Chapter One
Introduction and Theoretical Background

1.1 Introduction

The study of negation has been the focus of several research studies since Klima (1964). This aspect has been tackled within the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic frameworks because it is a core topic in the linguistic theory. Since this thesis is concerned with syntax, I will focus on the syntactic proposals that deal with negation.

Negation is a phenomenon that is present in most languages and it constitutes a significant topic in the linguistic design of every language. Interestingly, languages exhibit numerous morphological and syntactic variations with respect to the position of NegP, the categorial status of the negative marker, the ways of expressing negation by means of employing negative verbs, preverbal negative markers, post-verbal negative markers, using the two-part negative marker; the distribution and the licensing of NPIs, the assignment of negative scope and the manifold syntactic aspects that result from the interaction between negation and other linguistic elements.

This study aims at examining and exploring the syntactic aspects of negation in Yemeni Arabic\(^1\) (YA, henceforth). It investigates the system of negation in four dialects spoken in different geographical locations: Abyan, Aden, Hadhramout, and Taiz. These dialects express sentential negation by means of: i) using the one-part negative marker or ii) using two-part negative marker. Consider these examples:

\(^1\) YA is a cluster of Arabic varieties spoken in Yemen. There are many varieties of YA, which we can call dialects. These dialects exhibit distinctive morphological and phonological differences but minor syntactic differences. These variations are not motivating to classify them as languages because irrespective of the variation, speakers of different dialects are able to understand and communicate with each other.
This study uncovers several syntactic aspects that are not studied in earlier works. It mainly focuses on the following points:

i) to introduce to the literature novel linguistic data that have not been discussed so far,

ii) to approach and discuss negation within the recent trends of the minimalist framework and to establish working accounts, and

iii) to address some issues in the study of negation in dialectal Arabic and present more practical explanations and analyses.

The empirical domain that forms the basis of this study consists of sample data from four dialects collected from about 100 speakers (males and females) of different educational levels including students, teachers, graduates and postgraduates, housewives, and retired employees, with age ranging between 15-75 years. I consulted 25 speakers from each dialect including the Abyani dialect, the dialect that I speak. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews.

In this study, I argue that NegP is generated above TP and the two-part negative marker is generated in two different functional nodes. I support my arguments with
empirical evidence provided by the behavior of negation in certain contexts. For instance, the merger between negation and clitics or verbal categories furnishes evidence against generating NegP above vP. This analysis does not raise any problem of the previous analyses; nevertheless, it offers solutions to most of them. In my view, this proposal might account to other dialects that employ the same mechanism to express sentential negation.

I also discuss the strategy of using the emphatic negative quantifier *wala* 'and not' to express sentential negation with more emphasis. This element has been discussed by Hoyt (2005); not as an emphatic sentential negative element but as a negative concord item. In this thesis, I highlight the syntactic and semantic properties of *wala* 'and not' and I analyze its behavior in different positions of the sentence.

In this work, I discuss how clitics can constitute clusters of more than two in the context of negation. Consider this example:

3. ma-ṣata-la-hum-sh al-ktub di ʿand-uh
   neg-give.past.1s-them-neg the-books which near-him
   'He did not give them the books which he has.'

This claim, if right, goes against Shlonsky (1997) where it points up that clitics can cluster in Arabic.

In this thesis, I also examine the scope of negation in YA and argue that it is determined by word order. The constraints on the occurrence of the negative quantifier in both the object position and the subject position in the VSO order furnish a strong piece of evidence to the claim. Besides, the behavior of collective quantifier in the
subject position makes it clear that the scope of negation cannot extend beyond its c-commanding domain. Consider this example:

4. a. mish kulla-hum gaw  
   neg all-them come.past.3mp  
   'Not all of them came.'

   b. kulla-hum mish gaw  
   all-them neg come.past.3mp  
   'All of them did not come.'

Furthermore, I provide evidence from negative raising predicates in YA to support the claim that c-command relation plays a major role in determining the scope of negation.

Further, I address the licensing conditions and distribution of NPIs. Due to the lack of a common syntactic licensor of NPIs, I appeal to the semantic notion 'nonveridicality' (Giannakidou, 1998) and claim that NPIs are licensed by a nonVer operator posited in ForceP.

To sum up, the implicit goal of this study is to draw the attention of the Arabic syntacticians to the importance of studying dialectal Arabic and to show that this field is rich in linguistic aspects that are worth considering in future research.

1.2 Theoretical Background:

The present section is devoted to the discussion of some of the seminal work on the syntax of sentential negation. The focus will be on languages that employ the discontinuous negative marker since they bear resemblance to the system of sentential
negation of some Yemeni dialects. In general, most of the studies on the syntax of negation take into account in its discussion two central points: the position of the negative phrase in the clause structure and the syntactic properties of the negative markers. The groundbreaking work on negation is by Klima (1964). To distinguish sentential from constituent negation, Klima applied some diagnostic tests. Klima's (1964) proposal is quite well known, and in fact irrelevant to our discussion, so it will be avoided in this thesis.

To the best of knowledge, Pollock (1989) is the first to claim that negation can head its own functional projection. This study addresses negation in relation to other aspects such as word order and verb movement in English and French. It is generally assumed that the blocking effects that are raised by an intervening element determine the syntactic nature of the category whether it is a head or an adverbial element. In the following sections, I will discuss some of the influential studies that deal with word order and verb movement in relation to negation like Pollock (1989), Ouhalla (1990), Haegeman (1995), Rowlett (1998) and Benmamoun (2000).

1. 2.1 Pollock (1989):

As mentioned earlier, the idea that negation should project a NegP is first stated in Pollock (1989) and since then it has been adopted in the literature. Pollock's (1989) arguments were based on the syntactic behavior of main verbs and auxiliary verbs in finite and non-finite sentences, in French and English. He took into account the asymmetric behavior of verb movement between English and French in the presence of negative markers, adverbs and quantifiers. (all the examples in this section are from Pollock 1989)
5. a. *John likes not Mary.
   b. Jean (n’) aime pas Marie.

6. a. * likes he Mary?
   b. Aime-t-il Marie?

7. a. *John kisses often Mary.
   b. Jean embrasse souvent Marie.
   c. John often kisses Mary.
   d. *Jean souvent embrasse Marie.

   b. Mes amis aiment tous Marie.
   c. My friends all love mary.
   d. *Mes amis tous aiment Marie.

Obviously, verb movement to 1° in English is blocked by negative markers, adverbs and quantifiers, besides it cannot move to C, whereas in French, such kind of movements is permitted. Pollock (1989) notes that English and French have distinct agreement systems. He claims that agreement in French is transparent, but opaque in English. Consequently, the verb moves overtly to 1° in French to get its agreement morpheme but in English, a lowering movement of 1° (Affix Hopping) to V° is satisfactory.

He further claims that opaque agreement blocks theta-role assignment, while transparent agreement does not. Subsequently, V° in French adjoins to Agrs° and assigns theta-roles to its arguments, but in English, it does not.
On the other hand, auxiliaries in English exhibit different behavior from main verbs, but this is not the case in French. Pollock (1989) attributes this syntactic behavior to the incapability of auxiliaries to assign theta-roles so that the movement to 1° is not blocked. Consider this example:

9. a. John is happy/singing
   b. John has lost his way.
   c. John isn’t happy/singing.
   d. John hasn’t lost his way.
   e. John hasn’t any money.

The minimality effects raised by the verb movement in the presence of negative markers led Pollock (1989) to suggest that negation should project a functional head, NegP. He also emphasizes the syntactic status of negative markers by showing that heads only can block head movement. Accordingly, he argues that not is a negative head because it blocks head movement while ne...pas differ. In other words, ne is a clitical head because it does not allow the verb to move across it unless it is cliticized to its left edge while pas is an adverb that does not raise any minimality effects; the former is generated in Neg° while the latter in the Spec of NegP. In infinitival clauses, the verb does not move out of the VP so the negative markers are realized contiguous to each other. Consider this example:

10. Pierre dit ne pas manger

   ‘Pierre says ne not to eat’
The realization of *ne* above *pas* is ascribed to the critical nature of *ne* that forces it to search for a phonological host. Consequently, *ne* initiates another movement to \( T^o \), as in:

1. Pollock’s major claim hedges on the idea that negation is generated in an independent functional projection. He also explicitly states the idea that negative markers have different categorial status.

1.2.2 Ouhalla (1990):

Ouhalla (1990) claims that the structural position of NegP varies cross-linguistically. The interaction between the negative markers; and the tense morpheme and agreement features plays a major role in determining the position of NegP. Further, Ouhalla (1990) assumes that the negative head can select either a VP or a TP; this behavior is subject to parametric variations.

One of the significant points discussed by Ouhalla (1990) is how to determine the syntactic category of the negative marker based on the minimality effects. It is generally assumed that negative heads block verb movement to Tense or AgrsP; other negative
markers that do not manifest any minimality effects are treated as negative adverbs that are either adjoined to VP or base-generated in Spec, NegP.

Ouhalla discusses three types of negative markers in five languages: Turkish, Berber, Swedish, English and French. In Turkish, the negative marker is realized as part of the verb morphology (all the examples are taken from Ouhalla 1990).

12. John elemalar-i ser-me-di-o
   John apples-Acc like-Neg-past.3s
   ‘John does not like apples.’

In Berber, the negative marker precedes the tense morpheme and is realized as a prefix:

13. Ur-ad-y-xdel mohand dudsha
   neg-will-3m-arrive mohand tomorrow
   ‘Mohand will not arrive tomorrow.’

The negative marker can also be realized as a free morpheme as in English and Swedish.

14. a. Jan Kopte inte boken
    Jan bought not books

b. John did not buy books.

French, on the other hand, employs a distinct mechanism where sentential negation is expressed by employing the two-part negative marker ne...pas, as in:

15. Marie n’ aime-er-a pas Jean
    Marie neg-like-will-3s-neg Jean
    ‘Marie will not like Jean.’
The different realizations of the negative markers and the different ways of expressing negation reveal that negation is subject to parametric variations. Therefore, Ouhalla formulated his simple principle, the NEG parameter, in order to capture this diversity (this example from Ouhalla 1990: 16):

16. The NEG parameter:
   
   a. NEG selects VP
   b. NEG selects TNS (p)

Consequently, each language can select any value according to the syntactic properties of the negative marker. For instance, English has value (16a) and French has value (16b). This principle implies that the negative markers can project their functional projection since they can select their complement.

In the light of the principle of relativized minimality (Rizzi 1990), which imposes firm restriction on the head-to-head movement, Ouhalla determines the syntactic status of the negative markers in English and French. In English, the verb cannot move across the negative head and at the same time lowering t to V is blocked by the intervening Neg-head. It is also claimed that these movements violate ECP because they leave an ungoverned trace.

17. a. *John likes not t Mary.
   
   b. * John t not likes Mary.

On the other hand, ne in French does not block head movement but it cliticizes to the verb and moves with it to AgrsP. According to Ouhalla (1990), these facts indicate that negative heads vary in strength: strong heads block head movement, like not in
English, while weak or affixal heads allow head movement through moving with it, as *ne* in French.

The negative marker *pas* is compatible with the head movement; therefore, Ouhalla (1990), following Pollock (1989), posits *pas* in Spec, NegP.

![Diagram](image)

This analysis indicates that *pas* is higher in the structure than *ne*. However, this analysis does not seem to work in the case of infinitival clauses where the negative marker *ne* precedes *pas*. Consider this example:

19. *ne pas sembler heureux*  

    neg neg to look happy.

The occurrence of *pas* lower than *ne* gives rise to two possibilities: either *pas* is not base-generated in Spec, NegP or it is lowered to adjoin to *ne*. Ouhalla (1990) selects the second possibility; he claims that *pas* lowers in the overt syntax since its trace is still m-commanded so that it does not give rise to ECP violation. Apparently, he contradicts the main line of reasoning that he follows in this work that imposes restriction on lowering movements. In addition, this analysis depends on the availability of the rightward movement, which is not pursued anymore in the recent studies of syntax. All
these factors together significantly weakens his proposal and makes it less relevant at least to our study.

1.2.3 Haegeman (1995):

Haegeman’s (1995) proposal is one of the most remarkable contributions to the syntax of negation. She tackles negation in the light of the late GB theory basing mainly on the earliest version of the minimalist program (Chomsky, 1993) and radical minimalism (Brody, 1993).

This work aims at bringing out the similarities between interrogative and negative sentences in English and extending these observations to formulate a general rule that can capture the various behaviors of negative elements cross-linguistically. I will first look at the congruous aspects between negative and interrogative sentences:

First, both negative and interrogative sentences trigger subject-auxiliary inversion, as in:

20. a. What have you done to your father?
   b. Never in my life will I visit a museum.

Second, they can license negative polarity items (NPIs):

21. a. Have you eaten anything?
   b. I have not eaten anything.

Third, they both give rise to inner island effects:

22. a. Who do you think that they will fire?
   b. ? Who do you wonder whether they will fire?

23. a. [ Bill is here], as they know it
   b. * [Bill is here], as they don’t know it. (from Zeijlstra 2004: 6)
Fourth, they bring out the syntactic phenomenon 'absorption'. Absorption is expressed when there is more than one negative or interrogative element in the clause, but it produces one single reading. Consider this example


‘Who said what?’

For which X, Y [X: a person; Y: a thing] [X said Y]

b. personne ne disait rien

no one ne said nothing

‘No one said anything’

No X, Y [ X: a person; Y: a thing] [X said Y]

These examples illustrate the wh-absorption and the phenomenon of negative concord respectively.

Fifth, negative as well as wh-sentences are subject to that-trace filter effects and LF movement.


I ne demand that you say (subj) nothing

‘I don’t ask that you say anything.’

b*. Je ne demande que t personne disie cela

I ne ask that t no one say (subj) that

It is supposed that rien in (25a) undergoes a quantifier raising at LF in order to achieve a matrix scope, whereas the ungrammaticality of (b) is attributed to the effect of that-trace filter. Similarly, interrogative sentences produce the same effects. Consider this example:
26. a. *who did you think that would arrive first?  

   b. who did you think t would arrive first?  

   (26a) is ungrammatical because *that blocks the wh-word from governing its trace.

Finally, negative and interrogative sentences seem to give rise to the connectedness effect in which the subject negative phrase is licensed by LF movement (See Haegeman 1995 for more details).

Haegeman (1995) expands Klima's (1964) work. The latter dealt with the syntax of negation based on the similarities between negation and wh-phrases. As reported by Haegeman (1995), Klima (1964) does not include in his account the sentences that contain multiple occurrences of wh-words or negative elements. He merely focuses on sentences with a single wh-word or a single negative element. He claims that the subject-auxiliary inversion is triggered by the presence of a pre-sentential wh or neg which is dominated immediately by S. Haegeman's (1995) work tackles these aspects within the theory of principles and parameters. She assumes that negative elements and interrogative ones are affective elements since they contain an affective feature such as [WH] or [NEG]. These features are associated with functional heads and involve affective operators such as wh-constituents and Neg-constituents. This requirement is first introduced in Haegeman (1992) and referred to by the AFFECT criterion as reported by Haegeman (1995):

27. AFFECT-Criterion:  

   a. AN AFFECTIVE operator must be in a Spec-head configuration with an [AFFECTIVE] X°
b. An [AFFECTIVE] $X^0$ must be in a spec-head configuration with an AFFECTIVE operator.

Negative and interrogative elements instantiate a spec-head relation; therefore, they are instances of the AFFECTIVE elements. Notice that interrogative elements are irrelevant to our discussion and hence they will not be discussed further. Accordingly, the NEG-Criterion condition is formulated in order to determine the distribution of these elements:

28. NEG-criterion (from Haegeman 1995: 8)

a. A NEG-operator must be in a Spec-head configuration with an $X^0$ [NEG]

b. An $X^0$ [NEG] must be in a Spec-head configuration with a NEG-operator.

This condition explains the behavior of negative elements that take sentential scope and trigger subject-auxiliary inversion. The discussion of negation is extended to cover West Flemish (WF), some of the West Germanic Languages, English and Romance Languages.

The current discussion will consider only WF because it employs the bipartite negative marker to express sentential negation, as is the case of YA. In this language, sentential negation is expressed in two ways: the use of *nie* a negative adverb, and *en* a preverbal clitic or *en* with a negative quantifier. Consider this example: (from Haegeman 1995:5a&b)

29. a. da Valère die boeken* (nie) an zen vonder getoogd (en)-oat.

that Valère those books not to his father shown en-had

‘That Valère had not shown these books to his father.’

b. da Valère ier niemand (en)-kent.
that Valère here no one en-knows

‘That Valère does not know anyone here.’

*en* seems to be optional. However, it is classified as a negative head and is placed under the negative head position. *nie* and the negative quantifier are placed under Spec, NegP; *nie* represents the negative operator and *en* the negative head. They are assumed to be in a Spec, head relation; subsequently the NEG-criterion is satisfied. In case of expressing sentential negation by the use of a negative quantifier, the NEG-criterion triggers the movement of this quantifier to Spec, NegP. Accordingly, *niemand* in (29b) undergoes movement to the left of *en* to assign sentential scope and licenses *en*. In addition, the presence of more than one negative quantifier casts doubt on the capacity of the Neg-criterion principle to capture this aspect. Haegeman argues that these elements move to the left of NegP, as in: (from Haegeman 1995: 5f)

30. da valère woarschijnlijk *an niemand* *niets* *nie* (en)-zeg

that valère probably to nobody nothing not *en* – says

‘That valère probably does not say anything to anyone’.

This Syntactic phenomenon is called scrambling; negative quantifiers are scrambled to the left of *nie* to obtain a Negative Concord reading. Apparently, negative quantifiers do not achieve a Spec-head relation with *en* since the Spec of NegP is already occupied by *nie*. However, Haegeman assumes that the NEG-criterion is not only satisfied by a Spec-head relation, but also by adjunction to NegP, especially in these languages. In languages such as English, the negative operator can occur at the sentence final position; the NEG-criterion is satisfied by an operator CHAIN headed by a non-overt negative operator.
31. I did nothing.

The NEG-criterion, in this case is satisfied by co-indexation between a non-overt operator in Spec, NegP and, an associate (the overt negative element). Here, it is assumed that the non-overt operator is a scope marker for the post-verbal negative element; the negative scope is obtained by forming a representational CHAIN (&lt;Op1, nothing&gt;).

It seems that the NEG-criterion cannot account for all the various occurrences of the negative elements and the numerous ways of expressing sentential negation in the languages under discussion without stipulations. Therefore, Haegeman relies on other conditions such as adjunction, co-indexation and the notion of extended projection. The need to involve the notion of extended projection comes from the interference of non-negative elements amid negative operators, as in:

32. da Valère an niemand dienen boek (nie) getoogd en-eet

that Valère to no one that book not shown en has

‘That Valère did not show that book to anyone?’ (from Haegeman 1995:5)

dienen boek interferes between niemand and nie. According to Haegeman, the notion of extended projection can solve this issue. This notion is primarily introduced by Grimshaw (1991) where he states that the extended projection of a head is its functional projection or a functional projection that belongs to X°, for instance, AgroP is the extended projection of NegP, and the functional projections that dominate NegP are its extended projections as well. Consider this tree diagram:
Thus, any constituent in the Spec-position of any extended projection of NegP can suffice the NEG-criterion since it is deemed to be in a Spec-head relation with Neg$^\circ$.

In general, Haegeman suggests that theNEG-criterion can explain a variety of syntactic patterns of negation. She depends on various principles such as co-indexations, adjunction and the extended projection notion in order to account for all the linguistic discrepancies raised by these languages and for validating the Neg-criterion principle.

1.2.4 Rowlett (1998):

Rowlett (1998) did an extensive study on the syntax of sentential negation in French. Along with Pollock (1989), Ouhalla (1990), Haegeman (1995), Chomsky (1993) and others, he assumes that negation can head a functional projection. Although his analysis, to some extent, seems to be in line with Pollock's (1989) proposal, where ne is base-generated under the Neg$^\circ$, he argues against the assumption that pas is base-generated in Spec, NegP. He treats pas as an adverbial element that is adjoined to VP where it takes scope over all verbal arguments. He also claims that sentential negation is
obtained through moving pas overtly from its base position to Spec, NegP. By virtue of this, he rejects any assumption that is based on the existence of an expletive in Spec, NegP that can assign [+NEG] to Neg° by co-indexation.

In the light of the Neg-criterion (Haegeman, 1992, 1995), Rowlett suggests that sentential negation is expressed after moving pas to Spec, NegP; a [+NEG] feature can be assigned to the head of NegP (i.e., ne or its trace) via Dynamic Agreement. Consider this configuration:

34. AgrsP
   spec ~ Agrs'
   NegP
   Agrs°
   ne,
   Dynamic agreement
   Agrs°
   pas
   Neg°
   t
   AdVP
   pas
   VP

Contra Pollock (1989), Rowlett (1998) claims that pas is not base-generated in Spec, NegP, but it moves to that position by virtue of the capacity of pas to express sentential negation by itself and its occurrence after ne in infinitival clauses. Consider this example:
35. Nous fumes bien maheureux de ne pas t’emmener

We are well unhappy of neg neg you take

'We are very unhappy not taking you with us.' (from Zeijlstra 2004: 44b)

The occurrence of pas after ne indicates that pas cannot be generated in Spec, NegP. Otherwise, it will be realized higher in the structure than ne. This analysis is more plausible than Ouhalla (1990), who stipulates that pas lowers to adjoin to ne in order to obtain the right word order. Rowlett (1998) used theoretical, synchronic and diachronic arguments to support his claim (for more details see Rowlett 1998). The overt movement of pas is motivated by the nature of the Neg ne, which is not inherently negative. Thus, pas moves in order to assign [+NEG] feature to ne, or to check the uninterpretable negative feature of ne, since the latter cannot express negation by itself.

Interestingly, French patterns with YA in employing the discontinuous negative marker to express sentential negation. However, the semantic nature of the negative markers in the two languages differs. First, ma in Arabic is inherently negative unlike ne in French. Second, sh is not inherently negative unlike pas. This contrastive behavior casts doubt on the traditional proposals that pattern negation in French with negation in dialectal Arabic. Despite asymmetry, Rowlett’s analysis might give insights to our proposal that rejects generating the two-part negative marker in the same functional projection in dialectal Arabic.

The studies on the syntax of negation in dialectal Arabic are very limited. To the best of my knowledge, Benmamoun (2000) is the only study that tackles this topic in detail from a minimalist perspective. The other current studies tackle this topic within
the comparative syntax approach of the descriptive type or discuss only the morpho- 
syntax of sentential negation in some dialects.

In the next section, I will discuss Benmamoun’s account in detail, as it serves as a 
point of departure for this study.

1.2.5 Benmamoun (2000):

Benmamoun discusses the categorial features of tense in Arabic and the syntax of 
sentential negation in both Standard and Dialectal Arabic. These phenomena are tackled 
within the minimalist framework (Chomsky, 1995). Benmamoun (2000) claims that the 
categorial features of tense in Arabic do not remain the same: the past tense is specified 
for both [+D] and [+V] features, while the present tense is only specified for [+D] 
feature. This claim is supported by the behavior of the copula in the present tense; the 
copula cannot surface in the present but it can in the past and future.

36. a. ahmed talibun
    ahmed student
    ‘Ahmed is a student.’

b. ahmed kaan talibun
    ahmed be.past.3ms student
    ‘Ahmed was a student’.

Notice that negation cannot make the copula surface. In the dialects, which 
employ the discontinuous negative maker, the negative maker is realized as one element 
in the absence of the copula.

37. a. saleh ma-kan-sh fi albeit Adeni dialect
    saleh neg-be.past.3ms-neg in the house
‘Saleh was not in the house’.

b. saleh mush fi albeit
    saleh neg in the house
‘Saleh is not in the house’.

In Moroccan Arabic, negation can merge with NPs and APs in the absence of the copula. Consider this example:

38. a. omar ma-mrid-ṣ
    omar neg-sick-neg
‘Omar is not sick’.

b. omar ma-muḍallim-ṣ
    omar neg-teacher-neg
‘Omar is not a teacher.’

Based on these facts, Benmamoun argues that the merger between negation and other categories like NPs, APs and pronominals in the present tense is driven by the feature [+D] that both the present tense and negation bear. Further, he adds that the obligatory merger between negation and verbs in the other tenses is motivated by the properties of these tenses that carry [+D] and [+V] features.

He considers the preference for SVO order in the present tense constructions in Moroccan Arabic as a piece of evidence for the presence of a sole [+D] feature in this tense. Consider this example:

39. a. naṣṣ s-u la-wlād.
    slept.mp the children
‘The children slept’.
b. la-wlad ta-yla'b

The children asp.3m.play

'The children are playing'.

Consequently, he argues that the merger between the negative marker and the past tense is obligatory. This analysis cannot be extended to sentential negation in the dialects in which the discontinuous negative marker is realized as one element in present and past tenses. For instance, the negative marker in the Abyani dialect is always realized as one element.

40. a. (saleh) mish birooh (salah) ma'ahum

saleh neg fut.go.3ms with them

'Saleh will not go with them'.

b. (saleh) mish raah (saleh) ma'ah-hum

saleh neg go.past.3ms with-them.

'Saleh did not go with them'.

This dialect raises a number of issues that challenge Benmamoun’s analysis: i) it indicates that the verb in the present and past tense does not move out of the VP, ii) it makes the distribution of the categorial features into [+D and +V] for the past and into [+D] for the present without any value, and iii) the claim of checking these features in the overt syntax is weakened. Along the same lines, if negation is specified for [+D] feature how it can check this feature on NegP, since this dialect has free word order? These problems will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.
Generally, Benmamoun (2000), in line with Pollock (1989), Zanuttini (1997), Ouhalla (1990), Chomsky (1995), Haegeman (1995), Rowlett (1998) and others, suggests that negation in Arabic can project its own functional head. He suggests that NegP in Arabic is posited above VP. Furthermore, he rejects the analyses that patterned Arabic with French. As mentioned earlier, these analyses place sh in Spec, NegP along with pas and ma in the head position along with ne. The idea behind patterning French with Arabic is motivated by the analogous behavior of the negative quantifiers; it is assumed that pas in French and sh in Arabic cannot co-occur with the negative quantifier. Consider these examples:

41. Je n’ai (*pas) vu Personne
   I neg-have.3s.pres (not) seen no one
   ‘I have seen no one’.

42. ma-had- (*sh) aga
   no one came.3ms
   ‘No one come’.

Dropping sh and pas in the context of negative quantifiers is claimed to be a result of moving the negative quantifier to Spec, NegP. Benmamoun argues against this claim based on data from the Egyptian dialect. In this variety of Arabic, sh is not dropped in the context of the negative quantifier. Consider this example:

43. a. ma –suf-ti-š had
   neg-see.past.1s-neg anyone
   ‘I did not see anyone’.

b. ma-hadi-š yi-stašmil maktabi wi ana yaayib
neg-someone-neg 3m-use my office and I absent

‘Nobody is allowed to use my office while I am absent (to let no body) to give my orders’.

Further, he points out that dropping out sh is not restricted to the context of negative quantifiers where it can be dropped out in the context of NPI adverbs, such as ʿammar or ʿumr ‘never’. Consider this example from Moroccan Arabic:

44. a. ʿammar-u ma-2a

never-him neg.come.past.3ms

‘He never came’.

The same behavior is exhibited in YA. Consider this example from the Taizi dialect:

b. ʿumru-h ma zaar qaryatna

ever-his neg visit.past.3ms our village

‘He has not visited our village ever.’

The position of ʿumr is higher in the structure than NegP, and this indicates that dropping sh is not due to the movement of these constituents to Spec, NegP.

Returning to the issue under discussion, Benmamoun points out that generating the two-part negative marker; one in the Spec of NegP and the other in its head creates problems to the derivation. For instance, if the verb is supposed to move to T°, it will skip out Neg° in violation of minimality and sh will end up on its left edge generating a wrong word order. Consider this example:

45. *ma-haddi yistaʿmil-š maktabi wi ana qaayib
neg-anyone-use-neg my office and I absent

(from Benamoun 2000:21)

These arguments are not clear to me because they raise serious questions such as how *hadd* 'anyone' moves from Spec, vP to Neg⁰ and merges with *ma* and what makes the verb skips out *ma*; however, it moves first. In general, Benamoun takes this as evidence to support two main claims. The first is that verbs in the present tense do not move to T⁰. The second is that *ma...sh* is generated as a complex head in Neg⁰. Consider this configuration:

46. NegP
   Spec
      Neg
         Neg⁰
            VP
               ma
               sh

I also find this proposal quite problematic even for the derivation of negative quantifiers in Egyptian Arabic because it still requires the movement of *hadd* to a head position; a non-standard assumption. This tree diagram illustrates the invalid movement:
As can be seen, this proposal also suffers from two issues. First, two heads cannot be generated in one position. Second, it fails also to explain the merger of these elements, one as a proclitic and the other as an enclitic. To the best of my knowledge, there is no syntactic mechanism that allows for the mergers to the mid position of two clitics especially if these clitics are generated in one head position. These issues will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

So far, I have presented a brief overview of some of the major works on the syntax of sentential negation. These accounts discuss this syntactic phenomenon from different perspectives, starting with Pollock (1989) who tackles the topic in the light of
the developments of GB theory and ending with Benmamoun (2000) who attempts to provide an analysis within the minimalist program (Chomsky, 1995). Although each account adopts distinctive ideas, they discuss the main issues in the syntax of negation like the syntactic properties of the negative markers, the position of the NegP in the clause structure, the licensing of NPIs in the context of negation, etc. In the following chapters, I will examine the efficacy of the previous studies and other corresponding proposals to explain the behavior of negative markers in YA.

1.3 The organization of the chapters:

This thesis is organized as follows. The first chapter presents the main findings of this study and summarizes various proposals that deal with the research of negation in English, Arabic, French and West Flemish.

The second chapter presents a detailed descriptive analysis on the distribution of the negative marker and the various ways of expressing negation in the four dialects in question. It introduces the reader to the empirical domain of this study and highlights the syntactic areas that correlate with negation in a way that might affect its distribution like the syntactic and phonological focus. It points up the differences and similarities of the syntax of negation that hold among the dialects under investigation.

The third chapter provides various substantial analyses for the syntax of sentential negation. I discuss the syntactic status of negative markers, the position of NegP, the merger between negation and other categories. I argue that negation is generated above TP and present evidence in support of this claim. I also argue that the preverbal negative marker ma/mish heads NegP while the post-verbal negative marker sh is generated in a different node. The interaction between negation and focus that leads to the cancellation
of *sh* in some contexts is attributed to the inherent focus feature of this element that only shows up in emphatic contexts. These aspects and more are discussed in the light of the minimalist framework, particularly Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001).

The fourth chapter deals with the syntactic features of the negative scope. The findings and results of this chapter indicate that the scope of negation is determined by the word order, i.e. negative elements scope only over their c-commanding domain. To support this claim, I examine the scope of the sentential negative marker in various structures, constituent negation, the emphatic negative quantifier and negative quantifiers and the way of scope taking of each element. I also discuss some of the relevant works and point out their inadequacy to account for YA. Finally, I offer a proposal for the phenomenon of Neg-raising in the spirit of Chomsky (2001) and Pesetsky and Torrego (2007).

The fifth chapter addresses the syntactic and semantic characterizations of NPIs in YA. I discuss the distribution of NPIs and their licensing conditions within different perspectives and highlight the major problems that associate every account. Besides, I demonstrate that not all the non-negative contexts that can license NPIs in English can do so in YA. Then, I claim that approaching the phenomenon from merely a syntactic or semantic perspective cannot provide an adequate explanation for the licensing of NPIs in non-negative contexts; therefore, I argue that an account that appeals to semantics and syntax together can solve all the problems. Therefore, I attempt to provide an Agree-based account based on the claim that NPIs are licensed in particular semantic environments, in particular nonveridical contexts.
The sixth chapter concludes and summarizes the main findings of the thesis and discusses some issues that are worth considering in future studies. I also attempt there to suggest some possible analyses to these issues that are worth considering in future research.