Chapter Six

Conclusion, Implications and Future Suggestions

6.1 Issues and suggestions:

Dialectal Arabic is a rich field for any linguistic study. There are enormous linguistic patterns that have not been uncovered so far and are worth discussing in future researches. YA is one of the varieties of Arabic that includes subsets of other varieties which require much attention. In this study, I focus on the system of negation and attempt to tackle the phenomenon from a syntactic perspective. It is interesting to explore and come upon novel areas that have not been discussed in earlier works and to have the privilege to be the first researcher to bring out these syntactic facts.

In this chapter, I group the major findings of this study and I point out some of the aspects that are worth discussing in future researches. The thesis provides detailed analyses for the main patterns of the syntax of negation in four dialects of YA in the light of the minimalist framework. I argue against the earlier studies of the syntax of negation in dialectal Arabic like Benmamoun (2000) and I discuss the areas that constitute a gap in this proposal. I attempt to offer explanations that are more technical and convincing. The data from YA furnish evidence against Benmamoun's proposals and render them inadequate.

In this thesis, I focus on three major points: i) the mechanism of expressing sentential negation and all the aspects that interrelate to it, ii) the assignment of the scope of negation, and iii) the distribution and the licensing of NPIs.
As discussed earlier, negation is expressed either by a single preverbal negative marker or by a discontinuous negative marker that is realized as both a preverbal and post-verbal clitic at the same time. Consider these examples:

1. a. **mish** banandi-hum assiyarah haqqana  
   neg fut.give.1p-them the car ours  
   ‘We will not give them our car.’

    b. **ma** namit samh alrbarih  
       neg sleep.past.1s early last night  
       ‘I did not sleep early last night.’

    c. **ma-addaina-hum-sh** haqqana assiyarah  
       neg.give.past.1p-them-neg ours the car  
       ‘We did not give them our car.’

I argue that **ma/mish** is generated in the head of NegP above TP and **sh** is generated in another functional projection above vP. The reason not to generate **sh** in NegP is being assigned to several factors like the lack of a negative feature on **sh** and its focus feature that makes it dispensable in the context of focus. This behavior provides a strong piece of evidence for the claim that the presence of **sh** in negative context is for emphatic purposes.

In this thesis, I circumvent the varieties of YA that tend to omit **sh** in some contexts. Such dialects are spoken in the Hodiadah province, in particular Zabid and Tannahah and some other areas in the north of Yemen, which I am not certain about. The optionality of **sh** in these varieties does not weaken this proposal at any rate because it takes place in the phonological component. Here, it is not possible to discuss these
dialects due to the lack of data, but I am going to present some examples from Hoyt (2006) for Palestinian Arabic; a language that exhibits the same behavior. Hoyt (2006) claims that \textit{ma} is omitted or not pronounced when the word begins with a labial obstruent. Consider this example:

2. \texttt{b-ikun-f} \texttt{fi} \texttt{jitaa mi\textperiodcentered00f il-iyaam illi} \texttt{raah tiji} \hspace{1cm} \text{(from Hoyt 2006:39)}

\texttt{bc.3ms-neg exist rain \ like the-days rel. fut come.3fs}

‘There won’t be any rain like the days that are coming.’ (WWW)

Hoyt’s observation supports the proposal that the omission of \textit{ma} is a phonological rather than syntactic process, which goes in line with my claim. Accordingly, I claim that \textit{ma} is generated in NegP but is selected to remain silent due to some phonological constraints. Further, I argue that \textit{sh} cannot express negation by itself since it is not a negative element and is not generated in NegP. In spite of this, I suggest that a detailed study should be conducted in future research on these varieties in order to reach a firm conclusion.

This thesis also discusses the assignment of the negative scope in YA. The claim I made with this respect is that the scope of negation in YA is determined by word order. It is worth noting that I have not come upon any published study that discusses the assignment of scope in Arabic or the quantification phenomenon. Since the topic of this study is concerned with the syntax of negation in YA, I do not discuss these aspects in depth. Therefore, I suggest that these topics should be considered in future research.
One of the major issues raised by this chapter is the incompatibility of distributive quantifiers like *kull wahad* ‘everyone’ with negation especially when the quantifier appears in the subject position. Consider these examples:

3. a. *mish kull wahad qara? kitaab
   neg every one read.past.3ms book
   ‘Everyone did not read a book.’

   b. *kull wahad mish qara? kitaab
   every one neg read.past.3ms book
   ‘Everyone did not read book.’

The behavior of distributive quantifiers in this environment requires further investigation into the phenomenon of quantification in Standard Arabic in general and in Dialectal Arabic in particular. There are two alternative explanations to this behavior: one is that negation cannot take wide scope in the subject position due to the presence of the DistQ. The other is that negation cannot co-occur with indefinite subjects. Notice that these sentences seem to be incomplete. They can be grammatically saved only when they appear as a subject relative clause. Consider this example:

4. a. mish kull wahad qara? kitaab ?asbah ?alim
   neg every one read.past.3ms book become.past.3ms scientist
   ‘Not everyone who reads a book becomes a scientist.’
b.* kull wahad mish qara? kitaab ?asbah ?alim
every one neg read.past.3ms book become.past.3ms scientist

(4b) is ungrammatical because negation cannot scope over the vP, its scope is restricted to the quantifier phrase in the subject position. Further, collective quantifiers allow negation to alternate between them and the verb and that alternation is associated with a change in the scope readings, but distributive quantifiers show a different behavior as illustrated above. The question seeks an answer is what are the lexical properties of the distributive quantifier that make it exhibit such a behavior in negative contexts? It would be fascinating to uncover the accurate reasons behind this behavior in future research.

6.2 Conclusion:

This thesis offers both a descriptive and analytical study of the syntax of negation in YA. The descriptive part is introduced in Chapter 2 in which I attempt to examine the behavior of the negative markers in different structures and the significant changes that these markers undergo due to the interaction with the other syntactic patterns. This chapter demonstrates implicitly that the negative system in YA is similar though not identical. The remaining chapters deal with the analytical part of the study. For instance, Chapter 3 constitutes the main part of the thesis since it deals with sentential negation and provides analyses for each syntactic aspect that affect the ways of expressing negation. It also offers some tenable solutions to several syntactic patterns that interrelate with negation like the merger between negation and several categories and the interaction between negation and focus that makes sh dispensable in some environments. Chapter 4 discusses how the scope of negation is determined with respect to the other quantified phrases. The discussion in Chapter 5 is concerned with the distribution of NPIs and their
licensing conditions where I offer an Agree-based account of NPIs licensing conditions including both negative and non-negative contexts.

The merit of this study lies in that it is the first one that tackles the phenomenon of negation in YA from a minimalist perspective. It is more comprehensive since it includes four dialects in its investigation and offers unified analyses based on general syntactic facts that hold among the dialects in question.