In this monograph, Roberta Morano re-examines Carl Reinhardt's 'Ein arabischer Dialekt gesprochen in 'Oman und Zanzibar' (1894), a key work in Omani Arabic dialectology until the 1980s, when new linguistic studies on the Arabic varieties spoken in Oman began to appear. The book provides a linguistic analysis of the Omani vernacular spoken in the al-ʿAwābī district (northern Oman), based on the comparison of naive inhabitants' speech with data collected by the author. This comparison reveals a wide diachronic linguistic variation in the region, and the threat that such variation poses to linguistic features specific to the vernacular. Organised in four chapters, the book introduces a sociolinguistic analysis of the Omani language, followed by an in-depth analysis of the al-ʿAwābī vernacular. The appendix includes two sample texts, fourteen proverbs and one traditional song. This study will be of interest to those working in the fields of Omani Arabic, historical and comparative linguistics, translation and interpretation, or those with an interest in how languages develop over time. As with all Open Book publications, this entire book is available to read for free on the publisher's website. Printed and digital editions, together with supplementary digital material, can also be found here: www.openbookpublishers.com.
CHAPTER 4: SYNTAX

This chapter deals with the analysis and description of syntax in the variety of Arabic spoken in the district of al-ʿAwābī. The primary data in this chapter come from the corpora of spontaneous speech recorded with the informants and the WhatsApp messages (presented in Arabic script) used for the elicitation of specific syntactic structures.

The third section, i.e., “Dritter Theil,” of Reinhardt’s (1894) work is devoted to the syntax of the Banū Kharūṣī vernacular. In the introduction to the section—which he concisely entitles “Remarks on the Syntax and general additions”—Reinhardt suggests that the beginner-level learner can generally refer to the same syntactic rules applied in CA, albeit encouraging the students to go through all the examples for more clarity. He continues by saying, however, that it is Omani practice to cut sentences short and use specific “Semitic expressions” that often force the listener to pay particular attention. It is not clear what Reinhardt means by ‘Semitic expressions’, we may presume he refers to syntactic constructions that might have sounded more archaic to his ear.

1 Reinhardt (1894, 261):

Charakterisch für das Omani, namentlich der Unterhaltung, ist das Fehlen alles Bombastischen, die kurze und kernige, echt semitische Ausdrucksweise, welche den Horer zwingt, dem häufig bloss andeutungsweise Gesprochenen genau zu folgen resp. dasselbe selbstthätig auszudenken.

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Reinhardt’s section then passes to a brief analysis of agreement rules, word order, the verb, and various types of clauses. The discussion on verbs partly examines tense and aspect, although not explicitly acknowledged by the German author, and will be briefly mentioned in the discussion on tense and aspect later in this chapter. The section on clauses follows the verbs, providing limited analysis as such, but plenty of examples.

Overall, it seems that not much has changed in the main syntactic structures of the al-ʿAwābī district, but this chapter contributes a proper analysis and further examples extrapolated from the primary data. The comparison with Reinhardt’s notes and remarks are signposted throughout to signal diachronic variation in the district.

In order to give a clear and concise explanation of how the syntax of this variety of Arabic works, the present chapter has been divided into two broad categories, namely phrases and clauses. This choice has been made following other theoretical works on syntax (e.g., Payne 1997) and works that analyse syntactic structures in other Arabic varieties (e.g., Watson 1993). Payne (1997) deemed it especially appropriate for the theoretical background in approaching the study of syntax.

The category of phrases includes noun, verb, and prepositional phrases.

Noun phrase analysis includes the description of rules that regulate the agreement with nouns, the ‘construct state’, the use of genitive markers, and the attributive clause, considered here as a modifier of the noun phrase. Verb phrases consider a brief
discussion on TAM categories related to the morphological form of the verb, the verbal prefixes, and the auxiliaries used in this variety of Omani Arabic. Finally, prepositional phrases include existentials (i.e., prepositions used to indicate the existence or presence of something) and possession.

The second broad category includes: simple nominal clauses, simple verbal clauses, and complex clauses. The first subsection will analyse the structure of nominal and locational clauses in the vernacular under investigation; the subsection on verbal clauses will deal mainly with agreement in verbal contexts and word order, whereas the subsection on complex clauses includes adverbial clauses and complement clauses. The former group is further subdivided in time, location, manner, purpose, reason, and the conditional clause.

These two broad categories are then followed by a minor section on negation, which analyses it in both nominal and verbal contexts, adding some remarks on Reinhardt’s (1894) negation system.

1.0. Phrases

A phrase is “any term which functions as a major predicator—predicand or predicate—or as a complement, attribute or adverb, but which lacks the predicand-predicate structure typical

\(^2\) According to the division made by Payne (1997, 317).

\(^3\) “The predicate is the portion of a clause, excluding the subject that expresses something about the subject” (https://glossary.sil.org/term/predicate). Consequently, the predicand is the subject of a clause, what the predicate relates to.
of clauses” (Watson 1993, 15). Thus, a phrase is any part of a sentence that modifies the so-called head word (i.e., the nucleus that determines the syntactic category of that phrase), and is henceforth called modifier.

There are three major types of phrases: noun phrase, verb phrase and prepositional phrase.

1.1. Noun Phrases

Noun phrases are characterised by elements such as determination, gender and number, modifiers, different types of annexation structures, i.e., ‘construct state’, numerals, and demonstratives (Holes 2016, 218), and the analytic genitive. In this section, noun phrases and adjectival noun phrases, i.e., a head noun and a modifier, will be analysed (§1.1.1), followed by some remarks on nominal agreement (§1.1.2). After those, two major sections will analyse the use of construct state and genitive markers in the primary data (§1.1.3) and the behaviour of the attributive clause, considered here as modifier of the noun phrase (§1.1.4).

Determination of nouns is signalled by means of the definite article (i)l-/el- prefixed to the determined word, e.g., il-bēt ‘the house’, el-madrasa ‘the school’. A noun is also definite when it is the first element in an annexation construction, e.g., kitāb el-bint ‘the book of the girl, the girl’s book’ or when it is followed by a possessive suffix pronoun, e.g., zōg-he ‘her husband’, yad-i ‘my hand’. A determined head noun constitutes a noun phrase on its own, but it can also optionally be followed by a modifier.
1.1.1. Adjectival Noun Phrases

If the modifier is an adjective acting as attributive modifier, it usually follows the noun and agrees with it in definiteness, e.g., *el-bint Ỉs-ㄢgayra* ‘the young girl’, *bēt qadīm* ‘an old house’. Theoretically, there is no limit to the number of adjectives that can modify a head noun in a noun phrase (although in the primary data only strings of maximum two adjectives appear):

(1)  *

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{is-sannūr} & \text{iṣ-ㄢgayr} & \text{il-byād} \\
\text{DEF-cat} & \text{DEF-small.MSG} & \text{DEF-white.MSG}
\end{array}
\]

‘The small white cat’ [S5]

On the other hand, if the modifier is a cardinal number, it usually precedes the noun when it is indefinite, e.g., *tisāʿ awlād* ‘nine children’, *ṭalāṭa aśhur* ‘three months’.\(^4\) If the modifier is a demonstrative pronoun, the following lexical item is always definite, e.g., *haḍā l-kitāb* ‘this book’. Lastly, if the modifier is a quantifier, the head noun always follows the modifier, e.g., *baʿāḍ kutūb* ‘some books’.\(^5\)

Adjectival noun phrases include also head nouns modified by *wāgid* (‘many, much’) and *šweyy* (MSG) / *šweyya* (FSG) (‘a little, a bit’), with apparently no restrictions in the order of items:

\[\text{\ldots}\]

\(^4\) For more details on numerals, the reader is referred to ch. 3, §1.7.2.

\(^5\) Quantifiers can be followed by a singular or a plural noun, depending on the quantifier itself. For more details, the reader is referred to ch. 3, §1.8.1.
(2) \textit{il-gaww wāgid ḥarr il-yōm}
\begin{tabular}{llll}
\text{DEF} & \text{weather} & \text{very} & \text{hot.} \\
\text{MSG} & \text{DEF} & \text{day.} & \\
\end{tabular}

‘The weather is very hot today.’ [S14]

(3) \textit{bint ʿuḥt-i rabša šweyya}
\begin{tabular}{llllllll}
\text{girl.} & \text{sister.} & \text{naughty.} & \text{a bit.} & \\
\text{FSG} & \text{PRON.1SG} & \text{FSG} & \text{FSG} & \\
\end{tabular}

‘My niece (lit. ‘my sister’s daughter) is a bit naughty’ [S12]

1.1.2. Some Remarks on Agreement in Noun Phrases

Singular head nouns agree in gender and number with their attributive modifiers with no exceptions: feminine singular, e.g., \textit{el-bint iṣ-ṣaġira} ‘the young girl’, \textit{siyyāra ḥarbāna} ‘a broken-down car’, and masculine singular, e.g., \textit{eš-šabb iṣ-ṣaġir} ‘the young boy’, \textit{bēt gedīd} ‘a new house’.

The discussion on agreement with plural head nouns in Arabic takes into consideration various factors: animacy (i.e., human vs non-human) appears to be a determining feature in assigning agreement patterns to Arabic heads, as well as ‘individualation’.\textsuperscript{6} Brustad (2000, 53) reports three main agreement systems for Kuwaiti Arabic:

in the first, all plural nouns take masculine plural agreement; the second system distinguishes between human and non-human, and all non-human nouns take feminine singular agreement; and a third system combines rules

\textsuperscript{6} Brustad (2000, 24) includes six main features that can affect the ‘individualation’ of a noun and that play a role when it comes to agreement rules: agency; definiteness; specificity vs genericness; textual or physical prominence; qualification; and quantification vs collectivity.
from the first two and allows either masculine plural or feminine singular agreement with non-human nouns. These so-called systems, however, show great variation among speakers, and this is visible also in the primary data presented in this study.\textsuperscript{7} Brustad (2000, 54) justifies this variation by correlating it to the degree of individuation manifest by the Arabic head. This applies, for example, to collective nouns and plural heads identifying animate or non-animate entities.\textsuperscript{8}

A major distinction to be made when talking about plural agreement is based on the aforementioned ‘animacy’ feature of some Arabic nouns and distinguishes between human and non-human lexical items. The non-human group can be further distinguished in subcategories of inanimate (e.g., objects) and animate non-human (e.g., animals).

We have already seen how Omani Arabic as a broad category retains feminine plural agreement in nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns. This factor impacts on the agreement patterns chosen by the speakers in this study. Therefore, I chose to follow the distinction in ‘strict’ (i.e., PL–PL) and ‘deflected’ (i.e., PL–FSG) agreement, as reported by Holes (2016, 326).

In the primary data, noun phrases with inanimate plural heads tend to take deflected agreement, whereas noun phrases

\textsuperscript{7} Brustad (2000, 53) rightly states that ‘systems’ might not be the appropriate term to use, if speakers can “freely alternate” between them.

\textsuperscript{8} For more details on this topic in Omani Arabic, the interested reader is referred to Bettega (2017), who analyses various animate and inanimate plural controllers, taking into consideration such factors as definiteness, qualification, head type, specificity, and concreteness.
with human and animate non-human plural heads take strict agreement according to the gender of the head noun.  

Human head nouns with strict agreement:

(4) el-banāt  el-mašgūlāt
DEF-girl.FPL  DEF-busy.PP.FPL
‘The busy girls’ [S3]

(5) er-rgāl  it-ta‘bānīn
DEF-man.MPL  DEF-tired.MPL
‘The tired men’ [S4]

Inanimate head nouns with deflected agreement:

(6) mustašfayāt  saġīra  ḥaṣṣa
hospital.FPL  small.FSG  private.FSG
‘Small private hospitals’ [S1]

(7) il-malābis  il-gedīda
DEF-clothes.MPL  DEF-new.FSG
‘The new clothes’ [S10]

(8) aṭbāq  laḏiḏa
dish.MPL  tasty.FSG
‘Tasty dishes’ [S5]

(9) ašgār  masqāya
tree.FPL  watered.PP.FSG
‘Watered trees’ [S12]

The rules shown in examples (7)–(9) are in contrast with Reinhardt (1894, 265), who generically states that broken plurals—unless masculine by nature—have strict agreement.
Collective nouns can also be distinguished in terms of animate and inanimate, in referring to the agreement rules. Collective animate non-human nouns, such as livestock, e.g., *bōš* ‘camels’, *hōš* ‘goats’, and *baqar* ‘cows’, are grammatically treated as feminine plurals, as seems to happen in the primary data for animals in general:

9 Consider these examples: *al-faʿyān yaʾišen fī-l-gibāl* ‘Snakes are common (lit. ‘live’) in the mountains’ [S5], or *haḍēlā l-kullāb kabīrāt* ‘these dogs are big’ [S9]. Reinhardt (1894, 266) also reports that collective nouns referring to animals behave as feminine when it comes to agreement rules.
The words used to indicate dates vary according to the ripeness of the date, but the most general ones are tumur, suhḥ, and raṭab. While tumur is a plural form (sg tamr) and, therefore, behaves as other plural nouns, suhḥ and raṭab are collectives and show different behaviours when it comes to agreement. Consider the following:

(15) is-suhḥ el-ḥelū
    DEF-date COLL DEF-sweet

‘The sweet dates’

(16) yišīll ir-raṭab wa-yibiʿ-hum
    take 3MSG DEF-date COLL CONJ-sell 3MSG-PRON 3MPL

‘He takes dates and sells them’

In (15), suhḥ attracts masculine singular agreement for all the participants to this study. The term raṭab, on the other hand, is definite and attracts masculine plural agreement (expressed through the suffix pronoun -hum ‘them’). Further evidence of the anomalous behaviour of raṭab is provided in example (77)

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10 Although examples (11), (13), (14), and (16) are not noun phrases, they serve to support the argument about agreement with collective heads.

11 Reinhardt (1894, 266) reports an example with soḥḥ, which also takes masculine singular agreement.
of this chapter: in that instance, raṭab is indefinite and attracts masculine singular agreement. The peculiar behaviour of raṭab might be explained by the fact that it is considered a collective noun only when indefinite and not when definite. If so, then individuation might play a role in identifying raṭab as a masculine plural noun, especially when looking at the features of specificity and definiteness. It would be interesting to investigate further how inanimate collective nouns are treated elsewhere in the district and in Oman or neighbouring countries, although often not systematically used.

Dual nouns take, in the primary data, plural agreement and agree in gender with the head noun:\(^{12}\)

\[(17) \text{haḍēlā} \quad \text{l-mustašfīn} \quad \text{al-gadīdāt} \]
\[\text{DEM.PROX.FPL} \quad \text{DEF-hospital.FDL} \quad \text{DEF-new.FPL} \]

‘These two new hospitals’ [S1]

\[(18) \text{riggālin} \quad \text{zenīn} \]
\[\text{man.DL} \quad \text{good.MPL} \]

‘Two good men’ [S3]

In (17), both the demonstrative pronoun haḍēlā and the adjective gedidāt agree with the head noun, e.g., the dual form mustašfīn, as feminine plurals. This happens because a dual noun “indicates some degree of individuation, and hence usually does not provide collective reference” (Brustad 2000, 57).

\(^{12}\) In accordance with Reinhardt’s (1894, 267) data.
1.1.3. Synthetic and Analytic Genitive

In modern Arabic dialects, possession and ownership are variously expressed. The comparative study of possessive linkers by Eksell-Harning (1980) is a good starting point, as well as the work by Bettega (2019b), which the interested reader is referred to for more insights on the topic.

In the primary data, two main constructions can be found: the construct phrase (or synthetic genitive, known in Arabic as *iḍāfa*), which links together two nouns in a relationship of possessor and possessed, and the analytic genitive (henceforth, AG), which uses genitive markers to express possession or relationship between two nouns.

The synthetic genitive is a construction that consists of a noun and a modifier, usually linked by the definite article (*i*)l-/el- depending on the context:

(19) *bīstān el-gīrān*

   `garden.SG DEF-neighbour.MPL`

   ‘The garden of the neighbours’ [S15]

(20) *maṣnaʿ it-tūmūr*

   `factory.SG DEF-date.PL`

   ‘Date factory’ [S2]

(21) *markaz ʾiš-ṣaḥḥa n-nisā*

   `centre.SG DEF-health.FSG DEF-woman.FPL`

   ‘Centre for women’s health’ [S7]

(22) *malkat nūr*

   `engagement.FSG Nur`

   ‘Nur’s engagement’ [S3]
These examples show how the synthetic genitive construction does not exclusively indicate a relationship of possession, but also a relationship of generic belonging or characterisation, despite displaying the same pattern as nouns in a genuinely possessive construction. This is the case in examples (19) and (22), whereas example (20) provides evidence of a relationship of characterisation or description specifying the type of factory. Lastly, example (21) shows a double construct state. Although in theory there is no limit to the number of possible coordinated components in a construct state if the juxtaposition is maintained, very long strings of synthetic genitive are almost null in the primary data; strings that count more than three elements are usually interrupted by employing an AG construction (see further in this section).

In the synthetic genitive phrase, nothing can come between the noun and the modifier, except for the definite article or a demonstrative pronoun, e.g., šaʿar haḍī l-bint ‘the hair of this girl’—considered to be in apposition to the lexical item it precedes.

In the al-ʿAwābī district vernacular, it is possible to use the synthetic genitive construction for the following categories: alienable possession, such as in example (19) above, and inalienable possession, e.g., yad el-bint ‘the girl’s hand’; naming, e.g., madīnat ir-rustāq ‘the town of Rustaq’, where the first noun is a geographical noun and the second is a proper noun; container-contents, e.g., fīgān qahwa ‘a cup of coffee’ and not ‘a coffee cup’, or example (20) above, where the first is a noun
denoting an object and the second is a noun of substance;\textsuperscript{13} and material, e.g., ḥātim ḏāhab ‘a gold ring’, where the first is a concrete noun and the second is a noun of material. The primary data, however, show that for the latter category, the syntethic genitive and AG constructions are interchangeable irrespective of age, provenance, or level of education of the speaker, e.g., ḥātim māl ḏāhab ‘a gold ring’.

The synthetic genitive construction is always considered definite, if the second term of the annexation is determined, as in examples (19)–(21), and in the genitive relations of alienable/inalienable possession and naming. In the genitive relations of container-content and material, instead, the synthetic genitive can also be indefinite.

Another common example of synthetic genitive is the relationship of possession expressed through the possessive pronouns (see ch. 3, §1.2.3). Nouns that have “inherent possession”—in Payne’s (1997, 105) terminology—use this type of construction. These include body parts, kinship, and terms referring to personal adornments, e.g., bint-i ‘my daughter’; yad-iš ‘your (FSG) hand; kumm-o ‘his kumma (Omani hat)’.

The second type of possessive construction sees the use of genitive markers or exponents, i.e., grammaticalised nouns expressing ‘property’ or ‘ownership’, and it is known in the literature as the analytic genitive. Eksell-Harning (1980, 10–11)

\textsuperscript{13} Watson (1993, 183) defines this genitive relation as “genitive of description,” which are usually indefinite: “the sense of genitive of description can be rendered attributively by making the modifier a relational (nisbah) or other adjective.”
states that “modern Arabic dialects show a tendency towards an analytic language structure,” probably caused by the loss of the case endings and, in some cases, by the reduction of the categories of number and gender. The AG is, indeed, found throughout the Arabic-speaking world, although different dialects use different genitive exponents with different functions, scope, and limitations. In most of the dialects, both synthetic and analytic genitive constructions are used, “and the choice between them creates a dynamic process of language development” (Eksell-Harning 1980, 11).

According to the classification made by Eksell-Harning (1980, 158) in her comparative study, Omani Arabic varieties belong to the second group of dialects, where the AG occurs sporadically, the semantic categories of the AG cannot be structured, and formal factors are decisive for the choice of the AG. However, Eksell-Harning’s sources for Oman were mainly Reinhardt (1894) for the northern part, and Rhodokanakis (1908, 1911)\(^{14}\) for Dhofar, whereas more recent studies show different behaviours of genitive exponents in both areas.

The Omani dialects for which we have documentation present three main markers, all derived from nouns expressing possession and ownership in some way: in Dhofar, according to Davey (2016), ʰaqq ‘right, entitlement’ and ᵐᵃˡ ‘property’ are of common occurrence, with no difference in use or function;\(^{15}\) a

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\(^{14}\) These works have not been used as sources for this study, since Davey (2016) gives a much more reliable and recent account of the Arabic dialect spoken in Dhofar today.

\(^{15}\) Taking into consideration Eksell-Harning’s use of Rhodokanakis (1908, 1911) as source for Dhofari Arabic, Davey (2016, 228) states:
third type is ḥāl ‘state’, reported also by Reinhardt (1894) and of common occurrence in the primary data presented in this study. The main problem with Reinhardt’s (1894, 79) description of genitive markers is that, despite stating that ḥāl and māl are häufig ‘common’, they both appear very sporadically in the texts reported at the end of his work. The German scholar adds other grammaticalised terms apparently used as genitive markers in his informants’ speech. These are the APs rāy/rāyāt ‘seeing’, šāhib ‘owner’, and bū < اب ‘father’. The latter is also used as a relative pronoun. With the sole exceptions of ḥāl and māl, and partly of bū, none of the other markers reported by Reinhardt occur in the primary data.

Based on the primary data, the most common exponents in use are indeed ḥāl and māl. However, only māl conveys a genitive function, whereas ḥāl is instead syntactically a preposition used to convey a completely different type of relation in this dialect.

In contrast with Dhofari Arabic, ḥāl and māl are indeclinable forms, which means that they do not agree in gender and number with the noun they refer to, acting merely as linkers between the noun (N) and the modifier (M).

The phrase with an exponent usually follows this construction: N + māl / ḥāl + M, e.g., dišdaša māl ir-riggāl ‘a men’s dishdasha’; hadīya ḥāl Nūr ‘the gift for Nur’. The modifier, as in

“the current data in this study does indeed reveal that the AGC [analytic genitive construction] is far more common in CDA [coastal Dhofari Arabic] than was previously thought, and can express a variety of different possessive relationships”.
the case of the synthetic genitive, can be another noun, a participle, an adjective, a numeral, or an infinitive—and it is definite.

Examples with an indefinite modifier are rare in the primary data, but they can be found, for example, in the categories of material, e.g., ḥigāb māl ḥarīr ‘a silk hijab’, and of non-possessive qualification, e.g., example (25) below. This type of relationship can also be found in Sample Text 2—provided in the Appendix of this study—‘yṣṭi māl gebel ‘my life in the mountains’. The latter example is particularly interesting because the term gebel seems to convey characterisation and certainly not possession. Using this phrase, the speaker intends to draw attention to the type of life he will talk about, i.e., the part of his life spent in the mountains. In these cases—although quite rare in the primary data—the exponent conveys a relationship not of possession, but rather of description or qualification.

Similarly, this type of relationship is conveyed by the genitive marker māl in expressions of professions and specialisation, e.g., duktur māl wasm ‘doctor of traditional medicine’, brofesūr māl l-adab il-ingrīziyya ‘professor of English literature’.

Brustad (2000) identifies formal and pragmatic factors that come into play when the speaker needs to choose between the synthetic genitive and the AG construction. Among the formal motivations, Brustad (2000, 74) considers “multi-term annexation (three or more nouns), the presence of modifying adjectives and parallel phrases with more than one head noun.” This is consistent with the primary data presented in this study,
where \textit{māl} can be used to cut the line of coordinated items in a construct phrase, as in

\begin{align*}
(23) \quad \textit{maktab il-qabūl} \quad \textit{māl el-madrasa} \\
\text{office.SG \ DEF-admission.SG \ GEN \ DEF-school.FSG}
\end{align*}

‘The admission office of the school’ [S7]

Furthermore, the genitive exponent is preferred with foreign loanwords:

\begin{align*}
(24) \quad \textit{instagram māl-iš} \\
\text{Instagram \ GEN-PRON.2FSG}
\end{align*}

‘Your Instagram profile’ [S5]

\begin{align*}
(25) \quad \textit{raqm-o māl whatsapp} \\
\text{number.SG-PRON.3MSG \ GEN \ WhatsApp}
\end{align*}

‘His WhatsApp number’ [S9]

With nouns ending with a long vowel:

\begin{align*}
(26) \quad \textit{kursī māl-i} \\
\text{sofa.SG \ GEN-PRON.1SG}
\end{align*}

‘My sofa’ [S7]

\begin{align*}
(27) \quad \textit{gūṭī māl-iš} \\
\text{shoe.SG \ GEN-PRON.2FSG}
\end{align*}

‘Your shoe’ [S12]

and when the AG noun phrase is in predicative position within a nominal clause, e.g., \textit{ḥaḍī is-siyyāra māl-i} ‘this car is mine’.\footnote{See current chapter, §2.1 for more details on nominal clauses.}

Words of foreign origin may or may not take the genitive marker: nouns like \textit{tilifūn} ‘telephone’ or \textit{tittūn} ‘toddler’\footnote{The form \textit{tittūn} is a Swahili loanword.} seem to
prefer a synthetic genitive construction, e.g., *tilifūn-iš ‘your (FSG) phone’, *titūn-he ‘her toddler’. A possible explanation is that they are treated by the speaker as inalienable possessions and behave syntactically as such.

Among the pragmatic functions of the genitive exponent, Brustad (2000, 76) argues that “the exponent places a focus on the possessing noun not conveyed by the construct phrase” (italics in the original). This statement might explain the simultaneous use of the synthetic and analytic genitive constructions also found in the primary data. Thus, for example, a phrase like *kitāb el-bint ‘the book of the girl’ can be replaced by *kitāb māl el-bint, with no apparent difference in meaning, but a difference in function: *māl emphasises the possessor, in this case the girl (bint).

This interchange in the constructions for expressing possession is valid for almost every kind of relation, except for terms having inherent possessive value, such as parts of the body and kinship. Thus, it is not possible to find in the primary data phrases like *umm māl-o ‘his mother’, but always umm-o; or like *yad māl-iš ‘your (FSG) hand’, but always yad-iš, irrespective of gender, age, provenance, or level of education of the speaker.

The exponent ḥāl, conversely, conveys a function different from that of māl. In accordance with the primary data collected, ḥāl cannot be considered a marker of genitive relation, but rather is a preposition, albeit carrying strong pragmatic values.¹⁸

¹⁸ Davey (2016, 230) reports some examples where the genitive exponents māl and ḥaqq appear to be interchangeable, “with no resulting
If *māl* is used mainly to express a genitive relation of belonging, *ḥāl* is used in contexts that indicate a benefactual relation: in all the examples found in the primary data, *ḥāl* expresses a benefit for the modifier (the second item of the annexation, as stated above) and what in English translates as ‘for, to’.

(28) *ḥado awlād ʿamm-ha šey w-bāqit ḥāl-he*

      took.3mpl  child.mpl  uncle.MSG-PRON.3FSG  something

CONJ-remain.AP  MSG  PREP-PRON.3FSG

‘Her cousins took something, and the rest was for her.’  [S1]

(29) *haḍī l-hadiya ḥāl-iš*

      DEM.PROX.FSG  DEF-present.FSG  PREP-PRON.2FSG

‘This gift is for you.’  [S7]

(30) *haḍēlā l-mšākik ḥāl el-gīrān*

      DEM.PROX.MPL  DEF-skewer.PL  PREP  DEF-neighbour.MPL

‘These skewers are for the neighbours.’  [S10]

In example (28), the speaker is talking about the division of an inheritance and *ḥāl* expresses beneficial value for the modifier (in this case represented by the possessive pronoun *-he*, ‘her’). In (30), the speaker is referring to the skewers that are traditionally brought to neighbours and relatives on the second day of Eid celebrations. We may thus presume that *ḥāl* again is intended to convey here benefit for the modifier.

change in meaning.” Whatever the case may be, this does not seem to be possible in the speech of my informants, since *māl* and *ḥāl* convey distinct functions in the primary data.
Consider the following examples, which show how *māl* and *ḥāl* are not interchangeable in the informants’ speech:

(a) هذا الكتاب مال البنَّت

\( \text{haḍā} \quad l\text{-kitāb} \quad māl \quad el\text{-bint} \)

DEM.PROX.MSG DEF-book.MSG GEN DEF-girl.FSG

‘This book belongs to the girl’

(b) هذا الكتاب حال البنَّت

\( \text{haḍā} \quad l\text{-kitāb} \quad ḥāl \quad el\text{-bint} \)

DEM.PROX.MSG DEF-book.MSG PREP DEF-girl.FSG

‘This book is for the girl’

These sentences were elicited from all the informants involved in this research. In all cases, regardless of age, provenance, or level of education, the speakers clearly used the two constructions to convey the two different functions. The same difference is found by Bettega (2019b), who states that *ḥāl* expresses a dative case in his data, thus being a marker of clausal relation rather than genitive. As far as the primary data in this study are concerned, *ḥāl* can be considered a preposition and not a genitive marker, also confuting Reinhardt’s position.19

A third, more rarely used, genitive exponent is *bū* (< *abū* ‘father’), which is also used as a relative pronoun in the primary data (for further details, see next section). Only two examples showing *bū* in its genitive functions appear in the primary data, and they were found in YS:

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19 “Dass das Genitiv-Verhältniss häufig durch die Wörter *māl* Besitz und *ḥāl* Zustand, mit Beibehaltung des Artikels umschrieben wird” (Reinhardt 1894, 79, italics in the original).
Diachronic Variation in the al-ʿAwābī Omani Arabic Vernacular

\[(31) \text{asma}^{e} \text{ eṣ-ṣawt } \text{ bū } \text{ mmi-na}^{20}\]

hear.1SG DEF-voice.SG GEN mother.FSG-PRON.1PL

‘I hear our mum’s voice.’ [S5]

\[(32) \text{es-siyyāra } \text{ bū } \text{ aḥmad}\]

DEF-car.FSG GEN Aḥmad

‘Aḥmad’s car’ [S6]

Unfortunately, the examples are not sufficiently numerous to support any theory on the use of bū as a genitive exponent, and further research is needed. From these two examples, it seems that bū can be used when the modifier is a human entity and for the categories of both alienable and inalienable possession.

Eksell-Harning (1980, 160) offers two main criteria to detect how and when the AG is preferred to the synthetic genitive: one is geographical, “in the western region the AG tends to be the ordinary way of expressing genitive,” whereas “in the east the AG is a more or less extensively used complement to the SG [synthetic genitive];” the second criterion is socio-cultural, asserting that the AG is more widespread in urban dialects and less in the rural dialects and almost completely absent in Bedouin dialects. The reason lies in the marked heterogeneity of urban environments compared to rural realities. These statements are not entirely applicable to the vernacular presented here, since, as shown in this section, the AG is very productive, as it is also in other neighbouring dialects, \(^{21}\) and it is not always used.

\(^{20}\) The form mmi-na lit. ‘our mother’ is the informal way children call their mother.

\(^{21}\) Qafisheh (1977, 117) states that the genitive exponents in Gulf Arabic ḥagg and māl are often used to avoid structural ambiguity, i.e.,
as a complement to the synthetic genitive, but rather expresses different genitive relations based on pragmatic and functional factors.

With regards to the criteria chosen for this study, no difference has been found in the use of the analytic or the synthetic construction in respect of age, gender, or level of education of the speakers involved. Moreover, no difference has been found in respect of the different geographical areas which form the al-ʿAwābī district, i.e., Wādī Banī Kharūṣ and neighbouring villages.

1.1.4. Attributive Clause

Following Watson (1993), a relative clause functions as a modifier of a noun phrase, thereby becoming an attribute of the noun phrase. In a sentence like ‘the boy who lived in the countryside’, the boy represents the head (or noun phrase) and the relative clause who lived in the countryside is the modifier (Payne 1997, 325). The head and the modifier are linked together by the relative pronoun. In the primary data, the two relative pronouns illi and bū are used; both are indeclinable.

In the construction of a relative clause, it is important to distinguish between a definite and an indefinite head noun. The relative pronouns are used only when the head noun is definite; when “both elements of a noun construct have the same gender”; ḥagg precedes “animate or inanimate nouns, while māl is used with inanimate nouns.” In Bahraini Arabic, Holes (2016, 223) finds no particular differences in the use of ḥagg and māl, except that ḥagg is “used only where the relationship was one of part-whole or purpose, and not always in these cases.”
if the head noun is indefinite, the relative clause lacks the relativiser and is unmarked.\footnote{The same is found by Davey (2016) for Dhofari Arabic and by Holes (2016) for Bahraini dialects. However, Holes (2016, 387–88) later states that “in the speech of some elderly and uneducated B-dialect speakers” other forms can be found (i.e., \textit{iladi}, \textit{illadi}, and \textit{illi}), even if they occur rarely.}

(33) \textit{zōg-he} \textit{illi} \textit{hūwa} \textit{er-raqm}

husband.MSG-PRON.3SG \textit{REL} PRON.3MSG \textit{DEF-number.SG}

\textit{arba‘a} \textit{muqaṣṣar <in> he}

four.F negligent.AP.MSG <in> PRON.3SG

‘Her husband who was the number four was negligent towards her.’  [S1]

(34) \textit{il-māy} \textit{illi} \textit{yimši \textit{fi-l-balād} gāy}

DEF-water.M \textit{REL} walk.3MSG in-DEF-village.FSG come.AP.MSG

\textit{min el-gebel}

from DEF-mountain.MSG

‘The water that flows into the village is coming from the mountain.’  [S1]

As examples (33) and (34) show, there are no restrictions on the semantic typology of the head noun to which the relative pronoun refers: in (33) the head noun designates a human entity, i.e., \textit{zōg} ‘husband’, whereas in (34) the head is a non-human noun, i.e., \textit{māy} ‘water’.

When the head noun is indefinite, the relative pronoun is omitted, and the relative clause is unmarked, as in (35).
(35) yištgil fi naḥal yīstaṭnī
work.3MSG in palm garden.FSG rent.3MSG

‘He works in a palm garden (that) he rents.’ [S2]

The relative pronoun bū is found in sedentary dialects of Oman (cf. Holes 2008), and it is rarely found in any other neighbouring Arabic dialects. In the al-ʿAwābī district, bū is used in more informal contexts and especially among YS. Reinhardt (1894, 34–35) reports bū and its negative form buššī—which never appears in the primary data—as relative pronouns; there is no trace of illī. The relative pronoun bū might well have been the more widespread form in this region at Reinhardt’s time, a fact that is also evidenced by the high occurrence of bū in Reinhardt’s texts. It is highly possible that bū is now being replaced by the more mainstream form illī due to the phenomenon of linguistic homogenisation mentioned in ch. 1, §3.0.

(36) er-riggāl bū yībīʿ al-ḥoḍarā
DEF-man.MSG REL buy.3MSG DEF-vegetable.PL

‘amm-i
uncle.MSG-PRON.1SG

‘The man who buys the vegetables is my uncle.’ [S5]

Another clue supporting bū as the original relative form of this dialect is the fact that it is also found in local proverbs:24

23 In Gulf Arabic (Qafisheh 1977), in Ṣanʿānī Arabic (Watson 1993), and in Najdi Arabic (Ingham 1994) the main relative pronoun is illī (or allaḏī).
24 The reader can find the complete list of proverbs collected in the al-ʿAwābī district in the Appendix.
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(37) bū yatkall ʿalā ǧēr-o w-qallal

rel. depend.3msg on other-pron.3msg conj-became_less.3msg

ḥēr-o
good-pron.3msg

‘Who relies on someone else loses his right’

Both illi and bū can also function as general relativisers, i.e., ‘the one who, whoever’, ‘that which’, etc. In this case, they introduce a non-attributive clause, i.e., they do not have a head noun to modify:

(38) illi yrīd yīṭlaʿ ilā l-wādī banī ḥarūṣ

rel. want.3msg go.3msg to def-wadi bani kharūṣ

mānnūʿ baʿad il-maġrib yīṭlaʿ

forbidden.pp.msg after def-sunset go.3msg

‘He who wants to go to Wādī Banī Kharūṣ is not allowed to go after the sunset.’ [S1]

(39) bū mā bāyaʿīš tšill es-samak faqaṭ

rel. neg want.ap.fsg rice take.3fsg def-fish only

‘She who doesn’t want rice takes the fish only.’ [S6]

(40) bū fī masqaṭ trūḥ ilā l-maktab

rel. in muscat go.3fsg to def.office.sg

‘Whoever is in Muscat goes to the office.’ [S9]

Neither illi nor bū show gender distinction; in (39) bū is followed by a feminine singular AP, since the question is addressed to a group made of only women.
1.2. Verb Phrase

A verb phrase is a phrase whose head is a verb. In its simple conjugated form, the verb may already contain all the information needed to complete the clause meaning—albeit a transitive verb usually needs a complement:

(a) \textit{ekāl} ‘I eat.’
(b) \textit{šribti} ‘You (FSG) drank.’

Arabic verbs have received much attention from linguists, who have tried to identify whether their binary opposition is based on temporal (i.e., past versus non-past) or aspectual (i.e., perfectivity versus imperfectivity) factors, or on a combination of the two (cf. Eisele 1999). The reality is that in modern Arabic dialects it is not always possible to draw a clear demarcation between these categories.

For a thorough analysis of TAM categories in Omani Arabic, the interested reader is referred to Bettega (2019a), who provides numerous examples from his corpus of northern Omani data and to Brustad (2000), Dahl (1985), Comrie (1976; 1985), Payne (1997), Eades and Persson (2013), and Ingham (1994), who deal either with the theory of TAM categories or how these categories apply to various Arabic dialects.

In the verb section of his description of syntax, Reinhardt (1894, 271) briefly speaks of \textit{die Tempora}, a label that seems to include both tense and aspect. Admittedly, the German author’s omission of TAM categories is understandable, firstly because these categories had not yet been thoroughly studied at his time, and secondly, because the book was merely considered teaching material and not a linguistic description as such.
Nonetheless, Reinhardt provides some useful information. He says that the *Perfect* indicates either an action completed in the past (especially in narrative contexts), an action that is taking place at the moment of speaking, or an action that will take place in the future. The latter is especially common, according to Reinhardt (1894, 271), in oaths and wishes.

The *Imperfect*, on the other hand, describes an unfinished action in the present and the future; it is often used in subordinate clauses and in narrations to express the *Unvollendete* ‘unfinished’ (cf. Reinhardt 1894, 272).

In the following subsections, I will examine the roles of each morphological VP form with supporting examples from the primary data, without the intention of going further into the debate on tense and aspect.

1.2.1. Tense, Aspect and the VP Morphology

The labels ‘s-stem’ and ‘p-stem’ introduced in ch. 3, §2.0, are often used by scholars of the field to avoid implying any temporal and/or aspectual value to the morphological verb form. These forms, however, may carry temporal and aspectual values depending on their stems and/or the context of the utterance.

The S-stem VP

The s-stem is usually employed in a VP expressing a state or an action that was completed in the past and that is not relevant to the present situation. Thus, the time value of the s-stem is past and carries a perfective aspectual value.
The following example, narrated by a middle-aged illiterate woman from Wādī Banī Kharūṣ (i.e., S2), serves as an example of how s-stem verbs (highlighted in bold) are employed in past contexts and how their perfective value is conveyed:

(41) **rūhne ilā masqat w-nasit kēf uṣalne hināk baʿadin zōgi štağal fī is-safāra al-briṭanny a w-staqar hināk hawal ṭalāṭ sanuwāt baʿadin gīne fī l-ʿawābi fī as-sabʿīnāt w-ʿayšt ʿindo fī l-ʿawābi wa ḥadd25 haḏī l-mazrʿa l-kabīra baʿadin saw-wēna bēt w-anā gubt tisaʿ awlād, ūnin māto w-bāqin sabaʿ. haḏī kānat hayyati

‘We went to Muscat, I forgot how we arrived there. Then my husband worked at the British embassy, and he stayed there for about three years. Then we came to al-ʿAwābī in the Seventies, and I lived with him in al-ʿAwābī and I took this big palm garden. Then we built a house. I had nine children, two died and seven have remained. This was my life.’ [S2]

In (41) the speaker lists a sequence of events which are all connected one after the other by the adverb baʿadin (‘then’). The actions expressed by the VPs in (41) are all punctual, in that they start and finish in the past with no repercussions in the present state of events. In narrative past contexts of this kind, the s-stem is always preferred. Here are two more examples of narrative past:

25 This form is the result of the assimilation of the /t/ suffix in خذت ‘I took’.
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(42) marra wāḥid surt ‘ind awlād-i
time one.MSG went.1SG to child/MPL-PRON.1SG
w-ṣarrraft il-makān w-rigaʿt
CONJ-visited.1SG DEF-place.MSG CONJ-came_back.1SG

‘Once I went to my children, I visited the place, and I came back.’ [S8]

(43) darast fi-l-gāmiʿa sultān qābūs w-baʿadīn
studied.1SG at-DEF-university.MSG Sultan Qaboos CONJ-then
ruḥt ilā bahrain w-galast hunāk sitte ašhūr
went.1SG to Bahrain CONJ-stayed.1SG there six.MSG month/MPL

‘I studied at Sultan Qaboos University and then I went to Bahrain, and I stayed there for six months.’ [S6]

According to primary data, the s-stem always appears in this context, although other uses are possible in different peninsular dialects (cf. Holes 2016).

The P-stem VP

For its part, the p-stem form is employed to describe an action as incomplete, carrying an imperfective aspectual value. This incomplete action can be depicted as durative, continuous, or habitual.

P-stem conveying durative action:

(44) aʿyš maʿ uḥt-i wa umm-i
live.1SG with sister.MSG-PRON.1SG CONJ mother.MSG-PRON.1SG

‘I live with my sister and my mother.’ [S9]

In (44), the speaker is talking about a situation—i.e., living with her mother and sister—that started prior to the time of the ut-
terance and it will continue for the time being. The action expressed by the p-stem ʼayš is therefore *durative*.

P-stem conveying continuous action:

الصغيرين يلعبو خارج (45)

\[\text{is-ṣaḡīrīn yalʿabo ḫārig} \]

DEF-small.MPL play.3MPL outside

‘The kids are playing outside.’ [S5]

In (45), the p-stem yalʿabo expresses an action that is simultaneous to the time of the utterance, since the kids are in the process of playing. The VP, therefore, depicts *continuous* action.

P-stem conveying a habitual action:

(46) *kill yōm azūr gīrān-i w-ašrub*

every day.MSG visit.1SG neighbour.MPL-PRON.1SG CONJ-drink.1SG

\[\text{qahwa maʿ-hum w-baʿadīn arga`} l-bēt} \]

coffee with-PRON.3MPL CONJ-then go_back.1SG DEF-house.MSG

\[\text{w-(IConfiguration) el-ḡadā ḥāl is-ṣaḡīrīn} \]

CONJ-cook.1SG DEF-lunch for DEF-small.MPL

‘Everyday I visit my neighbours and drink coffee with them. Then I go back home and cook lunch for the kids.’ [S7]

In (46) the speaker is describing her daily routine; therefore, the actions can be depicted as *habitual*.

The p-stem, contrary to the s-stem, does not have a default time reference: it can refer to the present, to the past and to the future. Consider these examples:
In (48), the speaker is telling the story of a woman whose husband mistreated her. The s-stem ašbاه sets the story time in the past, but the p-stem verbs bring the story forward, describing a set of habitual actions that lasted for some time. In this sense, the habitual function of the p-stem is also maintained in past context. Further evidence of the past context is given by the negative marker lā, which in the primary data negates only the s-stem or the past tense.26

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26 Negation in the al-ʿAwābī district is discussed in ch. 4, §3.0.
Brustad (2000, 186) calls the use of the p-stem in past context “historical present” and says that it arises from the need of the speaker “to be as close as possible to the audience.” Something similar is mentioned by Holes (2016, 239), when he says that “the p-stem is often used to give a sense of drama and immediacy when narrating past events.” Switching between verb forms in storytelling and narrations is also used by speakers to differentiate between actions in the background and actions that move the story forward.\(^{27}\)

Often, the time reference of the p-stem is supported by the context of the utterance and/or the presence of an adjoining word, e.g., a temporal adverb, such as *bukra* ‘tomorrow’ in (48).

The AP

In the debate on tense and aspect in modern Arabic vernaculars, the AP plays a leading role, being the most disputed issue. Due to its nature intermediate between noun and verb, scholars have long argued over its temporal and aspectual values. For a thorough analysis of tense and aspect of the AP in Omani and Gulf Arabic, the interested reader is referred to the works by Bettega (2019a) and Eades and Persson (2013).

In the primary data, the AP commonly appears in everyday speech and narrative discourse with the whole spectrum of time values, i.e., past, present and future. Reinhardt’s contribution to the role of the AP in the dialect spoken by his informants is that it often carries an adjectival value, as in *ir-riggāl māyt* ‘the man is dead’ (Reinhardt 1894, 272). This holds true for the

\(^{27}\) On this see also, Brustad (2000), Holes (2016), and Persson (2015).
primary data, where the AP of stative verbs may have the syntactic role of an adjective, also in accordance with Eades and Persson (2013), e.g., *el-bint nāyma* ‘the girl is asleep/is sleeping’.

With present time reference, the AP usually behaves as a normal adjective, as in (49), indicating an action simultaneous to the utterance time:\(^{28}\)

\[(49)\]  
\[\text{in-naḥil} \quad \text{kibār} \quad w-\text{šweyya} \quad \text{min-hin} \quad \text{ʿāyšāt}\]  
\[\text{DEF-palms.\text{fpl}} \quad \text{big.\text{pl}} \quad \text{CONJ-a.few.\text{fsg}} \quad \text{of-pron.3\text{fpl}} \quad \text{live.\text{ap.fpl}}\]  

‘The palms are old and only a few of them are living’ (Morano 2020, 119)

In the example above, the AP ʿāyšāt presents strict agreement with the head in-naḥil ‘the palms’, as a normal adjective.

The AP is also found in the primary data with past and future time reference. Consider the following examples:

\[(50)\]  
\[\text{abū-ya} \quad \text{rigaḍ} \quad \text{ʿumān} \quad \text{fī-s-sabʿināt}\]  
\[\text{father-pron.1\text{sg}} \quad \text{came\_back.3\text{msg}} \quad \text{Oman} \quad \text{in-\text{def-seventies}}\]  
\[\text{w-ṣāyd} \quad \text{es-surṭān} \quad \text{fa-taṭawwur}\]  
\[\text{CONJ-help.\text{ap.msg}} \quad \text{DEF-sultan.\text{msg}} \quad \text{CONJ-advanced.3\text{msg}}\]  
\[\text{w-banā} \quad \text{ʿumān}\]  
\[\text{CONJ-built.3\text{msg}} \quad \text{Oman}\]  

‘My father came back to Oman in the Seventies and has helped the Sultan to advance and build the country.’  
[S12]

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\(^{28}\) More examples are given in Morano (2020).
When used in past contexts, as in (50), the AP often expresses an action that is relevant to the present time of the utterance. Therefore, whilst all the main VPs in (50) are in the s-stem, the action of ‘helping’ to build the new Oman is expressed by means of the AP sāyd. By doing so, the speaker moves the attention to the fact that Oman is the way it is today thanks in part to her father.

Example (51) shows the AP in a future time reference. This is found especially with the AP of motion verbs and is always accompanied by a temporal adverb.

The aspectual value associated with the AP is ‘perfect’, assigning to a past state some relevance with respect to the time of the utterance. When talking about aspect and AP, we cannot disregard the concepts of lexical aspect (or Aktionsart) and telicity, the former being the internal temporal constituency of verbal predicates and the latter being an inherent quality of VPs whose action or state may (or may not) lead to a conclusion.\(^29\)

In the primary data, the AP can convey either a perfect or an imperfective aspect, and never the perfective one.

\(^{29}\) Not many works to date deal with these concepts in Peninsular dialects. Nevertheless, the reader may find interesting the discussion on Aktionsart and telicity in GA and NA, respectively by Eades and Persson (2013) and Ingham (1994).
The recent work by Bettega (2019a), which analyses a corpus of 2200 verbs in Omani Arabic, found that 11.6 percent of it consisted of APs. Of these, he found that the number of participles of telic and atelic verbs were almost the same (i.e., 130 and 119 respectively), demonstrating that the AP does not privilege one type of verb stem over the other.

The AP of telic verbs like qarā ‘to read’ can bear only perfect aspect in the primary data, since it can only give the resultant reading ‘having read’ and indicates a past that has some relevance to the present time of the utterance (cf. Brustad 2000, 171).

However, telic stative verbs can also have a progressive reading in this dialect, i.e., concomitant with the time of the utterance, if accompanied by the semi-grammaticalised \(^{30}\) AP form of the verb galas ‘sit, stay’, i.e., gālis / gālsa / gālsin / gālsāt, followed by the p-stem verb (Morano 2020, 117):

\[
\text{(52) gālsa aqrā l-qurān taww, baʻad ʻašar} \\
\text{sit.AP.FSG read.1SG DEF-quran now after ten.M} \\
\text{daqāyq arūḥ ilā l-maṭbāḥ} \\
\text{minute.FPL go.1SG to DEF-kitchen} \\
\text{‘I am reading the Quran now; I will go to the kitchen in ten minutes.’}
\]

\(^{30}\) Grammaticalisation is the phenomenon by which words representing objects or actions, i.e., nouns and verbs, further develop as grammatical markers. The use of gālis as a marker of continuous aspect is well known in the Gulf area, as well as in other Arabic dialects (cf. Caubet 1991, for North African dialects).
(53) *gālis*  *ašūf*  *il-aḥbār*  *taww*  
sit.AP.MSG  see.1SG  DEF-news.PL  now

‘I am watching the news now.’

(54) *gālsa*  *abḥat*  *dawra*  *l-gāmiʿa*  
sit.AP.FSG  search.1SG  course.FSG  DEF-university.FSG

*mutaza*  *lākin*  *gāli*  *giddan*  
excellent.FSG  but  expensive.MSG  very

‘I am (still) searching for a good university course, but it is very expensive.’ [S3]

In all examples, the AP of *galas* is followed by the p-stem form that agrees in gender and number with the subject. All these AP forms can be translated as ‘I am sitting and reading the Quran’, ‘I am sitting and watching the news’, and ‘I am sitting and searching’, i.e., as two simultaneous actions conveying continuous aspect. The verb *šāf* in (53) is an atelic action verb that cannot convey a progressive reading without the AP *gālis/gālsa*.

To sum up, in the primary data, the AP can have two main readings, i.e., either resultant or progressive, and therefore can be associated only with the ‘perfect’ or ‘imperfective’ aspects. According to the primary data, though, the ‘perfect’ aspect can only be related to the AP when it conveys a resultant reading; whereas when it conveys a progressive reading, the AP carries the ‘imperfective’ aspect. This reading depends on the combination of the Aktionsart of the verb involved and on the semantic properties of the verb in a given context.

In the primary data, APs of motion verbs tend to convey a progressive reading: AP forms such as *gāy* ‘come’ and *māši* ‘walk’ in all cases—regardless of age, provenance, or level of
education of the speaker involved—convey progressive meaning. By contrast, telic motion verbs give a resultant reading in the primary data. Consider these examples, which show how telicity can affect the aspectual values of motion verbs:

\[(55)\] sāyir marṭīn li l-mustāšfi
\[\text{go.AP.MSG twice.DL to DEF-hospital.FSG}\]
‘I have been twice to the hospital.’ [S8]

\[(56)\] ṭāyḥa ilā l-dikkān
\[\text{go.AP.FSG to DEF-shop.MSG}\]
‘I am going to the shop.’ [S11]

*Sār* in (55) is a telic motion verb, whereas ṭāḥ in (56) is an atelic motion verb. In the first case, the AP ṣāyir indicates a resultant state: the speaker has already been to the hospital, and he is seeking help in order not to go back there again. In the second case, the AP ṭāyḥa conveys a progressive reading and a continuous state relating to the present time of the utterance. In the primary data, there is no evidence of AP of ṭāḥ with a resultant meaning.\(^{31}\)

Interestingly, Reinhardt (1894, 276) states that the dialect he describes employs three main strategies to indicate *im Begriffe sein* ‘being in the process of’: (a) the simple AP; (b) the Imperfect (i.e., p-stem verb); and (c) the AP bāģi. The latter, especially, is used—according to Reinhardt (1894, 226)—with the meaning of ‘about to be’ and therefore ‘be in the process of becoming’, as in this example: ṣṣēf ḥāḏum ‘ād bāći yindēg ‘the fruit

\(^{31}\) This is also noted by Brustad (2000, 170), who confirms that the verb ṭāḥ “cannot give a resultant meaning in some dialects.”
already has seeds, it is about to be ripe’ (Reinhardt 1894, 226). A more detailed analysis of the AP form bāği in this dialect can be found in the next section. It seems, however, that in Reinhardt it keeps that futurity value which is at the origin of the verbal prefix b(i)-.

The aspectual value of ‘progress’ or ‘being in the process of something’ seems to be a feature of the AP of motion and stative verbs in the informants’ speech, as exemplified so far.

1.2.2. Mood

Mood is a complex category in dialectal Arabic. Modern Arabic dialects show different structures and forms to express mood.

Payne (1997, 244) defines ‘mood’ as “the speaker’s attitude towards a situation, including the speaker’s belief in its reality.” Thus, ‘mood’ can be intended as the belief of the speaker that the event is possible, necessary, or desirable. And in order to express this belief, VPs in the primary data may present a verbal prefix or the speaker may employ some modal verbs and expressions conveying ‘potentiality’, ‘obligation’, and ‘desire’ (see ch. 4, §1.2.5).

Amongst the unmarked moods (i.e., verbs with zero prefixes), the primary data show the indicative and the imperative. The indicative is used for statements and questions, whereas the imperative is used for commands or requests.

Consider these examples:
(57) *tridi samak aw laḥam?*

want.2fsg fish.msg conj meat.msg

‘Do you want fish or meat?’ [S4]

(58) *il-ḥarīm yiṭbaḥen fi-l-masā*

def-woman.fpl cook.3fpl in-def-evening

‘The women cook in the evening.’ [S14]

(59) *ḥabbir-ni*

inform.imp.2msg-pron.1sg

‘Tell me!’ [S14]

1.2.3. Verbal Prefixes

Admittedly, dialects of the Arabian Peninsula tend to show minor use of verbal prefixes to indicate mood—compared, for example, to Syrian or Egyptian dialects. The most common of these prefixes and, probably, the most debated in the literature for its disputed modal values is *b(i)‑*. The verbal *b*-prefix has been extensively investigated in the literature: numerous studies recognise it as a marker of future or condition in many Arabic dialects (cf. Brockett 1985; Ingham 1994; Brustad 2000; Eades and Persson 2013; Persson 2015; Holes 2016; Davey 2016).

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32 Cf. Brustad (2000, 241): “Kuwaiti, on the other hand, will receive less attention, because its modal system does not make extensive use of verbal prefixes”; and also, Persson (2008, 29): “The dialects of the Arabian Peninsula, however, are comparatively poor in terms of modal or temporal markers.” Further on, she also states that “the temporal and modal system of Gulf Arabic appears to be quite rudimentary” (Persson 2008, 29).
In his analysis of a corpus of 2200 Omani verbs, Bettega (2019a) finds 302 occurrences of prefixed p-stem forms, the majority of which are prefixed by \( b(i) \)- and are used without an inherent modal value, but instead convey future time reference. The \( b(i) \)- prefix finds itself in a very blurred position between time reference and mood. This prefix often seems to carry a modal value of intention and volition, mainly because it is the result of the grammaticalisation of the root *BĠY ‘to want’,\(^{33}\) ultimately having undergone phonological reduction to become \( bi \)-. Undeniably, the distinction between futurity and intention is not always clear-cut, as also reported by Bettega (2019a) and Persson (2008, 40), the latter of whom rightly states that “intention often comes with a tint of futurity.” In their analysis of p-stem verbs prefixed by \( b(i) \)- in Omani and Gulf Arabic, respectively, both Bettega and Persson find that the occurrence of a predicate introduced by \( b(i) \)- and not expressing futurity is rare, and often found only in narrative discourse.

Davey (2016) reports that the prefix \( ba \)- in Costal Dhofari Arabic is often used for reference to the future, but that it can imply a modal quality if prefixed to \( kān/yikūn \) ‘be’. In the primary data, though, this does not seem to happen and when used in future contexts, this prefix conveys a future that is intentionally planned or about whose occurrence there is some degree of certainty. Nevertheless, the \( bi \)-prefix in the primary data also appears in non-future contexts, especially in condi-

tional clauses. It never appears as a prefix in the indicative mood.

The following examples demonstrate b- as a future marker:

(60) bitgiyi ʿars manāl?
      FUT.come.2FSG wedding.MSG Manal

‘Are you coming to Manal’s wedding?’ [S11]

(61) bgī l-bēt li-sāʿa ṭnāʿaš taqrīban
      FUT.arrive.1SG DEF-home.MSG PREP-hour twelve about

‘I will be home around twelve.’ [S5]

The difference in use between the p-stem verb alone and the b(i)-prefixed p-stem to express futurity in the primary data seems to be the planning or the likelihood of the future event happening: the b-prefix is used when the future event is planned or is about to happen, whereas a general future is indicated by the bare p-stem verb. In (61), for example, the speaker is giving a specific time of arrival, i.e., around 12 o’clock on the following day.

Consider this example:

(62) il-awlād yygio bukra maʿa l-banāt
      DEF-child.MPL arrive.3MPL tomorrow with DEF-girl.FPL

‘The children will arrive tomorrow with the girls.’ [S12]

Here, the speaker employs a ‘plain future’ expressed by the p-stem verb. The future time reference is inferable only on the basis of the presence of the temporal adverb bukra ‘tomorrow’. In contrast to (61), the speaker in (62) is not given a spe-
cific time. Therefore, ‘the children’ can potentially arrive at any point during the following day.

In addition to $b(i)-$, other verbal prefixes found in Omani Arabic and partially in the primary data are $rah$ and $ha-$, which are both used as a modal marker of future or realis/irrealis and prefixed to the p-stem verb. The verbal markers $rah$ and $ha-$ are attested in other Arabic varieties (i.e., Levantine, Egyptian, and some Gulf dialects; Brustad 2000, 241), and the latter, especially, is reported by Reinhardt (1894, 149) as the only prefix for the future in the Banū Kharūṣī vernacular. In the primary data collected and presented in this section, very few occurrences of $rah$ or $ha-$ have been found.

(63) رح أكون هناك في ديسمبر

\[
\begin{align*}
rah & \quad akūn \quad hunāk \quad fi \quad dīcimber \\
\text{FUT} & \quad \text{be.1SG} \quad \text{there} \quad \text{in December}
\end{align*}
\]

‘I will be there in December.’ [S5]

The verbal prefix $rah$ is generally used as a marker of future in northern Oman (cf. Holes 1989; 2008), but in the primary data appears rarely.

The only occurrence of the $ha$-prefix is in the apodosis of a conditional clause, expressing a realis condition:
In (64) the speaker is telling a story about one of the Imams of Wādī Banī Kharūṣ—Warith Ben Ka’ab—famous for moving objects and stones. Given the lack of other reliable examples, it is not possible at this stage to provide a full analysis of the ḥa-prefix in this (or other) Omani dialects, whether in a future or in a conditional context.34

Persson (2008) analyses the occurrence of the b-prefix and raḥ in Gulf Arabic and finds that raḥ is hardly ever used in a non-future context, whereas bi- is very extensively used in conditional clauses. The fact that the b-prefix functions both as a future and a conditional marker is explained by Persson (2008, 44), who remarks that “futures also often have a conditional trait in the sense that their fulfilment often depends on certain conditions.” In the primary data presented in this study, we will see that the bi-prefix is used only in the first type of conditional clause—i.e., the one expressing a realis condition—supporting the modal value of b(i)- in the informants’ speech.

34 However, the interested reader can find further insights in Persson (2008).
1.2.4. The Case of bāġi/bāya ‘want’

Ingham (1994, 93) classifies bāği as a dynamic atelic verb, since in Najdi Arabic it cannot be used as an AP. In the primary data, however, the AP of the stative verb bāği is extremely common and therefore deserves some analysis.

Interestingly, the AP bāği shows the feminine counterpart bāya ‘want’, which represents the only gender differentiation found in the primary data. The form bāya—used exclusively by women—lacks a complete verbal conjugation and can be used only in contexts where the AP is acceptable, whereas the verb bāği presents s-stem and p-stem forms, i.e., bāği/yibğa.

One possible etymology of the AP bāya is the verb abā/yabī ‘want’, commonly found in the Arabic dialects of North Africa and the Levant (cf. Owens 2018). The fact that Retsö (2014) states that the ba-prefix found in South Arabia most likely developed from the verb abā rather than the verb bağā (realised in the ditrict as [bģī]) can be seen as evidence of the once widespread use of abā in the southern Arabian Peninsula (or at least parts of southern Oman). Moreover, the simultaneous occurrence in Oman of bāği, bāya, and the b-prefix—which all have different syntactic functions—supports this idea.

The primary data show various verbal predicates to mean ‘want’:

\[(65) \text{trīdı tūkli šey? lā, mā bāya} \]

\[
\text{want.2FSG eat.2FSG thing NEG NEG want.AP.FSG}
\]

‘Do you want to eat something? No, I don’t (want to).’

[S5]
The same question could instead be posed using the verb bġī, i.e., tibġī tūkli šey?, without any difference in meaning and the answer would still be the same. For example, the formulation lā, mā arīd is acceptable in the answer, but several people I talked to in al-‘Awābī told me that if I wanted to sound like an Omani from al-‘Awābī, I had to use the form bāya to express ‘want’ (or, of course, bāği for a male).

The forms bāği and bāya are modal in that they are often used to express a wish or desire, although modality is expressed through their syntactic function rather than their morphological AP form.

The time reference of the APs bāği/bāya is usually present, expressing a state of ‘wanting, desiring’ something simultaneous to the utterance time:

(66) wāgid bāya arūḥ ma‘-kin bas il-yōm

much want.AP,FSG go.1SG with-PRON.2FPL but DEF-day.MSG

mašgūla min el-‘aṣr lēn is-sā‘at ‘ašar

busy_PP,FSG from DEF-afternoon until DEF-hour,FSG ten.M

il-masā

DEF-evening

‘I really want to go with you but today I am busy from the afternoon until 10 pm.’ [S12]

(67) bāya duwā wa mā arūm arūḥ ilā

want.AP,FSG medicine,FSG CONJ NEG can.1SG go.1SG to

ṣ-ṣaydīliya

DEF-pharmacy,FSG

‘I want a medicine, but I cannot go to the pharmacy.’ [S7]
In both (66) and (67), the AP indicates a strong desire or a need
for something. It expresses a state of wanting simultaneous to
the utterance time. In the following example, bāya is used to
express a wish:

\[(68) \text{bāya} \quad \text{arūḥ} \quad \text{lākin} \quad \text{mā} \quad \text{‘ind-i} \quad \text{waqt} \]
want.AP.FSG go.1SG but NEG to-PRON.1SG time.MSG

‘I would like to go, but I don’t have time.’ [S9]

In the example above, the AP bāya conveys the speaker’s state
of ‘wishing’ to be able to go, but the wish cannot be fulfilled be-
cause the speaker does not have enough time to go with the
others.

Morphologically, as the above examples show, both bāği
and bāya are followed by the conjugated p-stem verb:

\[(69) \text{bāya} \quad \text{tisma‘} \quad \text{kill} \quad \text{šey} \quad \text{‘ind-ik} \]
want.AP.FSG hear.3FSG every thing to-PRON.2MSG

‘She wants to hear everything you have (to say).’ [S11]

\[(70) \text{awlād-o} \quad \text{bāgin} \quad \text{yibi‘o} \quad \text{il-hōš} \]
child.MPL-PRON.3MSG want.AP.MPL sell.3MPL DEF-goats.COLL

‘His children want to sell the goats.’ [S15]
The AP bāği be-
haves in the same way.

It is only used by men\(^{35}\) to convey a wish or a desire, as in:

---

\(^{35}\) Both examples (71) and (72) were elicited from male speakers. One
was university-educated 32-year-old from Stāl in Wādī Banī Kharūṣ.
The other was illiterate, aged about 55 from al-‘Awābī. Both belonged
to the al-Kharūṣī tribe. They are not on the list of speakers provided in
ch. 1, §8.1, because they were employed for the sole purpose of eliciting
the AP form of bāği.
(71) turīd ʿīš lā, mā bāģī
want.2MSG rice NEG NEG want.AP.MSG
‘Do you want rice? No, I don’t want it.’

(72) bāģī arūḥ ilā d-dikkān
want.AP.MSG go.1SG to DEF-shop.MSG
‘I’d like to go to the shop’

In contrast with abā, the verb bģī shows a verbal conjugation and can be used in both s-stem and p-stem:

(73) qāl haḏī ṣaḡīra, mā abģ-ha
said.3MSG DEM.PROX.FSG small.FSG NEG want.1SG-PRON.3FSG
‘He said, “She is young, I don’t want her.”’ [S1]

(74) aqūl-l-iš anā mā abģ-ak
say.1SG-to-PRON.2FSG PRON.1SG NEG want.1SG-PRON.2MSG
w-ṭallaq-ni
CONJ-divorce.IMP-PRON.1SG
‘I tell you, I don’t want you, divorce me!’ [S2]

The conjugated verb bģī can be used, as shown in (73) and (74), both by men and women, as can the verb arād, e.g., anā mā arīd-l-iš ‘I don’t want you’ (FSG). From the samples collected, it seems that there is a tendency among high school- and university-educated speakers to prefer arād over bģī, e.g., examples (65) and (71). I noticed that it was more frequently used in formal contexts and in YS, whereas OS and speakers with little access to education in general prefer bģī, also in questions. At present it is not possible to assess for sure if the alternation between arād and bģī depends more on syntactical or sociolinguistic factors. It seems, however, that in all the syntactic contexts where
the AP is acceptable—as per previous discussion—the forms bāği and bāya are preferred. Moreover, since the VP bģī/yibğa can be used by both men and women, it seems that the gender distinction in speakers applies only to the participial forms of these predicates.

1.2.5. Auxiliaries and Modal Expressions

In the primary data, the most frequently used modal verbs and expressions include lāzim ‘it is necessary, must’, yiḥtāg ‘it needs’, rām/yrūm ‘be able to’, qadar/yiqdar ‘can’. In addition to these, there are also auxiliaries that support the predicate in expressing its modal values.

kān/ykūn ‘be, exist’

We have already seen the role of kān as a copula in ch. 3, §2.8.

As an auxiliary, kān modifies the aspect and tense in nominal clauses, when accompanied by a p-stem verb:

(75) mā ḥad kān yištiġil yōm ṭwōfī

NEG person was.3MSG work.3MSG day.FSG died.3MSG

abū-hum

father.MSG-PRON.3MPL

‘None of them used to work when their father died.’ [S1]
We have already seen how the p-stem VP is employed in past contexts to express the habitual past. In these contexts, the auxiliary kān can recur at the beginning of the narration as an aspect/tense marker, as in (75), (76) and (77). Once the main story line has been set in the past at the beginning of the narration, the p-stem verb can be found even without repeating the auxiliary, as in (77).

Similar combinations of kān and the p-stem are not new to Arabic and are also found in CA and MSA (cf. Haak 2006).

However, the combination of kān followed by a s-stem verb is rarer. The primary data offers one example uttered by an illiterate AS:

---

36 Examples (75) and (76) also show a different realisation of the 3MSG yištaġal ‘he works’: in Wādī Banī Kharūṣ there is no imāla, whereas in al-ʿAwābī there is.

37 On the auxiliary kān as an aspect marker, see also Persson (2015).
In (78), the speaker infers a possibility that ended at some point in the past: one could walk to Bahrain, but now it is no longer possible. More data on this subject are needed to be able to assess if this construction is still productive or used only sporadically. Suffice to say that I have found only one example here in 15 hours of recordings.

The syntactic construction of modal verbs and auxiliaries embedding s-stem verbs is unusual, but can be found, for example, in Levantine Arabic (cf. Brustad 2000; Wilmsen 2015). In the district of al-ʿAwābī asyndetically juxtaposed s-stem verbs are rare, but the primary data offer a few examples. Here is one with the verb nsī ‘forget’ in its auxiliary function:38

(79) نسيت اشترى حليب للصغيرين

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{nasīt} & \text{iṣtrīt} & \text{ḥalīb} & \text{li-ṣ-ṣāgīrin} \\
\text{forgot.1SG} & \text{bought.1SG} & \text{milk} & \text{to-DEF-small MPL} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘I forgot to buy the milk for the kids.’ [S10]

38 When nsī does not function as an auxiliary in the sentence, it is usually followed by a p-stem verb in asyndentic construction, as in nsīt arīd ṭūb gedīd li-l-ʿīd ‘I forgot I wanted a new dress for Eid’ [S9].
lāzim ‘necessary, must’

lāzim is an impersonal modal expression, used to express ‘necessity’ or ‘obligation’. It is an old AP form which underwent grammaticalisation in CA. It does not conjugate, thus the p-stem verb which follows it carries the grammatical functions (i.e., person, number and gender) specified in the sentence.39

(80) lāzim yarga’ marra ūanya
necessary.AP come_back.3MSG time second.F
li-balād w-yinām fi-l-ʿawābi
to-DEF-village.FSG CONJ-sleep.3MSG in-DEF-ʿAwābi

‘One had to come back again and sleep in al-ʿAwābi.’ [S1]40

(81) lāzim aḥallīṣ haḍā l-kitāb
must.AP finish.1SG DEM.PROX.MSG DEF-book.MSG

‘I must finish this book.’ [S7]

In (80), the sentence has an impersonal subject, expressed with the third person masculine singular. In (81), conversely, the subject of the sentence is the first person singular and it is carried by the p-stem verb aḥallīṣ.

39 lāzim can also occur in a nominal construction, i.e., with no verb involved, as in: lāzim qabil il-maḡrib ‘it was necessary before the sunset’ [S1]. However, there are only two examples of this construction in the primary data.

40 In the primary data, a verb with an impersonal subject is often realised as 3MSG, as in this example.
y ihtāg ‘it needs’

This verb governs the p-stem verb directly. An example of y ihtāg as an auxiliary is:

(82) aḥtāg  arūḥ  ilā  d-dikkān
need.1SG  go.1SG  to  DEF-shop.MSG
‘I need to go to the shop.’ [S10]

rām/yrūm ‘be able to’ and qadar/yiqdar ‘can’

The verb rām/yrūm appears to have an interesting function in the primary data. The root *RWM originally indicates ‘be over, overlook’,⁴¹ but in the primary data it means ‘be able to’ and, according to my informants, is characteristic of the al-⁴Awābī district.⁴²

rām/yrūm is generally followed by a p-stem form, which is conjugated in the same person, gender, and number as the main verb.

ما تروم تساوق لان سيّارته خربانة (83)
ma trūm tusāwwiq l-inne siyyarat-he
NEG  can.3FSG  drive.3FSG  because  car.fsg-pron.3FSG
ḥarbāna
damaged.fsg
‘She cannot drive because her car is damaged.’ [S7]

(84) mā  yrūm  yitla‘  l-inne  šīši  darag
NEG  can.3MSG  come.3MSG  because  NEG.EXIST  stair.MSG

⁴² This root is also attested by Reinhardt (1894).
‘He cannot go up because there are no stairs.’ [S15]

(85) aqdar musāʿid-iš?
    can.1SG help.AP.MSG-PRON.2FSG

‘Can I help you?’ [S12]

The main difference in the use of rām/yrūm and qadar/yiqdar is that the former indicates actual ability (or inability) of the subject to fulfill the action expressed by the verb, whereas the latter has a stronger modal value, similar to the English modal ‘can’. In (83) and (84), the subjects are both physically unable to perform the action expressed by the subordinate verb because of external factors (i.e., the car damaged and the absence of the stairs). In (85), aqdar functions as a modal and does not involve any physical ability.

The verb qadar/yiqdar can also be found in asyndetic construction governing an s-stem verb, as in:

(86) mā qadart ḥaṣalt waqt asawwi
    NEG could.1SG found.1SG time do.1SG

‘I couldn’t find time to do (it).’ [S9]

‘Potentiality’ can also be expressed in the primary data by the impersonal non-past form yumkin followed by a p-stem verb usually agreeing with the referent, as in:

(87) yumkin yrūh īlā l-wādī
    is_possible.3MSG go.3MSG to DEF-wadi

‘It is possible for him to go to the wadi.’ [S1]
This form, albeit not particularly common in the primary data, is strictly linked to the category of ‘mood’, since potentiality is expressed mainly through semantics.\footnote{This way of expressing ‘potentiality’ is also found in Najdi Arabic (cf. Ingham 1994, 129).}

\(\text{ḍall/yiḍall} \) ‘continue, keep on’ and \(\text{dār/yidīr} \) ‘start’

The auxiliares \(\text{ḍall} \) and \(\text{dār} \) govern a p-stem verb directly:

\begin{align*}
\text{(88)} & \quad \text{w-ḍallit} \quad \text{trabbi-hum} \\
\text{CONJ-kept.3FSG} & \quad \text{take_care.3FSG-PRON.3MPL} \\
\text{‘She kept on taking care of them.’ [S1]}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{(89)} & \quad \text{ḍall} \quad \text{yiḥāf-he} \\
\text{kept.3MSG} & \quad \text{scare.3MSG-PRON.3FSG} \\
\text{‘He kept on scaring her.’ [S2]}
\end{align*}

The verb \(\text{dār/yidīr} \) is an interesting case. It is not documented in any other Omani dialect,\footnote{This is according to all works on Omani Arabic already published and used as sources for this study.} but is a common feature of Moroccan Arabic. In the primary data, it often appears when ‘start’ is used as an auxiliary,\footnote{The verb \(\text{badā} \) is also attested in the primary data in non-auxiliary contexts, e.g., \(\text{badāt kitāb gedīd} \) ‘I started a new book’ [S7], \(\text{sulṭān qabūs badā dāḥil el-mašāri} \)\textsuperscript{c} \(\text{aš-šuwāra} \) ‘Sultan Qaboos started inside (the country) projects of roads (highway projects)’ [S1].} particularly in the speech of AS in Wādī Banī Kharūṣ with low or no education. In the examples, \(\text{dār} \) is always followed by a p-stem verb.

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\(\text{ḍall/yiḍall} \) ‘continue, keep on’ and \(\text{dār/yidīr} \) ‘start’
(90) \textit{w-dār en-nās yištağlo}  
\textit{CONJ-started.3MSG DEF-people work.3MPL}  
‘People started to work.’ [S2]

(91) \textit{dār haḍā l-ʿālim yaqrā}  
\textit{started.3MSG DEM.PROX.MSG DEF-man_of_religion.MSG read.3MSG}  
\textit{l-qurān}  
\textit{DEF-Quran}  
‘This man of religion started to read the Quran.’ [S2]

In examples (90) and (91), \textit{dār} is in first position in the sentence, followed by the subject and then by the verb of the subordinate sentence. In (90), the auxiliary verb does not need to be conjugated, because, when the main verb is in first position, it needs to agree only in gender with the subject, but not necessarily in number; the secondary verb, however, agrees grammatically with the subject \textit{nās ‘people’}, which takes the agreement as masculine plural, i.e., \textit{yištağlo}.

When the subject is not mentioned, or it is implied, the p-stem verb follows directly the main auxiliary verb:

(92) \textit{dār yidris fi-l-gāmiʿa sulṭān}  
\textit{started.3MSG study.3MSG in-DEF-university.FSG Sultan.MSG}  
\textit{qābūs}  
\textit{Qaboos}  
‘He started to study at Sultan Qaboos University.’ [S14]

Interestingly, Reinhardt (1894, 207) reports \textit{dār} followed by the ‘Imperfect’ as indicating a commitment to something, and states that “it usually precedes verbs whose activities cannot be done all at once.”
\textit{ḫallī} ‘let’

The verb \textit{ḫallī} ‘let’ is also an interesting modal verb in this dialect. Ingham (1994, 124) reports it in Najdi Arabic, where it is used as “a regular marker of the 3rd and 1st person jussive.” In the primary data, this verb is often found followed by a suffix pronoun, as in \textit{ḫallī-ni} ‘let me’ or \textit{ḫallī-he} ‘let her’. It also has non-auxiliary use in the meaning ‘stay, remain’, as in \textit{ḫallī-k hnā} ‘You (MSG) stay here’.

1.3. Prepositional Phrase

Prepositional phrases are those phrases introduced by a preposition, e.g., \textit{min}, \textit{bi-}, \textit{fī}, ‘\textit{ind-}’\textsuperscript{46}, and \textit{li-}. Prepositions are indeclinable, therefore lacking morphological inflection.

(93) \textit{(grūb) min ṭnā’āš ḥurma}
    \textit{group.MSG of twelve woman.FSG}
    ‘(A group) of twelve women’ [S14]

(94) \textit{bi-alfin ryāl}
    \textit{PREP-two_thousand ryal.PL}
    ‘(At a price of) two thousand ryals’ [S9]

(95) \textit{fī s-siyyāra}
    \textit{in DEF-car.FSG}
    ‘In the car’ [S8]

The case of the prepositions \textit{fī} ‘in’, ‘\textit{ind-} ‘at’, and \textit{li-} ‘to’ needs to be explored in more detail. In the literature they are sometimes

\textsuperscript{46} I am including ‘\textit{ind-} in the list of prepositions to express possession following the classification made by Prochazka (2008, 699–709).
referred to as ‘pseudo-verbs’, which is linked to the way they are translated in other languages.\(^{47}\)

The preposition \(\text{fi}\) introduces the existential clause, whereas the prepositions ‘\(\text{ind}\)’- and ‘\(\text{li}\)’- introduce the possessive clause. In this work, following the classification made by Watson (1993, 224), the label prepositional phrases will be used throughout for phrases introduced by a preposition.

1.3.1. Existential Clause

It is possible to refer to existentials as those prepositions forming phrases that express the presence or the existence of something. In the primary data, the most common form of existentials is the preposition \(\text{fi}\) ‘in’ plus the 3MSG pronoun, in some cases followed by a locational or temporal adjunct:

(96) \(\text{fi} \ \text{māy} \ \text{dāhil} \ \text{īt-ṭallāğa}\)

EXIST water inside DEF-fridge.FSG

‘There is water in the fridge.’ [S10]

(97) \(\text{fi} \ \text{ṭawla} \ \text{barrā}\)

EXIST table.FSG outside

‘There is a table outside.’ [S14]

\(^{47}\) Brustad (2000, 153): “In general, most pseudo-verbs consist of either prepositions that give locative or possessive meaning, or of nominally derived forms that give modal meaning. Pseudo-verbs are characterized by one or more semantic or syntactic features”. One of the supporting characteristics for the label ‘pseudo-verbs’ is that both existentials and possessive clauses take the same negation as verbs. However, since in the primary data both nouns and verbs are negated by \(\text{mā}\), the denomination used by Brustad is not appropriate in this study.
Consistent with Davey’s (2016, 180) analysis of existentials in Dhofari Arabic and with Payne (1997, 123), the noun phrase following *fīh* is always indefinite. Moreover, the time reference expressed by the existential construction is always present (in relation to the time of the utterance). In fact, the primary data show the use of the verb *kān/yikūn* to express the existence or presence of something in the past (see ch. 3, §2.8 for examples).

‘Existentiality’ in the future is also expressed with *kān b(i)*-prefixed, sometimes accompanied by a temporal adverb, as in:

(98) *byikūn hunāk ḥamsīn šahṣ fī-l-ʿurs*

*bukra*

‘There will be fifty people at the wedding tomorrow.’

[S12]

In addition to *fīh*, the word *šey* ‘thing’ is also used:

(99) *šī fanāgin*

‘There are coffee cups.’ [S11]

(100) *šey siyyarāt*

‘There are cars.’ [S1]

No criteria seem to be used in the choice of one form or another among the speakers: both *fīh* and *šey* are used by men and women, in YS, AS, and OS with no relevance to their level of education either.
1.3.2. Possessive Clause

The prepositions ‘ind- ‘at’ and li- ‘to’, followed by a suffixed pronoun, are used to express possession:

(101) li-š tūb gedīd

‘You have a new dress.’ [S10]

The example above shows how in the possessive prepositional phrase the predicand is indefinite. In cases in which a subject is expressed, the preposition follows it and an anaphoric pronoun, agreeing grammatically with the subject, is suffixed to it, as in:

(102) ‘amm-i ‘ind-o siyyāra bēda

‘My uncle has a white car.’ [S3]

(103) el-bint ‘ind-he sannūr ṣaġīr

‘The girl has a kitten (lit. ‘small cat’).’ [S12]

2.0. Clauses

A clause is a group of words consisting of a subject and a predicate (i.e., a referent expressing something about the subject). This sub-section has been divided into simple nominal clauses, simple verbal clauses, and complex clauses (i.e., adverbial clauses and complement clauses). In this work, any clause consisting of a predicand and a predicate that can be a noun phrase, an adjectival noun phrase, or a prepositional phrase is considered a nominal clause. Conversely, any clause including a
finite verb (either in first or second position), followed by optional subject and complements is considered a verbal clause.

**2.1. Simple Nominal Clause**

A simple nominal clause is a sentence where the predicand is a noun phrase and the predicate can be another noun phrase, as in examples (104) and (105), an adjectival phrase, as in (106) and (107), or a prepositional phrase, as in (108) and (109). 48

(104)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ḏāk} & \quad \text{ir-riggāl} & \quad \text{ʿamm-ī} \\
\text{DEM.DIST.MSG} & \quad \text{DEF-man.MSG} & \quad \text{uncle.MSG-PRON.1SG}
\end{align*}
\]

‘That man is my uncle.’ [S14]

(105)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{haḍī} & \quad \text{s-siyyāra} & \quad \text{māl-ī} \\
\text{DEM.PROX.FSG} & \quad \text{DEF-car.FSG} & \quad \text{GEN-PRON.1SG}
\end{align*}
\]

‘This car is mine.’ [S5]

(106)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sannūr} & \quad \text{uḥt-ī} & \quad \text{bunī} \\
\text{cat.MSG} & \quad \text{sister.FSG-PRON.1SG} & \quad \text{brown}
\end{align*}
\]

‘My sister’s cat is brown.’ [S6]

(107)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{siyyārat-ī} & \quad \text{ḥarbāna} \\
\text{car.FSG-PRON.1SG} & \quad \text{damaged.FSG}
\end{align*}
\]

‘My car is damaged.’ [S7]

(108)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ḥadēlā} & \quad \text{l-ḥarīm} & \quad \text{min} & \quad \text{ahl-ī} \\
\text{DEM.PROX.FPL} & \quad \text{DEF-woman.FPL} & \quad \text{from} & \quad \text{family-PRON.1SG}
\end{align*}
\]

‘These women are from my family.’ [S9]

---

48 In the following examples, the predicate phrase is highlighted in bold.
When the predicate of a simple nominal clause is a noun phrase, it does not carry the definite article and it agrees with the predicand only in number and not in gender; in fact, “the predicate agrees with the predicand only insofar as the two nouns can logically refer to one and the same referent” (Watson 1993, 98). In (104), the predicate is the noun phrase ‘amm-i ‘my uncle’, consisting of a noun and a possessive suffixed pronoun. It is logically linked to the predicand, since they are both nouns denoting male entities.

When the predicate is an adjectival phrase, it is essentially indefinite, e.g., ir-riggāl ūtawīl ‘the man is tall’, el-bint gamīla ‘the girl is beautiful’. In these cases, as far as agreement is concerned, the predicate follows the same rules that apply in the case of noun phrases: human plural predicands have strict agreement, whereas inanimate non-human plural predicands have deflected agreement, as in the examples below:

(109) es-siyyāra qiddām il-bwāb

`The car is in front of the gate.' [S9]

A nominal clause consisting of a noun phrase and a prepositional phrase is also called ‘locational clause’, since it indicates a specific location in space: al-wusāda fī-l-kurfāya ‘the pillow is on the bed’.

(110) el-banāt mašgūlāt

`The girls are busy.’ [S3]
(111) *il-mustašfayāt  ḥāṣṣa*

DEF-hospital.PPL  private.FSG

‘The hospitals are private.’ [S1]

If the predicate is an adjective referring to a plural or dual predicand, it can be in its broken plural form (if it has one), as in:

(112) *in-naḥil     kibār*

DEF-palm.PPL  old.PL

‘The palms are old.’ [S8]

(113) *ir-riggālīn  ṭuwāl*

DEF-man.DL  tall.PL

‘The two men are tall.’ [S14]

2.2. Simple Verbal Clause

A simple verbal clause includes a finite verb, e.g., *sawwēna* ‘we built’, and an optional explicit subject and other complements, e.g., *sawwēna bēt* ‘we built a house’. It can also be modified by adverbs, prepositional phrases, or noun phrases used adverbially. These adverbials can express time, as in:

(114) *qabil  ḡurūb    iš-šams   yirūḥ   il-wādi,  masmūḥ*

before  sunset.SG  DEF-sun.FSG  go.MSG  DEF-wadi  allowed.PP.MSG

*w-baʿad   al-ġurūb   mustahil   yirūḥ*

CONJ-after  DEF-sunset.SG  impossible.MSG  go.3MSG

‘Before the sunset, one goes to the wadi—it is allowed; but after the sunset it is impossible to go.’ [S1]

---

50 The reader can compare examples (110) and (111) with (4) and (6) respectively in the present chapter, §1.1.2.
(115) *bukra š-sabāḥ yrūḥ ilā l-wādī*

tomorrow DEF-morning go.3MSG to DEF-wadi

‘The morning after one goes to the wadi.’ [S12]

(116) *baʿad ‘ašar sanuwāt taqrīban ṭallaq-ha*

after ten.M year.FPL about divorced.3MSG-PRON.3SG

‘After about ten years he divorced her.’ [S5]

or space, as in:

(117) *enām taḥt is-saṭḥ fi-l-kurfāya*

sleep.1SG below DEF-roof.SG in-DEF-bed.FSG

‘I sleep on the bed under the roof.’ [S8]

(118) *atīb qahwa hnā*

bring.1SG coffee here

‘I bring coffee here.’ [S15]

Before examining the structure of the simple verbal clause in further detail, it is worth discussing word order and agreement in verbal contexts as these appear in the primary data.

### 2.3. Word Order

In Arabic dialectological literature, the analysis of word order starts with the individuation of the three main sentence constituents: verb (V), subject (S), and object (O). Thus, the sentence typologies are SVO or VSO according to the order of the components in a given sentence. CA has been classified by Arabists as a VSO language, which means that the verb is in first position in the sentence, followed by the subject and then by complements. Modern Arabic dialects shows less strict ordering and
both VSO and SVO systems may be found, sometimes varying according to the type of discourse, i.e., narration or dialogue.

In the primary data, both VSO and SVO sentence types are found: if the subject of a clause is definite, it precedes the verb (i.e., SVO), whereas if it is indefinite, it follows the verb (i.e., VSO), with the sole exception of the auxiliary dār ‘start’, which in the primary data always appear in first position in the sentence.

2.4. Some Remarks on the Agreement in Verbal Contexts

Consider the following examples of the VSO sentence-type:

(119) kānat syūḥ
    was.3FSG empty_lot.pl
    ‘There were empty lots of land.’ [S2]

(120) gyen madāris w-mustašfiyāt
came.3FPL school.FPL CONJ-hospital.FPL
    ‘Schools and hospitals arrived.’ [S1]

(121) kānat bint ḫagīra
    was.3FSG girl.FSG small.FSG
    ‘She was a young girl.’ [S15]

(122) kāno kill-hum ṣgār
    was.3MPL all-pron.3MPL small.pl
    ‘All of them were young.’ [S14]

(123) rabbit-he ḥobbōt-he
took_care.3FSG-pron.3FSG grandmother.FSG-pron.3FSG
    ‘Her grandmother took care of her.’ [S1]
Examples (122), (123), and (124) are from narrative discourses, whereas all the others are from spontaneous speech recordings. When the head noun is singular, the verb agrees with it in gender and number: the verbs in (121) and (123) are in the feminine singular form according to their subjects.

All other examples show sound plural or broken plural heads, whose agreement patterns once again depend on their degree of animacy and individuation. So, in (120), the verb in first position is in the feminine plural and refers to two feminine inanimate head nouns coordinated. In (119), a broken inanimate plural, such as syūḥ, depends on the verb kān in its feminine singular form.51

Consider also these examples:

إذا تحصل المفاتيح ترجعهن لي

\text{idā} \text{tahs} \text{sal} \text{el-mfātīḥ} \text{targʕ-hin} \text{l-i}

‘If she finds the keys, she’ll give them back to me.’ [S14]

51 The verb kān ‘be’, when expressing past existential semantics, i.e., ‘there was, there were’, always appears in first position in the primary data, but its form may vary according to the head noun. Consider the following example: kān ʿtalāt madāris fi-š-ṣūlṭana ‘there were three schools in the Sultanate’ [S1]—here the verb preceding a numeral is in its masculine singular form.
The kids are playing outside.’ [S5]

‘The girls are ill.’ [S12]

‘The women work in a date factory.’ [S2]

In (125) the object in the protasis is an inanimate broken plural, with which the suffixed object pronoun -hin in the apodosis agrees in its feminine plural form. In all other cases, i.e., (126), (127), (128), the subjects are human head nouns followed by the verb in second position and showing strict agreement.52

The case of nās ‘people’ is interesting when it comes to agreement rules. Brustad (2000, 54) considers nās a collective noun with a lack of ‘individuation’. In the examples reported by Holes (2016, 333–34), nās shows both strict (masculine plural) and deflected agreement and this is due to a “difference in individuation,” since “the likelihood of strict agreement is higher where the verb is s-stem and describes an actual event, lower when it is p-stem and describes habits or in unspecific terms what generally happens/used to happen” (Holes 2016, 334). In

52 This is consistent with Bettega’s (2017) findings regarding human plural controllers.
the primary data, nās appears to attract strict masculine plural agreement:

(129) nās ʿind-hum fulūs
    people to-PRON.3MPL money.COLL
    ‘People are rich (lit.: ‘people they have money’).’ [S10]

(130) الأناس بو عايشين طريقنا هنود
    an-nās bū ʿāyšīn ṭarīq-na hunūd
    DEF-people REL live.AP.MPL street.FSG-PRON.1PL Hindi.MPL
    ‘The people who are living in our street are Indians.’ [S5]

In (129), nās is an indefinite noun, indicating a non-individuated group of people, whereas in (130) the speaker is talking about specific people, i.e., the ones who live in her street. Despite this difference, in both cases nās attracts masculine plural agreement, i.e., in (129), the suffix pronoun -hum, and in (130), the AP عايشين.

Even in verbal contexts, nās still attracts strict agreement, with one exception: when the verb is in first position, and nās indicates a generic group of people, the verb has a masculine singular form. Consider the following examples from the primary data:

(131) gē nās fi-l-bilād
    arrived.3MSG people in-DEF-country.FSG
    ‘People arrived in the country.’ [S14]

(132) dār nās yištaglo
    started.3MSG people work.3MPL
    ‘People started to work.’ [S2]
In (132), the first verb (an auxiliary) is masculine singular, but the dependant verb, coming after the head noun, is conjugated as masculine plural. Both (131) and (132) have been extracted from narrative contexts.

According to Brustad (2000, 57), “viewing the grammatical feature of plural agreement as a continuum allows a principled account of the variation that occurs and reflects the speaker’s control over this feature.” Thus, “the choice of agreement depends on the features that influence individuation, especially specificity and agency.” Based on this statement, nās can have various degrees of individuation and therefore attract either strict or deflected agreement. In the primary data, all the examples with nās take masculine plural agreement, and this can be explained by the fact that nās, meaning exclusively a group of ‘humans’, is grammatically treated like other human plurals, which usually take strict agreement (in this case, masculine).

2.5. Complex Clause

A complex clause is a clause that combines an independent clause (i.e., a nominal or verbal clause) with at least one dependant clause (i.e., adverbial, attributive, complement clause). In this subsection, the structure of complex clauses as they appear in the primary data is analysed, and they are divided into adverbial, conditional, and complement clauses.

2.5.1. Adverbial Clause

Adverbial clauses “modify a verb phrase or a whole clause” (Payne 1997, 316–17). In the linguistic literature, these clauses
belong to the category of supplementation, which is to be distinguished from complementation. The former involves adding supplements to the clause (further investigated below, §2.5.2), while the latter involves providing constituents necessary to ‘complete’ a clause.

Adverbial clauses can modify a main clause in different ways. In this section I will analyse them following the distinction drawn by Payne (1997, 317–20) regarding adverbial clauses of time, location, manner, purpose, and reason.

Adverbial Clause of Time

Adverbial clauses of time address the question ‘when?’ and can be introduced by the conjunctions lemme / yöm\(^{53}\) ‘when’; by noun phrases used adverbially, e.g., il-yöm ‘today’, iṣ-ṣabāḥ ‘this morning’, bukra ṣ-ṣabāḥ ‘tomorrow morning’, il-ʿām il-mādī ‘last year’; prepositional phrases, e.g., fi-ṣ-ṣabāḥ ‘in the morning’, fi l-lēl ‘in the night’, etc.; and temporal adverbs, e.g., bukra ‘tomorrow’, ʿems ‘yesterday’, taww ‘now’, taqrīban ‘about’, qabil ‘before’, lēn ‘until’.

\(^{53}\) In Wādī Banī Kharūṣ, the noun waqt ‘time’ is also used to introduce a subordinate temporal clause. In the primary data, it occurs in a few examples from AS and OS: waqt il-barad ṭanām fōq? ‘When it is cold/during cold season, do you sleep upstairs?’ [S11].
‘She was thirteen years old when he got her married off.’ [S1]

‘None of them used to work when their father died.’ [S1]

The conjunction *lemme* introduces an action that occurs simultaneously with another, as in (133), whereas *yōm* introduces a generic temporal clause, as in (134).

‘My sister did not have a car until she went to Muscat.’ [S6]

‘Before I leave, I want to visit Salalah.’ [S5]
The temporal adverb *qabil* is followed by the particle ‘*an* when introducing an adverbial clause, as in (136) and (137). Otherwise, it simply precedes the noun phrase, e.g., *qabil il-mağrib* ‘before the sunset’.

### Adverbial Clause of Location

Adverbial clauses of location address the question ‘where?’ and are introduced by *ēn / wēn* ‘where’; locative adverbs, e.g., *warā* ‘behind’, *fōq* ‘up, above’, *taḥt* ‘under’, *yasār* ‘on the left’, *yamīn* ‘on the right’, etc.; locative demonstratives, e.g., *hinā* ‘here’, *hināk* ‘there’; or prepositional phrases, e.g., *min aš-šamāl* ‘from the north’, *min al-baʿīd* ‘from far away’, *fī-l-makān* ‘in the place’, *qiddām al-bāb* ‘in front of the door’, etc.

(138) *šūft el-makān ēn taskun*

‘I saw the place where you live.’ [S12]

### Adverbial Clause of Manner

Adverbial clauses of manner modify the main clause by describing the way in which the action expressed by the main verb is carried out. They are introduced by *kēf* ‘how’ or *kamā* ‘as, like’.

---

الصفاري يحتاجن تغسيل قبل أستخدأمهن (137)

*iṣ-ṣafārī yaḥtāgen tuġsīl qabil ‘an*

def-def pot. need.3fpl wash.vn before prep

*yistiḥdām-hin*

use.3msg-pron.3fpl

‘Pots need a wash before using them.’ [S7]
Adverbial Clause of Purpose

Adverbial clauses of purpose express the resulting aim of the main clause. In the primary data, these clauses are introduced by the preposition ‘ašān ‘in order to’.

(141) il-imām  yaqrā  ‘alī-ha  min  il-qurān
  DEF-imam.MSG  read.MSG  to-PRON.MSG  from  DEF-Quran

il-karīm  ‘ašān  yisgin-he
  holy.MSG  in_order_to  imprison.MSG-PRON.MSG

‘The imam reads the Holy Quran in order to imprison her.’ [S2]

(142) qubbit  ša‘ar  fī  wṣat  it-ṭariq
  made_a_dome.MSG  hair.COLL  in  middle  DEF-street.FSG

‘ašān  ṭḥāf-o
  in_order_to  scare.MSG-PRON.MSG

‘She made a dome with her hair in the middle of the street in order to scare him.’ [S2]54

54 Examples (141) and (142) are both from a story about gīnns in Wādī Banī Kharūṣ.
Adverbial Clause of Reason

Adverbial clauses of reason address the question ‘why?’ and are introduced by *l-inn* ‘because’ and, in a few instances, by *ʿašān kḏāk* ‘so that’. The subordinating conjunction *l-inn* takes a suffix pronoun which agrees grammatically with the subject of the verb in the adverbial clause (if different from the one in the main clause).

(143) *ṭallaq-ha nafs eš-šey l-inn-he*

divorced.3MSG-PRON.3FSG same DEF-thing because-PRON.3FSG

*magnūna*

crazy.PP.FSG

‘He divorced her for the same reason, because she was crazy.’ [S1]

(144) *kān fīh ḡamām ʿašān kḏāk sum-o*

was.3MSG exist cloud.PL so that name-PRON.3MSG

*masgid l-ḡāma*

mosque DEF-cloud.SG

‘There were clouds, so its name is “mosque of the cloud.”’ [S2]

2.5.2. Circumstantial Clause

Circumstantial clauses are also known in the literature as ḥāl-clauses, and they “describe the manner [in] which one did something, the manner how something happened, one’s conditions when something happened, etc.” (Qafisheh 1977, 216). In terms of time reference, the circumstantial clause indicates an
action or event simultaneous to the action or event expressed by
the main verb. Consider the following example:

(145) رحت أتمشى أشوف ألنجوم
	ruḥt  itmašā  ašūf  an-nagūm
	went.1SG  walking.VN  see.1SG  DEF-star.FPL

‘I went walking looking at the stars.’ [S5]

In the example above, the main verb is expressed through an s-
stem form, whilst the action of the circumstantial clause is ex-
pressed by means of a verbal noun. This is because the whole
event happened in the past in relation to the time of the utter-
ance. If, on the other hand, the event is happening in the pre-
sent, both the main clause and the circumstantial clause can
have a p-stem verb or an AP and a p-stem verb. Both structures
express the idea of simultaneous action:

(146) umm-i  taqrā  kitāb  tišūf
	mother.FSG-PRON.1SG  read.3FSG  book.MSG  see.3FSG

iṣ-ṣaqiṣrīn
DEF-small.MPL

‘Mum is reading a book (while) looking after the kids.’
[S9]

(147) wāṣal  il-bēt  yağnī
	arrive.AP.MSG  DEF-house.MSG  sing.3MSG

‘He has arrived home singing.’ [S7]

2.5.3. Conditional Clause

Conditional clauses are structured in terms of a protasis (i.e.,
the dependant clause expressing the condition) and an apodosis
(i.e., the main clause expressing the consequence if the condition is not fulfilled). In the primary data, similar to Dhofari Arabic (Davey 2016, 207), the protasis can be introduced by the particles law and iḍā ‘if’. Based on the examples in the primary data, the difference in their use seems to be that the former indicates a condition unlikely to be fulfilled, whereas the latter a condition more likely to happen.

Thus, the overall likelihood of the condition being fulfilled and the realis/irrealis contraposition in the conditional clause is mainly expressed through these particles. The verb forms vary according to the time reference of the conditional clause and according to the rules mentioned above.

Conditional clauses can be divided into three main types, according to the likelihood of the condition expressed happening.

The first type expresses a realis condition that is likely to be fulfilled. In this case, the primary data show both the protasis and the apodosis taking a p-stem verb, although the verb of the apodosis may also take the future/conditional verbal marker bi:-

\[
\text{(148) } \text{iḍā } \text{tridi } \text{malābis gedīda binruḥ } w-\text{ništri}
\]

‘If you want new clothes, we will go and buy (them).’

[S12]

---

\[55\] In Dhofari Arabic, Davey (2016, 253) notes that the verbal prefix bā- is not obligatory with the verb of the apodosis when an outcome is achievable or likely to be fulfilled, but it occurs more often if the conditional clause is introduced by iḍā.
(149) *iḍā*  *arūḥ*  *taww*  *batʿaššā*  *maʿ-kum*

if  go.1SG  now  FUT.have_dinner.1SG  with-PRON.2FPL

‘If I leave now, I will have dinner with you.’ [S3]

The second type expresses a realis condition unlikely to be fulfilled. In this case, the protasis will show an s-stem verb (or a prepositional phrase), whereas the apodosis has a p-stem verb with no prefixes. These types of conditional clauses can be introduced by either *law* or *iḍā:*

(150) *law*  *ʿind-*  *siyyāra,*  *arūḥ*  *rustāq*

if  to-PRON.1SG  car.FSG  go.1SG  Rustāq

‘If I had a car, I would go to Rustaq.’ [S6]

(151) *iḍā*  *laqtī*  *šīḥḥa*  *tqūli-*  *tursil-nī*

if  met.2FSG  Shīḥḥa  tell.2FSG-PRON.3FSG  send.3FSG-PRON.1SG

‘*aṭṭūr*

medicine.SG

‘If you meet Shīḥḥa, would you tell her to send me the medicine?’ [S8]

In (151), the speaker is asking her niece to inform Shīḥḥa, his nurse, that he needs a new medicine. However, as Shīḥḥa was spending a few days in Muscat for work at the time, the likelihood of his niece meeting Shīḥḥa in al-ʿAwābī was low.

Finally, the third type expresses an irrealis condition, which is impossible to be fulfilled because it refers to a past event or a condition that cannot be changed anymore. In this case, the conditional clause is introduced by *law* and the protasis takes an s-stem verb (or a nominal, adjectival, or prepositional phrase), whereas the apodosis takes a p-stem verb.
(152) \textit{law is-ṣağirin mā mariḍin, ašill-hum}  
\hspace{1em} if DEF-small.mpl NEG sick.mpl take.1sg-pron.3mpl  
\hspace{1em} ilā l-falag  
\hspace{1em} to DEF-falag  
‘If the kids weren’t sick, I would have brought them to the falag.’ [S10]  

(153) \textit{qāl law ‘ind-i fulūs atzawwug}  
\hspace{1em} said.3msg if to-pron.1sg money.coll marry.1sg  
\hspace{1em} ġēr-iš  
\hspace{1em} other-pron.2fsg  
‘He said, “If I had money, I would have married someone other than you.”’ [S14]

(154) \textit{law mā kunt faqīra wāgid aʿyš fi bēt}  
\hspace{1em} if NEG was.1sg poor.fsg much live.1sg in house.msg  
\hspace{1em} qāṣr  
\hspace{1em} mansion.msg  
‘If I weren’t so poor, I would have lived in a bigger house.’  
[S15]  

All these examples show situations that cannot be changed at the moment of the utterance, either because of a physical state (i.e., the kids being sick) or because of a state like poverty that is very difficult to change.
2.5.4. Complement Clause

In the primary data, a complement clause can be introduced by the particle *inn* - ‘that’, or any other prepositional complement required by the verb.

The particle *inn* - can also take a suffixed pronoun in the event that the subject of the complement clause differs from the head noun or from the subject of the main clause:

(155) \textit{manšab-i mā yismaḥ inn-ī asawwi}

\begin{verbatim}
position-PRON.1SG NEG allow.3MSG that-PRON.1SG make.1SG
\end{verbatim}

\textit{mašākil}

problem.PL

‘My position does not allow me to make trouble.’ [S3]

In this case, the particle *inn* - carries the suffixed pronoun -\textit{i} for the first person singular since it is the subject of the subordinate clause. As in other Arabic dialects,\textsuperscript{56} in the primary data, there is no specific category of verbs that takes the particle *inn* - before a complement clause.

Generally, verbs of ‘saying’ and ‘thinking’ carry the particle *inn* - to introduce a subordinate sentence:

(156) \textit{aqūl-l-iš inn-īš rabša}

\begin{verbatim}
say.1SG-to-PRON.2FSG that-PRON.2FSG naughty.FSG
\end{verbatim}

‘I tell you that you are naughty.’ [S12]

\textsuperscript{56} Holes (2016, 374) notes that in Bahraini Arabic, noun clauses can lack the complementising particle *inn* “regardless of the type of verb which governs them if they are objects, or which is predicated of them if they are subjects,” and generally follow the main verb directly.
(157)  
\[
edann\text{ inn haḍī l-gāmiʿa mumtaza
\]
think.1SG that DEM.PROX.FSG DEF-university.FSG excellent.FSG

‘I think that this university is excellent.’ [S5]

However, they can also be found without the introducing particle:

(158)  
\[
qāl l-ha mā trūḥi
\]
said.3MSG to-PRON.3SG NEG go.2FSG

‘He told her not to go.’ [S4]

According to Holes (2016, 374), the sporadic use of the particle *inn-* with any category of verbs “may reflect the greater exposure of the user to varieties of Arabic which use a complementiser routinely (especially MSA).” This statement is consistent with the primary data presented in this study: most of the complement clauses introduced by the particle *inn-* have been recorded in al-ʿAwābī in YS and AS with an average to high level of education, whereas in Wādi Banī Kharūṣ, speakers tended not to use any particle between the main verb and the subordinate clause, as in example (158), regardless of their level of education. Hence, it is possible that people in the town are more exposed to different types of Arabic whether through education or greater freedom of movement.

Verbs of ‘wanting’ and ‘ordering’ do not take any complementiser in the primary data.

(159)  
\[
amar-ik trūḥ tinām
\]
order.1SG-PRON.2MSG go.2MSG sleep.2MSG

‘I order you to go to sleep.’ [S12]
In (160), we see the AP form \textit{bāya} introducing a complement clause. This is the most common way, according to the primary data, of expressing will and desire, although when the subject of the complement clause differs from the one of the main clause and, as already mentioned, a suffix pronoun is needed, the AP form \textit{bāya} (or \textit{bāğa}) cannot be used, and is replaced by the verbs \textit{arīd} or \textit{bġī}, as in example (161) and (162).

Verbs of ‘liking’ and ‘loving’ do not take any complementiser:

(163) \textit{aḥībb} \textit{al-iqrā}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
love.1SG & DEF-reading.VN \\
\end{tabular}

‘I like reading.’ [S3]

(164) \textit{ṭḥibbi} \textit{ṭ-ṭbah?}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
love.2FSG & DEF-cooking.VN \\
\end{tabular}

‘Do you like cooking?’ [S7]
‘Do you like watching the football match?’ [S5]

In examples (163) and (164), the main verb is followed by a verbal noun, which constitutes the usual construction in the primary data for the verb ḥabb ‘love’. In (165), the main verb is followed by a p-stem verb, which agrees grammatically with the suffixed pronoun.

Two categories of verbs in the primary data that never take the complementiser to introduce the subordinate clause are modal verbs and auxiliaries. These categories are usually followed by the p-stem verb directly (as shown in the present chapter, §1.2.5).

A final category to be analysed in this section is that of complement clauses that function as indirect questions, also known as embedded questions. In the primary data, these clauses are introduced by mū or šē ‘what’, lēš / amū ‘why’, kēf ‘how’, kam ‘how many’, min ‘who’, matā ‘when’, and ēn / wēn / hēn ‘where’, all of which directly govern the main verb.

(166) mā aʿraf mū asawwi

‘I don’t know what to do.’ [S12]

57 For more details on interrogative pronouns in this vernacular, the reader is referred to ch. 3, §1.2.5.
(167) mā .afham  lēš  trūhi  ilā  dubei  ma‘hum
NEG  understand.1SG  why  go.2FSG  to  Dubai  with-PRON.3MPL
‘I do not understand why you go to Dubai with them.’ [S7]

(168) bāya  a‘raf  kam  ‘adad  il-mu‘āzīm
want.AP.FSG  know.1SG  how_much  number  DEF-confirm.PP.MSG
il-‘ars
DEF-wedding.MSG
‘I want to know how many are confirmed for the wedding.’ [S5]

(169) bāya  a‘raf  kēf  umm-iš
want.AP.FSG  know.1SG  how  mother.FSG-PRON.2FSG
‘I’d like to know how your mother is doing.’ [S11]

(170) bāgi  yisāl  min  yisawwi  šay  kdāk
want.AP.MSG  ask.3MSG  who  do.PRES.3MSG  thing  like_this
‘He wants to ask who does (something) like this.’ [S14]

(171) ḥabbir-ni  matā  yikūn  il-‘ars
inform.IMP.2MSG-PRON.1SG  when  is.3MSG  DEF-wedding.MSG
‘Let me know when the wedding is.’ [S9]

(172) sāyla  wēn  aḥ-iš
ask.AP.FSG  where  brother.MSG-PRON.2FSG
‘I am asking where your brother is.’ [S9]

3.0. Negation

The literature on negation in Arabic individuates two main iso-glosses that divide the Arabic-speaking world: the western dialects (e.g., Moroccan, Egyptian, Tunisian), which combine some
variants of /mā/ and /-š/, and eastern dialects (e.g., Syrian, Kuwaiti, Gulf), which use /mā/ and other particles (Brustad 2000, 277). In the Arabian Peninsula, there is a wide range of negation strategies: in Ṣanʿānī Arabic, for example, we found miš / maš, mā, mā...š and lā (Watson 1993); in Gulf Arabic, Holes (1990, 71–76) reports mā (usually adopted to negate perfective and imperfective verbs), lā (for imperatives), lā...wila (for coordinated clauses) and mū and its variants (adopted to negate a constituent of a sentence); in Najdi Arabic, Ingham (1994, 44) reports only the forms mā and lā to negate verbal sentences.

There are not many works on negation in Omani Arabic. In Dhofar, the main negation markers are mā (used to negate the lexical verb and existentials) and lā (used alongside mā to negate the imperative). Holes (2008, 485) reports a few negation markers for Omani Arabic, such as mā, māb (in the Sharqiyyah region), mu / muhu (in Bedouin dialects of al-Batinah), and lā (especially for imperative).

3.1. Negation in the Data

In the primary data three main negation markers appear: mā, lā, and ġēr. In addition to these, the primary data also show the use of the older forms šīši and -šī, that will be briefly presented further in this section. I will divide the description of the negation

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58 In the Tihāma region of Yemen, alongside the mūš / mīš, also the discontinuous markers mā...-šī are attested (Simeone-Senelle 1996, 209).
59 Davey (2016, 217).
system used by the informants in the al-‘Awābī district in noun, verb, and prepositional phrases.

Negation of noun phrases is realised with the negative particle *mā* before the noun, the adjective, the demonstrative, or the participle it is meant to negate:

\[(173) \text{lākin hiya mā kabīra} \]
\[\text{but PRON.3SG NEG big.FSG} \]
\[\text{‘But she isn’t old.’ [S1]} \]

\[(174) mā kdāk\]
\[\text{NEG like_this} \]
\[\text{‘Not like this.’ [S7]} \]

\[(175) mā ḥad šūf-kum\]
\[\text{NEG person saw.3MSG-PRON.2MPL} \]
\[\text{‘No one saw you.’ [S11]} \]

\[(176) umm-he mā rādy <in> he\]
\[\text{mother.FSG-PRON.3FSG NEG accept.AP.FSG <in> PRON.3FSG} \]
\[\text{‘Her mother did not accept her.’ [S1]}^{60} \]

\[\]

---

\[^{60} \text{Brustad (2000, 290), in an analysis of negation of participles, reports a few remarks for dialects that show different negation markers for noun and verb phrases. In dialects where participles are treated as predicates (e.g., Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan) they are negated by miš, māšī, and mū; whereas when participles carry more verbal force, they tend to be treated as verbs and are negated by particle mā (e.g., Syrian, Kuwaiti). The primary data presented in this study do not distinguish between nominal and verbal negation; therefore, the participle is always negated by mā.}\]
(177) lā, mā qahwa, bāya šāy
   NEG  NEG  coffee  want.AP.FSG  tea
   ‘No, not coffee. I want tea.’ [S14]

(178) hīya mā hnā
   PRON.3FSG  NEG  here
   ‘She is not here.’ [S12]

In example (173), only the adjective kabīra ‘big, old’ is negated by the negation marker, which is positioned just before the word, although a contrastive sense to the whole sentence is given by the initial lākin ‘but’. In (175), mā followed by the indefinite pronoun results in the negative indefinite pronoun mā ḥad ‘no one’.

In some cases, the adjective or a PP (as in the example below) can be negated by the noun ġēr ‘other’:

(179) haḍā z-zōg riggāl ġēr
   DEM.PROX.MSG  DEF-husband.MSG  man.MSG  other_than
   maḍbūṭ
   acceptable.MSG
   ‘This husband is not an acceptable man.’61 [S1]

As the examples above show, the negative marker in a noun phrase always precedes the lexical item it negates.

Verb phrases can be negated by either mā or lā, and both immediately precede the verb. More than depending on the morphological form of the VP (i.e., s-stem or p-stem), it seems that the negative markers are linked to the VP temporal and/or aspectual value. Therefore, lā tends to negate the past and mā

61 According to Islamic rules (i.e., he would drink alcohol).
the non-past. This, however, is subject to a degree of variation: in (180), the speaker negates a past s-stem form in a narrative context with \( mā \). This variation might be caused either by the influence of other Arabic dialects through television, for example, or by aspectual values inherent in the context of narration. By contrast, example (183) shows the negative marker \( lā \) negating a p-stem verb in a past narrative context.\(^{62}\)

More insights are certainly needed. However, without trying to draw any final conclusion, it is worth mentioning that S2 in (180)—despite being an illiterate AS like S1 in (183)—was more exposed to the language of the media, since she was often found enjoying Egyptian soap operas.

(180) \( il-imām \quad mā \quad ḥāf-he \)

\( \text{DEF-imam.MSG} \quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{feared.3MSG-PRON.3FSG} \)

‘The imam was not afraid of her.’ [S2]

(181) \( mm-i \quad mā \quad trūm \quad taṭbaḥ \quad l-inne \)

\( \text{mother.FSG-PRON.1SG} \quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{can.3FSG} \quad \text{cook.3FSG} \quad \text{because} \)

\( yad-he \quad matʿūre \)

\( \text{hand.FSG-PRON.3FSG} \quad \text{injured.pp.FSG} \)

‘My mother cannot cook because her hand is injured.’ [S3]

(182) \( haḍiḥ \quad ṣaḡira, \quad mā \quad abḡā-ha \)

\( \text{DEM.PROX.FSG} \quad \text{small.FSG} \quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{want.1SG-PRON.3FSG} \)

‘This (girl) is young. I don’t want her.’ [S10]

\(^{62}\) This is linked to the use of the p-stem verb in past contexts, which has been explained in the present chapter, §1.2.1.
(183) \textit{hūwa lā ya’ti-he malābis w-fulūs}

\begin{verbatim}
PRON.3MSG NEG give.3MSG-PRON.3FSG cloth.MPL Conj-money.COLL
\end{verbatim}

‘He doesn’t give her clothes or cash.’ [S1]

The negation marker \textit{lā} is also used as a negator in prohibitive sentences:

(184) \textit{lā taʿāl hinā}

\begin{verbatim}
NEG IMP.come.MSG here
\end{verbatim}

‘Do not come here!’ [S12]

(185) \textit{lā tūkli ḏāk}

\begin{verbatim}
NEG eat.2MSG like_this
\end{verbatim}

‘Do not eat like this!’ [S9]

(186) \textit{lā trūḥi!}

\begin{verbatim}
NEG go.2FSG
\end{verbatim}

‘Don’t go!’ [S6]

Finally, prepositional phrases are also negated by the particle \textit{mā}, always positioned before the preposition:

(187) \textit{mā fīh byūt, mā šey siyyāra}

\begin{verbatim}
NEG EXIST house.MPL NEG EXIST car.FSG
\end{verbatim}

‘There are no houses, there are no cars.’ [S1]

(188) \textit{mā ‘ind-i fulūs}

\begin{verbatim}
NEG to-PRON.1SG money.COLL
\end{verbatim}

‘I do not have cash.’ [S8]

(189) \textit{mā ‘ind-iš miftāḥ māl bēt}

\begin{verbatim}
NEG to-PRON.2FSG key.SG GEN house.MSG
\end{verbatim}

‘You do not have the house key.’ [S9]
When two (or more) negated sentences are coordinated, the main verb (or noun) is negated by mā and the linkers are usually wa and lā, which negates the following verb (or noun):

(190) mā fīh karhabā wa lā tilifūn wa lā

\[ \text{NEG EXIST electricity.fsg CONJ NEG telephone.sg CONJ NEG} \]

myā

water

‘There is no electricity, nor telephone, nor water.’ [S1]

(191) ʿind-ha awlād ʿamm lākin mā ysālo

\[ \text{to-pron.3fsg child.mpl uncle.msg but NEG ask.3mpl} \]

‘an-ha wa lā ʿarfū-he

\[ \text{about-pron.3fsg CONJ NEG knew.3mpl-pron.3fsg} \]

‘She had cousins, but they don’t ask about her, nor did they know her.’ [S14]

3.2. Remarks on Reinhardt’s Negative Structure

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, there is a fourth negation linker used in the al-ʿAwābī district, i.e., the enclitic -šī and its emphatic form šīšī. Reinhardt (1894, 282) states that the enclitic /-šī/ can be suffixed directly to the predicate it negates, e.g., huwwa-šī sekrān ‘he is not a drunkard’. Consider these examples from his texts:

(i) ʿu froḥ hest terāh baʿado mākil-šī šei

‘Denn er hatte noch nichts gegessen’

‘Because he had not eaten yet’ (Reinhardt 1894, 297)

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63 These are reported following Reinhardt’s transcription and translation.
As these examples show, the enclitic /-ši/ can be suffixed to any part of speech: a PP, as in (i); a s-stem verb, as in (ii); an adverb, as in (iv); and used as negative existential, as in (iii).

In his description of the negative clause, Reinhardt (1894, 281–82) reports various negative markers. In addition to the aforementioned mā and lā—“both negating the verb”—there are:

- the negative verb laysa, only used in the 3MSG form lēs;
- words like ‘adem ‘absence’ or qille ‘small amount, little’;
- The clitic -ši, “welche dem zu verneinenden worte angehängt wird” ‘which is attached to the negated word’.

All these forms appear in the texts at the end of his study, albeit some more often than others. Diem (2014, 89) found that negations with the clitic -ši “considerably outnumber the negation with mā/lā” in the descriptive parts of Reinhardt’s monograph, but in the texts he gives a different picture. In fact, the narra-
tors of the stories reported use all means of negation, with the only exception of ‘adem and qille, which are still quite rare.

Lucas (2018, 2) reports a “purely postverbal negation of this kind” for (a) all of the sedentary dialects of historic Palestine, as well as those of northwestern Jordan, southwestern Syria and southern Lebanon; (b) marginally, Cairene Egyptian; (c) the Upper Egyptian dialect described by Khalafallah (1969); (d) Maltese, but only in prohibitives; (e) the Omani dialect described by Reinhardt; and (f) a small cluster of dialects spoken in the southern part of Yemeni Tihama.

Many modern Arabic dialects (e.g., Moroccan, Egyptian) use the negation complex mā... -š to negate both verbal and nonverbal predicates. Ouhalla (2008, 357) reports a few examples from Moroccan Arabic to show how the complex works: mā always appears before the s-stem or the p-stem verb, and -ši is suffixed to the verb negated, e.g., mā ka-n-tkllam-ši maʿhum ‘I don’t talk to them’. In the case of nominal predicates, the complex shows two main patterns: it can appear on the left edge of the predicate, e.g., samīr maši hna ‘Samir is not here’, or -ši appears as an enclitic whenever the predicate is a noun, an adjective, or an adverbial element, e.g., samīr mā hnaši ‘Samir is not here’. It seems that in most of the dialects that show this negative complex, the use of the clitic -ši alone is not possible, even though there are a few dialects in between that allow it. Simone-Senelle (1996, 213–14) reports the use of the suffixed marker -š alone, but always to negate verbs and not nouns; she also attests the use of a reinforced form -šī, clitic or not.
In the Omani dialects that have been documented so far there is no evidence of this negation complex nor of the only enclitic form /-ši/.

In none of Holes’ works (1989; 1996; 1998; 2013) is the clitic -ši mentioned as a form of negation for Omani Arabic; neither is it in Kaplan’s (2008) nor in Webster’s (1991) work on Bahla in his description of the Āl Wahība of Oman.

Nevertheless, Brockett (1985) and Nakano (1994)—in their brief descriptions of Khabura and Zanzibar Arabic, respectively, provide some examples in favour of -ši. Brockett (1895, 140) says that šīši is “a Bedouin expression” according to one of his informants originating from the Jabal Akhdar region—hence, close to the district of al-ʿAwābī. Nakano, on the other hand, provides only one or two examples with šīši used as ‘nothing’ (cf. Diem 2014, 90). This is in accordance with Reinhardt (1894, 30), who reports šyšy and māšay as ‘nothing’.

Having now compared the sources available, we can postulate—in accordance with Diem (2014)—that the clitic /-ši/ was probably the original negative construct used in the region, before being almost entirely replaced by mā under the influence of non-š-dialects as the ones spoken in the Arabian Peninsula.

Further evidence of this theory is given by the following extract, a traditional song of Jabal Akhdar performed by speaker 13:64

(192)  w-iḍa  gīt  w-int  aḡbār  w-anā  afrāḥ
       w-ḥad-ši  bērī-nā  yislāḥ
       min  šyuḥīn  wa  ʿorbān

64 The text of the entire song is given in the Appendix.
mā min šyuḥ ahel-ši d-dār
w-edann mā egi aḥsār
w-agib mṣarr min el-kbar
‘If he goes and you are poor and I am happy
and no one is between us to mediate
among shaykhs and people,
which65 of these shaykhs is not from the people (family)
of the house
and I think I won’t lose anything
I bring the biggest mṣarr (lit. ‘a mṣarr among the big-
gest’).’ [S13]
In the song, the clitic -ši is used to negate two nominal predi-
cates, i.e., ḥad, ‘someone’ and then ahel ‘family, tribe’, which is
apparently a phenomenon that does not occur in any of the dia-
lects cited above. The indefinite pronoun ḥad-ši ‘no one’ is re-
ported by Reinhardt (1894, 29) as the most common form in his
data, but in the speech of my informants it has become obsolete
and almost completely replaced by the indefinite mā ḥad. Inter-
estingly, the clitic -ši seems to interrupt the synthetic genitive
construction in the song, which is not possible in any of the dia-
lect cited above. Although it might also be due to poetic licence.

In general, -ši is not used as a negator in most of Oman
today (Lucas 2018, 2), and the investigations conducted for this
work in the al-ʿAwābī district confirmed this statement as far as
my informants are concerned. This negative enclitic has not

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65 The use of mā as relative pronoun ‘that which, what’ is also reported
by Johnstone (1967, 67) for Peninsular dialects, although in the pri-
mary data the form mū is more common.
been found in the primary data collected and it is definitely not in use in the everyday speech.

The emphatic šīšī, on the other hand, is used by the OS in Wādī Banī Kharūṣ (i.e., speakers 4, 8, 13 and 15) as a negative existential ‘there is/are not’, instead of mā šay / mā ḥfh.\(^{66}\)

\[(193) \quad \text{šīšī} \quad šay \quad hnā\]
\[
\quad \text{NEG.EXIST} \quad \text{thing.MSG} \quad \text{here} \\
\quad \text{‘There is nothing here.’} \quad [\text{S8}] \]

\[(194) \quad mā \quad yrūm \quad yiṭlaʿ \quad l-inne \quad šīšī \quad darag\]
\[
\quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{can.3MSG} \quad \text{come.3MSG} \quad \text{because} \quad \text{NEG.EXIST} \quad \text{stair.MSG} \\
\quad \text{‘He cannot go up because there are no stairs.’} \quad [\text{S15}] \]

\(^{66}\) It is worth mentioning, however, that some of my informants told me that the negative existential šīšī is normally used in the speech of OS in Rustaq.