Abstract

The thesis is a synchronic descriptive account and analysis of the Tihami Yemeni Arabic (TYA) spoken in Zabid, an important city in Tihamah of Yemen. The present work does not attempt a comprehensive description of all linguistic aspects of TYA, but it is confined to provide a comprehensive description and a full, unified descriptive analysis of the (root-and-pattern) morphology of nouns and adjectives and the plural formation assigned to them in TYA using the two plural techniques so-called revowelling and affixation, and to provide morphosyntactic representations of gender-number agreement and definiteness agreement between nouns and attributive adjectives. The relevant phonology of TYA is also dealt with. Such a study is perhaps the most economical way of showing the character of the dialect and its relationship to some extent to Classical Arabic (CA), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and other modern Arabic dialects and how it is slightly or considerably different from CA, MSA and other modern Arabic dialects and even different from other Yemeni Arabic dialects.

It is the first attempt to investigate the TYA dialect using modern linguistic methodology and eclectic approach for description and analysis. There is no literature or previous studies on TYA (root-and-pattern) morphology that provide(s) descriptive analysis using examples of nouns and adjectives or even verbs. In general, “The root-and-pattern morphology of Arabic is most commonly described using examples of derivational verbs.” Watson (2002, p.125).

There is no literature or previous studies on TYA plurals (of the TYA nouns and adjectives) that provide(s) analyses on the formation of the plurals neither in terms of affixation (suffixation in most cases) nor in terms of Revowelling plural formation (that is slightly different in pattern from the non-linear, internal change, or internal vowel manipulation (IVM) plural formation). Because of this, this thesis or study provide descriptive analyses on the formation of the plurals in terms of affixation (i.e. suffixation) like the feminine sound plurals (FSP) and the masculine sound plurals (MSP) on the one hand; and the revowelling plural formation by the revowelling technique or process or operation like broken plurals (BP) or rather revowelling broken plurals (RBP) as we implicationally propose. Also, there is no
literature or previous studies on TYA that provide morphosyntactic representations of gender–number agreement and definiteness agreement between nouns and attributive adjectives. Even the relevant phonology of TYA has not been dealt with in the literature or previous studies.

So, the present work is both empirical and theoretical in presentation based on an observation and descriptive analysis of corpus of TYA data that is collected from different sources and is substantiated with adequate theoretical foundations. The approach is empirical, i.e. the facts and statements are informed by evidence drawn from such corpus.

In order to avoid possible regional variation in TYA, we have tried, in the whole thesis, to illustrate pan-dialectal phenomena by examples from a single dialect, Zabid Arabic, the TYA spoken in Zabid city, the city of the present researcher and his wife as well as all TYA informants. The transcription is a simplified, slightly modified and unified adaptation of IPA and the various conventions adhered to in the literature.

This dissertation also raises issues related to the implications of TYA data. Definitions of TYA forms are provided in the form of English glosses and translations, and they are elaborated upon when the need calls for it. Furthermore, certain theoretical implications can be derived from this study.

To highlight the characteristics and the unique linguistics features of this TYA dialect, it is compared at some points with MSA, CA and some other modern Arabic dialects.

By the deletion of the TYA unique linguistic features represented in its over-generalized nominative case (OGNC) /u/ or pausal /u/, this study will have a global impact in case of the study of other modern Arabic dialects.

This study should, if Allah wills or by Allah willing, fill some of the major gaps that exist in linguistic studies of Tihami dialect in Yemen and contribute to the
field of Semitic as well as Arabic linguistics by providing such descriptive analysis of the nominal phonology, morphology, and morphosyntax of TYA.

This thesis is both empirical and theoretical research study based on the descriptive analysis of TYA data, utilizing modern methodological and analytical techniques. The linguistic relationship among TYA, MSA, CA and other modern Arabic dialects highlights the theoretical and empirical problems of linguistic analysis and description. This study is both exploratory and analytic in nature, and is divided into six chapters.

**Organization of the thesis**

The presentation of this dissertation is conducted in the following way:

Chapter I is divided into eight sections: general introduction in (1.0); objectives in (1.1), methodology and procedure in (1.2), scope of the thesis in (1.3); organization of the thesis in (1.4), Backgrounds on Yemeni Arabic and Arabic in general in section (1.5); sound system in TYA in (1.6) showing some introductory notes; Morphophonological alternations I (1.7) and General Morphological Elements, Principles and Concepts in (1.8). All these which are considered to be necessary for the core discussion of this dissertation are presented and discussed in this introductory chapter.

In chapter 2 (Structure of Nouns in TYA) and especially in section (2.1), we will deal with a descriptive study and analysis of the structure of nouns and their patterns in TYA. These are mono-consonantal patterns, bi-consonantal patterns, tri-consonantal patterns, quadri-consonantal patterns and others. The TYA nouns under such patterns, and which are considered to be the lexical corpus of the data collected and observed from tape & digital recordings, responses of direct elicitation and personal communications and interviews, are cited in the absolute form of the singular. The singular noun with a certain pattern will be considered as an input that undergoes plural formation by one of these techniques: (Revowelling or Affixation). In other words section (2.1) will deal with the morphological structure of TYA singular nouns and their patterns as inputs, including verbal nouns (VN), occupational nouns
(ON), singulative (sing.) nouns, collective (CN) some of mass nouns (mass), place nouns (PN), instrumental nouns (IN), and Hypostatic nouns (HN), etc. This nominal morphology is root-pattern morphology where different morphological categories are produced through the inter-digitations of roots and vowels which might be accompanied by affixes. Such a process is a very productive method in word creation or formation as has been pointed out in the main body of this work.

No attempt will be made to include taboo nouns or proper nouns or personal names.

Section 2.2 (Noun Inflectional Forms) of this chapter will be devoted to the discussion and analysis of the noun inflectional patterns and forms such as the formation of the dual forms (like English, are commonly used) and the formation of the nominal plurals and their patterns in TYA (which is really not a simple matter), using the following plural techniques:

(i) Affixation (i.e. suffixation with or without change in the stem);
(ii) Revowelling (i.e. an internal vocalic change in the stem (ablaut), (such internal vocalic change will be slightly different from the internal vocalic changes or Internal Vowel Manipulation (IVM) observed in MSA, CA or many of the modern Arabic dialects));
(iii) Revowelling or affixation (i.e. (i), or (ii) shown above);
(iv) Combination of (i) and (ii) shown above in the same plural form; and in addition to these, there might be
(v) A few irregular plurals.

These four types will be respectively referred to as (i) Sound Plural (SP) (i.e. purely affixal (suffixal in most cases)) including masculine sound plural (MSP) that is used mostly for humans (+H) and feminine sound plural (FSP) that is used for both human and non-human nouns; (ii) Broken Plurals (BP) exploiting a major shift in vowel quality by the Revowelling process; (iii) BP or SP in different forms; (iv) BP and SP in the same form; and in addition to these, there might be (v) a few irregular plurals.

The multi-tired analysis of templatic prosodic morphology developed by McCarthy, (1982), McCarthy and Prince (1990) in case of Classical Arabic and by Ratcliffe (1992) will be followed in analyzing the broken plural (BP) patterns and
forms of nouns in TYA. For example, the TYA BP qluubu “hearts” would be analyzed as follows:

**Figure (1) Multi-linear representation of the BP qluubu “hearts”:**

Root tier / consonant melody  
\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\text{q} & \text{l} & \text{b} \\
\end{array}
\]

Skeletal tier /template/pattern  
\[
C_1C_2VVC_3V
\]

Vocalic melody tier/vowel melody:  
\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
u & u \\
\end{array}
\]

Giving: qluubu “hearts”

Section 2.3 (Numerals in TYA) of this chapter gives a brief descriptive analysis of TYA numerals. It provides briefly an outline of some of the general structure of the morphology and syntax of TYA numerals, with examples taken mostly from the researcher and his wife as native speakers of the TYA dialect and from data collection from TYA native speakers. Consultation of some other contexts, wherever necessary, from other varieties of Arabic has been taken into consideration and this is for the purpose of showing the slightly different forms of TYA. Some rules and illustrative examples are presented in numerical order, cardinal numerals first and then ordinal numerals, fractions are also taken into consideration. The morphological treatment of the TYA numerals, unlike that of nouns and their patterns discussed in the previous two sections of this chapter, is going to be done separately not as a form class/ pattern. This is because, TYA numerals belong to more than one class/ pattern. However, they are treated as ‘a semantic class whose members have a common morphological patterning’ according to Aboul-Fetouh, (1969) in case of ECA).

Section 2.4 (Loanwords in TYA) of this chapter gives a brief descriptive analysis of loanwords in TYA. It provides briefly an outline of the morphological structure of loanwords in TYA. The morphological treatment of the loanwords in TYA is also going to be done separately not as a form class/ pattern. This is because some loanwords fit so well into the root–pattern system of TYA, the other some do not. Many examples of the data of loanwords in TYA are taken from the researcher and his wife and from data collection from TYA native speakers. Some other examples are reproduced from Assuuswh (2007, pp158-169), Al-Omariy (2000, pp. 418-419), Al-Ahdal (2004, p. 15). All examples have been checked by the present researcher as well as his wife and by TYA informants in personal communications,
especially in the case of their plurals in the system of TYA. Consultation of the origin and gloss of some foreign words/loanwords have been taken from the following sources mentioned in the bibliography: The Browser's Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases by Varchaver, Mary and Frank Ledlie Moore (2001), Abdu, Hussein Ramadan (1988) in case of the Italian loanwords in colloquial Libyan Arabic as spoken in the Tripoli region, and Butros, Albert Jamil (1963) in case of the English loanwords in the colloquial Arabic of Palestine. Loanwords in TYA, like in Arabic in general, cover both specific and general subjects and some of them belong to words of everyday use (cf. Bakalla, 1984, p. 75). The word lists for the loanwords in TYA are displayed according to their origin and according to the plural they take. Most of non-science and technology words have broken plurals by the Revowelling process and the science and technology forms have feminine sound plurals (FSP) by the affixation process (i.e. suffixation with –aatu plural suffix).

Section 2.5 (Some Remarks on the TYA Historical Development) of this chapter gives briefly some remarks on the TYA historical development. It provides briefly an outline and a descriptive analysis with supportive rules and illustrative examples and representations in tables and figures that there is a major historical development which has affected the word (Noun and Adjective) structure/pattern. It will show that all tri-consonantal structures/pattern of the MSA C1vC2C3 as in qalb, nigm, and durg “heart, star and drawer” resulting from the loss of case-ending, have developed to C1vC2C3u structures/patterns in TYA as in qalbu, nigmu, and durgu “heart, star and drawer”, since a final cluster of two consonants (unless geminate) is not permitted by the MSA syllable structure which allows only Cv. CvV. CvC and CvVC, but not CvCC unless a geminate cluster at the end of the word (cf. Hamid (1984, p. 17) in case of Sudanese Colloquial Arabic (SCA)). This result will, in fact, lead to certain differences or discrepancies between TYA on the one hand, and MSA and its modern Arabic dialects, on the other hand. This phenomenon will also be applicable to quadri-consonantal patterns and quinque-consonantal patterns, but since this is not our scope in this thesis, we will focus only on some of the tri-consonantal patterns such as the aforementioned TYA C1vC2C3u vs. MSA C1vC2C3. It will also show that all structures/patterns of the MSA C1ayC3 as in bayt “house” and C1awC3 as in 0awr “ox, bull” have developed to C1eeC3u as in beetu “house” and C100C3u 0ooru “ox, bull”, respectively in TYA, changing the vowel /a/ into /e/ or /o/ before /y or /w/ respectively and eliding the /y/ or /w/ which resulted in ‘Compensatory Lengthening’
(De Chene, Brent and Stephen R. Anderson (1979)) of the preceding vowel /e/ or /o/,
respectively. In the sub-section (2.5.5) a descriptive analysis of the development of
feminine marker from CA /-at/ or MSA /-a(h)/ to TYA /-ah/-eh/ will be provided. In
the sub-section (2.5.6) we provide a descriptive analysis, a historical background and
an argument for the developmental phenomenon of the Tihami Yemeni Arabic (TYA)
pausal /u/ in particular such as ktaab-u “a book”, kutub-u “books” and kabiir-u “big”,
versus the pausal phenomenon in Arabic in general such as kitaab “a book”, kutub
“books” and kabiir “big”. It will be mentioned there that it is noteworthy to point out
that the remarks on the TYA Historical Development represented above will also be
applicable to the plural forms of majority of nouns discussed in chapter 2 as well as
majority of adjectives discussed in chapter 3.

In chapter 3 (Structure of Adjectives in TYA) especially in section (3.1), we
will deal with identification, classification, discussions and a morphological analysis
of adjective patterns and (their illustrative forms) in Tihami Yemeni Arabic (TYA).
These are tri-consonantal pattern, augmented tri-consonantal patterns, quadri-
consonantal patterns, etc. The TYA adjectives under such patterns and which are
considered to be the lexical corpus of the TYA data collected and observed from tape
& digital recordings, responses of direct elicitation and personal communications and
interviews, are cited in the absolute form of the singular. The singular adjective with a
certain pattern will be considered as an input that undergoes the plural formation by
one of the plural techniques: Revowelling or Affixation. There is no attempt will be
made to include taboo words/adjectives. Section 3.2 (Noun Inflectional Forms) of this
chapter, will be devoted to the discussion and analysis of the adjective inflectional
forms and patterns, such as the formation of the singular feminine and the formation
of adjectival plurals and their patterns, using the following plural techniques:

(i) Affixation (i.e. suffixation with or without change in the stem);
(ii) Revowelling (i.e. an internal vocalic change in the stem (ablaut), (such internal
vocalic change will be slightly different from the internal vocalic changes or Internal
Vowel Manipulation (IVM) observed in MSA, CA or many of the modern Arabic
dialects));
(iii) Revowelling or affixation (i.e. (i), or (ii) shown above);
These four types, slightly similar to those discussed under section (2.2.2.3), will be respectively referred to as (i) Sound Plural (SP) (i.e. purely affixical (suffixical in most cases)) including masculine sound plural (MSP) that is used mostly for humans (+H); (ii) Broken Plurals (BP) exploiting a major shift in vowel quality by the Revowelling process; (iii) BP or SP in different forms; (iv) BP and SP in the same form; and in addition to these, there might be (v) a few irregular plurals.

The multi-tired analysis of templatic prosodic morphology developed by McCarthy, (1982), McCarthy and Prince (1990) in case of Classical Arabic and by Ratcliffe (1992) will be followed in analyzing the broken plural (BP) patterns and forms of adjectives in TYA. For example, the TYA BP Humru “red” would be analyzed as follows:

**Figure (2) Multi-linear representation of the BP Humru “red (M&F)”**:

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Root tier / consonant melody     H m r
Skeletal tier / template/pattern  C_1 V C_2 C_3 u
Vocalic melody tier/vowel melody: u   u
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Giving: Humru “red (M&F)”

In chapter 4 (Broken Plural vs. Sound Plural assignments in TYA: Revowelling vs. Affixation), we will deal with the descriptive and morphological analysis of the BP vs. SP assignment to TYA nouns and adjectives. The opposition of broken vs. sound plural generally corresponds to that between internal vs. external, ablaut vs. suffixical forms or revowelling vs. affixation. Acquaviva (2008, p. 195) points out that: “Glossing over many complications, the opposition of broken vs sound plural generally corresponds to that between internal vs. external, ablaut vs. suffixical forms.” In this chapter, a set of general principles that are construed to govern this assignment will be proposed.

The most important claim being that the type of plural received by an input singular noun or adjective form is crucially determined by information from outside
the input’s form. As a result, it is argued that serious difficulties will be met by a
treatment on the structure of the input’s form. The descriptive analysis supported by
discussions, interpretations, reinterpretations and unusual treatments will draw heavily
on the autosegmental framework developed in Goldsmith (1976), McCarthy (1982
and elsewhere) and Abd-Rabbo (1988 and 1990). It will also draw heavily on two
morphological constraints: the Number of Consonant Constraint (NCC) and Avoid
Homophony (-AH), introduced in Abd-Rabbo (1988 and 1990) as important
principles that determine the form of CA/MSA morphology as well as, I argue, the
form of TYA Morphology. The NCC will be a restriction on the number of
consonants (i.e. tri-consonantal (TC), quadric-consonantal (QC), or quinque-
consonantal (QqC)) in the input forms to morphological operations as well as
different specifications of rules and templates. The function of AH in certain cases is
to block the derivation of outputs for which there exist homophonous forms in the
language. Such homophonous forms are either listed in the lexicon or derived earlier
than the outputs in question. For example, the masculine adjective/ nominalized
adjective mqaatlu “fighting” does not receive BP, although it qualifies for it, since it
has four consonants. Its behavior can be explained, by invoking Avoid Homophony
(AH), facts of use and degree of lexicalization. If mqaatlu is to take the quadri-
consonantal broken plural (QC BP), it becomes maqaatlu. But maqaatlu is the plural
of maqtalu (a place Noun of the TC root /qtl/ meaning “a place (in the body) where a
blow could kill”. The noun maqtalu is given priority over the adjective mqaatlu for
BP formation, since nouns are generally given priority for BP formation over
adjectives. Thus AH block BP formation.

Eligibility of geminates for BP vs. SP assignment, the order of the two
morphological rules, viz. BP Formation Rule and Metathesis Rule given to produce
the surface structure and finally interpretation or reinterpretation of BP vs. SP
assignment in foreign words/ loan words found in TYA will all be proposed and
provided in this chapter.

In chapter 5 (Agreement between nouns and attributive adjectives in TYA),
we propose a descriptive analysis of gender–number agreement (henceforth GN
agreement) as well as definiteness agreement between nouns and attributive adjectives
in Tihami Yemeni Arabic (TYA). This is in accordance with the limitations and
delimitations of the thesis realized in its title. The nature of such agreement on the
light of MSA, CA and modern Arabic dialects as well as some consequences for morphosyntactic representations (following Kihm (2003), Kremers (2003) and others) are also presented in this chapter. Also, in the morphosyntactic analysis what we are going to suggest is an analysis such that the initial structure of, e.g., am-ktaab am-gdiid (the-book the-new “the new book”) would be as in (3):

\[(3) \ [DP [D^o] \ [XP [X^o] \ [YP gdiid [Y^o] \ [NP [N^o ktaab]]]]] \]

Because adjectives fully agree with nouns in Arabic and sometimes in TYA, N^o raises to the head of the modifier projection YP, thus giving rise to an agreement configuration with the adjective in Spec YP, and from there to the head of an intermediate projection XP between DP and YP. N^o is inherently specified for the definiteness feature, so that ktaab in (3) ought to be written down as ktaab [+def]. As it passes through the head of YP, ktaab [+def] triggers definiteness (as well as Gender-Number agreement of the adjective, i.e. it sets gdiid’s D-feature value at <+>). Then ktaab [+def] adjoins to D^o, setting its unspecified value to <+>. [+def] spells out as /am-/ on both the adjective and the noun. This definite article am-, the Himyaritic am-, is another unique linguistic feature in TYA as it is different from the definite article al- observed in CA, MSA and all other modern Arabic dialects.

TYA definite quantified expressions such as ‘the five books’ appear under the following two forms in ((4) & (5)):

(4) am-kutub am-xams-eh
    the-book.M.BP the-five-Fsg
    “The five books”

(5) am-xams-eh am-kutub
    the-five-Fsg the-book.M.BP
    “The five books”

The examples in (4) and (5) look like an ordinary noun–adjective construction, with the post-nominal or pre-nominal numeral showing deflected agreement for gender and being overtly definite. This is different (especially in (5)) from the definite quantified expressions such as ‘the five books’ observed in other varieties of Arabic (see Kihm (2003) and Shlonsky (2004)).
In chapter 6 (Summary and Conclusions), we summarize and conclude the study by presenting the salient features and findings of TYA in this dissertation. This chapter also delineates the limitations and delimitations of this thesis and contains specific comments on the observations made in the process of this research. The contributions of this dissertation and suggestions and recommendations for further investigation and research are also discussed in chapter 6.