ?ankisir	1p. ninkisir

## Form VIII

3m. $\phi i\Xi tilif$ “differ”	3m.p. $\phi i\Xi talfu:n$
3f.s. $ti\Xi tilif$	3f.p. $\phi i\Xi talfu:n$
2m.s. $ti\Xi tilif$	2m.p. $\phi i\Xi talfu:n$
2f.s. $ti\Xi talfi:n$	2f.p. $\phi i\Xi talfu:n$
1s. $?a\Xi tilif$	1p. $ni\Xi tilif$

**3.7. Forms IX and X**

There is no Form IX in Abha Arabic, unlike Naḡdi Arabic <sup>(20)</sup> and Hijazi Arabic.

Verbs in Form X have the pattern of Form IV (cf.3.3.) plus the prefix  $?ast/$  to have the pattern  $?astac_1c_2ac_3$  as:

$?asta\aleph lam$  “got information for oneself”,  $?astafham$  “investigated for oneself”,  $?astadrak$  “reclected for oneself”,  $?astandar$  “ousted for oneself”,  $?astagrab$  “dragged for oneself”,  $?astab\aleph ad$  “pushed off for oneself”.

Verbs in this form convey the meaning of reflexivity, similarly to Form IV (cf.3.2.). The agent of the verbs performs the action of the verb extensively on something or with someone/thing in order to achieve the result. For example, the verb  $?astandar$  means that someone got someone else out to do something with him, as in the following context;  $?astandarah min l-be:t ji\Xi a:\sigma mah$  “he got him out of the house just to have a fight with him”.

When inflecting, the imperfect prefix low vowel  $/a/$  and the second vowel of the verb are both raised to  $/i/$ . Where the subject suffix is  $/u:/$ , the second vowel of the verb becomes  $/u/$ , as:

3m. $\phi i\sigma tander$	3m.p. $\phi i\sigma tanduru:n$
3f.s. $tistander$	3f.p. $\phi i\sigma tanduru:n$
2m.s. $tistander$	2m.p. $\phi i\sigma tanduru:n$
2f.s. $tistandiri:n$	2f.p. $\phi i\sigma tanduru:n$
1s. $?astander$	1p. $nistander$

Verbs in this form indicate that a longer time is taken to perform the action denoted by the verb than with verbs of Form IV.

**4. The Imperative**

Imperative verbs are derived from imperfect verbs by deleting the imperfect prefix and taking the prothetic  $?u/$  or  $?i/$ . Verbs with  $/u/$  as the stem vowel usually take

<sup>(20)</sup> Abboud, P.F. “The Verb in Northern Najdi Arabic.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 42, No. 3 (1979), 467-499.

the prothetic /ʔu/, whereas verbs with /i/ or /a/ stem vowels take the prothetic /ʔi/. Thus, we can generalize three patterns for imperative verbs: ʔuccuc, ʔiccac, and ʔiccic, as in: ʔugʔʔud “sit”, ʔilʔʔab “play”, ʔiZlis “sit”. /ʔa/ is not used in the imperative of this dialect. This is in contrast to Meccan Arabic, where /ʔa/ is used, as stated by Ingham<sup>(21)</sup>.

Some verbs can be used with or without a prothetic vowel by optionally using Form II as:

insa□ “wipe”/ massi□, ʔifta□ “open”/ fatti□. These verbs have slightly different impressions, as in the case of differences between Form I and Form II. Forms V and VI are used with the same pattern, as in:

taʔʔallam “learned”, taʔʔarraZ “graduated”.

#### 4.1. Imperative verbs inflection

ʔuccuc verbs do not show any changes when inflecting, as in:

2m.s. ʔudʔul	2m.p. ʔudʔulu: <sup>(22)</sup>
2f.s. ʔudʔuli:	2f.p. ʔudʔulu:

Wʔeʔ ʔiccac and ʔiccic verbs inflict, the stem vowel agrees with the vowel of the subject suffix, except when C2 is /ʔ, □, h, ʔ and ʔ/ as in:

2m.s. ʔifta□	2m.p. ʔiftu□u:
2f.s. ʔifti□i:	2f.p. ʔiftu□u:

2m.s. ʔirsim	2m.p. ʔirsumu:
2f.s. ʔirsimi:	2f.p. ʔirsumu:

But in the following example,

2m.s. ʔis□ab	2m.p. ʔis□abu:
2f.s. ʔis□abi:	2f.p. ʔis□abu:

2m.s. ʔidʔak	2m.p. ʔidʔaku:
2f.s. ʔidʔaki:	2f.p. ʔidʔaku:

cacic perfect verbs (Type II) have the pattern ʔiccac when they are in the imperative case. The stem vowel does not change when the verb inflects, as we can see in: ʔiʔrab “drink”, ʔiʔrabi:, ʔiʔrabu:. However, when C3 is a guttural, the stem vowel of the verb

<sup>(21)</sup> See B. Ingham (1971).

<sup>(22)</sup> /i:/ and /u:/ are the suffixes that usually attach to the imperative verbs to refer to/or function as the subjects. They show gender, number and person. They are subject-bound pronouns that are used in the imperative case. See footnotes 3 & 4.

becomes in harmony with the vowel of the subject suffix as: ?ismaʕ “listen”, ?ismiʕi:, ?ismuʕu: .

## 5. The Passive

The passive form (Form VII) takes the pattern ?ancacac for the perfect stem and -ncicic for the imperfect stem.

### 5.1. Perfect passive

?ansakan “been inhabited”, ?ankasar “been broken”, ?anqarag “been burned”.

Few verbs take the pattern cicc as the verb libs “been dressed” beside the main form ?ανλαβασ ανδ σικν “been inhabited” beside the main form ?ανσακων. This feature is present in Najdi Arabic, as reported by Abboud <sup>(23)</sup>.

### 5.2. Imperfect passive

φinkisir “being broken”, φindiqik “being overused”, φinΣirib “being drunk”, φinlibis “being dressed”.

The first /i/ is changed to /a/ and the second /i/ is usually deleted when the suffix is plural, as in: φinkasru:n and φindaku:n.

We should note that not all passive verbs take plural forms in Abha Arabic, as in:

φinlibis	tinlibis
φindiΞil	tindiΞil
φinΣirib	tinΣirib

This is because of the object reference of the stem verb, which cannot be used when referring to humans.

## 6. Conclusion

This study examines strong verbs of Abha Arabic, which have two patterns: cacac and cacic. Unlike Najdi, northern and eastern dialects in Saudi Arabia, perfect verbs in the cacac pattern keep their stem patterns when inflecting, whereas verbs in the cacic pattern are subjected to one of two kinds of change: raising the first vowel to /i/ when suffix pronouns are consonant initial, or losing their second vowel when suffix pronouns are vowel initial (cf. 2.1).

Because of the mixture of Abha speakers (who came originally from surrounding areas), it was interesting to find the feature in this dialect that imperfect verbs can take imperfect prefixes with different vowels, like /a/, /i/ or /u/. The vowel of the stem verb plays a role when selecting among those vowels, i.e. when the stem vowel is /u/, the prefixal vowel becomes /u/, when the stem vowel of the verb is /a/ or /i/, the prefixal

<sup>(23)</sup> See P. F. Abboud (1978).

vowel becomes /i/. This feature is distinctive, since other dialects in the Arabian peninsula do not show this diversity in using the three vowels (cf. 2.2.).

It is worth mentioning that the first vowel of a cacac imperfect verb is usually deleted, whereas the second vowel shows different changes. Thus, imperfect verb patterns are ccac, ccic, ccuc as summarized below:

cacac → -ccac (when C2 or C3 is a guttural)  
 cacac → -ccuc (when the verb denotes a process of action or is intransitive with C3 as an emphatic, stop or liquid)  
 cacac → -ccic (when no process of action is denoted or C3 is a glide or nasal)

The imperfect -ccuc does not change when inflecting but -ccac and -ccic become in harmony with the vowel of the suffix pronoun, as summarized below:

/a/ → /u/ \_\_u:n (except when C2 is a guttural)

/a/ → /i/ \_\_i:n (except when C2 is a guttural)

/i/ → /u/ \_\_u:n

In most cases, the imperfect pattern of Type II does not change (cf. 2.3.).

Abha Arabic shows different forms of verb from Form II to Form X similarly to many Arabic dialects, with the exception of Form IX, see (Holes, 1995). These forms show diversity, not only in form, but also in meaning (cf. 3.). Morphologically, the patterns of these forms are found to not change when inflecting, except in the imperfect case (cf. 3.).

The imperative verb in this dialect is formed from the imperfect verb by replacing the prefix with the prothetic /?u/ or /?i/ according to the stem vowel of the verb. Imperative verbs have the same processes of change as the imperfect (cf. 4.). The passive verb, on the other hand, takes the pattern ?ancacac, which is Form VII. It rarely takes the cicc pattern when it is perfect and -ncicic when it is imperfect. The first vowel of the imperfect passive changes to /a/ and the second vowel is usually deleted when the verb inflects (cf. 5.).

A further study on Abha verbs is still required especially the weak verbs. A sociolinguistic study is also needed in order to examine the change in the dialect in general.

أستاذ مساعد، قسم اللغات الأجنبية،  
كلية التربية، جامعة الملك فيصل،  
الهفوف، المملكة العربية السعودية

( قدم للنشر في ١٤٢٤/٢/١٦ هـ ؛ وقيل للنشر في ١٤٢٥/٦/١٦ هـ )

**ملخص البحث.** يدرس هذا البحث بعض صفات النظام الصرفي والصوتي للأفعال في لهجة أبيها، وهي لهجة تستخدم في جنوب غرب المملكة العربية السعودية، كما يهدف إلى دراسة التغيرات التي تطرأ على حرف العلة عند التصريف في حالات الماضي والمضارع التام والأمر. ويستعرض هذا البحث أيضا الصيغ المختلفة للفعل ابتداء من الصيغ ١ إلى ١٠ ويقدم شرحا عن الفرق في المعاني بين هذه الصيغ، بالإضافة إلى ذلك يدرس هذا البحث الفعل في حالة المبني للمجهول، وهذا البحث عبارة عن دراسة وصفية تعنى بالاستخدام اليومي للهجة.

*J. King Saud Univ.*, Vol. 18, *Arts* (1), pp. 1-15, Riyadh (1426H./2005)