Hassâniyya Arabic

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Ḥassāniyya Arabic

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Ḥassāniyya (or *klām əl-Bīḍān* 'language of the Whites') is the mother tongue of the Arabic-speaking population of the western Sahara, especially the Moors (Bīḍān) of Mauretania and the former Spanish Sahara (from the Sagya el-Ḥamra and the Rio del Oro). It is difficult to draw the precise geographical limits of this dialect, but its approximate borders are Goulimine in the north, Tindouf in the northeast, Tombouctou in the southeast and the Senegal River in the south. The percentage of Ḥassāniyya speakers is highest in the central regions. There are about 3 million speakers, around 2 million living in Mauretania, out of a total estimated population of 2,9 million. By the middle of the 20th century, most speakers still had a Bedouin lifestyle.

The origin of the Ḥassāniyya is linked (as indicated by its name) to the arrival of the Banū Ḥassān, a branch of the Maᶜqil Arabs – who were themselves linked to the movements of territorial expansion of the Banū Hilāl and the Banū Sulaym. Ḥassāniyya is a Bedouin dialect that is part of the western dialect group (Maghrebi) and has developed in a Berber-speaking environment. Despite the influence of the substrate and because of its Bedouin nature, it has more in common with eastern Arabic dialects, most of which (though not all) are Bedouin, than with Maghrebi dialects like Moroccan and Algerian.

Ḥassāniyya is rarely used as a lingua franca, even if certain Black-African Mauretanians are more or less proficient in it. It is not used as a means of written communication; Literary Arabic (Classical or Standard) or a foreign language, in particular French, are used for writing. An important oral literature exists, most of it poetry, but the conditions that gave rise to this literature are rapidly changing (—> Mauretania).

Ḥassāniyya has been studied extensively, but no recent manuals exist, except in xeroxed form. A reference grammar was published by Cohen (1963). Although its subtitle is 'Dialect of the Gabla', it may be regarded as typical of the dialect variety that is spoken in Mauretania as well as in the former Spanish Sahara. An overview of the grammar is given in the introduction to Taine-Cheikh's Ḥassāniyya/French dictionary (1988:I-CIII). For grammatical details see Taine-Cheikh's articles, which appeared in particular in *Materiaux Arabes et Sudarabiques*.

Ḥassāniyya shows an exceptional unity, with a few exceptions. Genuine Ḥassāniyya speakers, as well as unilingual or, more often, bilingual people speaking a variety that differs from the standard dialect, can be found at the Moroccan, Malian, and probably Algerian borders. The dialects of these speakers are so different that they are virtually incomprehensible to the uninformed Ḥassāniyya speaker (Taine-Cheikh 1997; Heath 2002, 2004). Nowadays, this variation is largely individual, but formerly it was often linked to the history of certain tribal groups, such as the Tekna of Morocco or the Brābīš and the Kunta of Mali.

In the 1970s, under the influence of Arab nationalist movements and in the context of forced settlement, intellectuals and their students have developed a form of Arabic that was a mix of dialect and Modern Standard Arabic, used in political discussions (Taine-Cheikh 1978). This 'middle' Arabic has spread gradually, introducing many new words in the traditionally very rural dialectal lexicon.

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2. LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION

Ḥassāniyya is a relatively conservative language (at least when compared to other Maghrebi dialects) but it has also developed several innovations, in particular certain morphosyntactic patterns (Taine-Cheikh 1991). The Berber substrate does not seem to have had a large influence on the structure of Arabic. Its presence may be perceived in the lexicon, but since most loanwords receive a special treatment, their influence is usually limited. Where common forms exist between Ḥassāniyya and Mauretanian Berber (Zenaga), it is often hard to attribute the source to either language. In several cases, a parallel development may have taken place, facilitated by the remote genealogical relation between Arabic and Berber. This development may have been furthered by the progressive disappearance of Zenaga and a process of osmosis between Arabic- and Berber-speaking groups.

2.1 *Phonology*

2.1.1 Consonants

2.1.1.1 Inventory (Table 1)

	velarized	labial	inter-dental	dental	pre-palatal	post-palatal	velar	pharyn-geal	laryn-geal
plosive voiced	-	b		d	d^y	g			
	+	ḅ		ḍ					
plosive voiceless	-			t	t^y	k			(ʔ)
	+			ṭ			q		
continuant voiced	-	v	ḏ	z	ž		ġ	'	
	+	(v)	ḏ̣	ẓ					
continuant voiceless	-		Ú	s	š		x	ḥ	h
	+			ṣ					
nasal	-	m		n	n^y				
	+	ṃ		(ṇ)					
lateral	-			l					
	+			ḷ					
vibrant	-			r					
	+			ṛ					
semivowel		w			y				

/ġ/ is attested only among certain speakers (mainly in the west, southwest and northwest) when it is not geminated. /ġ/ and /q/ have merged, being realized as [q] by the other Ḥassāniyya speakers (centre, east and northeast Mauretania, Mali and Algeria) and, by all, in all case of gemination (/ġġ/ realised [qq] as in Zenaga).

The phonological system is rich. Ḥassāniyya tends to phonemicize the opposition emphatic/non-emphatic (especially for the vibrants, /ṛ/ being more frequent than /r/) and to preserve the pronunciation of some of the borrowed lexemes, hence the presence of phonemes from Classical Arabic (/ḍ/, /q/, or even /ʔ/), Zenaga (/ẓ/, /dʸ/, /tʸ/, /nʸ/) and even from Black African languages (/q/ and the palatalized consonants).

Yet, certain phonemes remain marginal, especially in loanwords and the velarized *ḅ, ṃ, ṇ, γ*). It is often difficult to find minimal pairs, except for *l ~ ḷ, g~ q* and above all *r~ṛ*: *dār/idīr* 'to put' vs. *dāṛ/idōṛ* 'to want'; *gās* 'to go toward' vs. *qās* 'measure'; *gām* 'to get up' vs. *qām* 'to prepare the tea'; *ḍall* 'to err [in religion]' vs. *ḍall* 'to spend the day'; *zanga* 'to skirt around while going up' vs. *ẓanga* 'to make someone pay a tribute'; *walla* 'to come back' vs. *waḷḷa* 'or'; *bəṛga* 'shacks' vs. *ḅəṛga* 'bad quality tea'; *tamātāya* '(a) gum tree' vs. *taṃātāya* '(a) tomato'.

Even though the status of some phonemes is problematic (especially in the case of *ṇ* and *γ*), this does not challenge the existence of emphasis (for an opposite position see Zavadovskij 1981:26–27).

2.1.1.2 Historical remarks on the inventory
Ḥassāniyya is characterized by the realization of *qāf* as [g], the maintaining of the interdentals (/ḏ/ being the reflex of most words with *ḍād* in Classical Arabic) and the disappearance of the *hamza* (often compensated, at the end of the syllable, by lengthening of the preceding vowel).

2.1.1.3 Phonetic realization
/j/ is realized as a palato-alveolar fricative [Ž]. The labial spirant is realized preferentially as a voiced consonant [v], except in contact with a voiceless consonant or when it is geminate. This realization is particular to this dialect (with the exception of the Ḥassāniyya of the Mali).

2.1.1.4 Distribution
The emphasis of the vibrant varies sometimes according to the context. Emphasis may be lost or absent in the presence of /y/, /ī/ or even /ə/: ʕ*ašṛa* 'ten', ʕ*əšrīn* 'twenty', ʕ*āšər* 'to count by tens'. More generally, the assimilation of sonority and emphasis — in particular for /s/~/ṣ/, /z/~/ẓ/ — is frequent among the consonants, whether in contact or not: ʕ*rīs* 'bride groom', but ʕ*ṛūṣ* 'bride'. Extended to all the forms of the same root, this helps to explain certain differences with Classical Arabic (sometimes common to other dialects), e.g. *t-f-l*: *dvəl* 'to spit' (but in the east and in Mali: *tfəl*), *q-t-l*: *ktəl* 'to kill', *ṣ-ġ-r*: *sġayyər* 'small', *ẓ-ʔ-y*: *ẓwä* 'to twitter'. There are also some conditioned alterations between sibilant and palato-alveolar fricatives belonging to the same root (assimilation with loss of the palato-alveolar fricative), thus *n-s-ž*: *näzz* 'to weave', *ž-z-z*: *zäzz* 'to shear'.

2.1.1.5 Sociolinguistic variables
Some tendencies appear among the least educated groups, such as the marginalization of /ḍ/; in the southwest, the merger of /q/ and /ġ/ and, only in a limited region, the tendency to emphasize *t* in contact: [ṭra:b] 'earth'.

2.1.2 Vowels
Table 2. Vowels

long	short	
	opened syllable	closed syllable
/ī/	/i/	/ə/
/ū/	/u/	
/ā/	/a/	/a/

The merger of /i/ and /u/ in closed syllables is characteristic of the nomadic dialects (Cohen 1970). The short phonemes /a/ and /ə/ are realized variably, according to context. In a neutral context, /a/ undergoes ’imāla and is realized more centralized (transcribed *ä*). Long vowels have variable length: long under the accent, average apart from the accent, and short in final position. Final long vowels are lengthened again before a suffix: *šāvu* ‘they have seen’, *šāvū-h* ‘they have seen him/her/it’. When /ā/ is realized as a short vowel, it undergoes ’imāla: *žä* ‘he came’, *žā-h* ‘he came to him’.

2.1.3 Diphthongs
The four former diphthongs are preserved: /ay/, /aw/, /iy/, and /uw/. However, the realization of /ay/ and /aw/ sometimes tends towards [e:] and [o:].

2.1.4 Syllable
Because of the general preference for closed syllables, short vowels in open syllables are rare, apart from loanwords and in final position. They are found, however, in several initial syllables in which the short syllable represents a first radical *w/y* (*uvä* ‘he is over') or plays an important morphological role (*aḥmaṛ* ‘red’, *ikättäb* ‘he makes [them] write’, *udägdäg* ‘to be broken’).

The most frequent syllabic type is CVC and CVV, but syllables with double coda CVCC or double-onset CCVC are frequent. Closed syllables with long vowels (CVVC) are attested, especially in the participles, *kātbīn* ‘writing [pl.]’. Several open syllables have a secondary origin (3rd radical *w/y*): *žäru < žərw* ‘young dog’ (fem. *žərwä*).

2.1.5 Consonant clusters
The general rule for consonant clusters is to introduce epenthetic vowels after elision of short vowels in an open syllable, *malḥafa* > /malḥfa/ ‘veil (of the women)’ [realized [mælᵊḥfæ]. In monosyllabic nouns, metathesis is regular, except in loans from Classical Arabic: [ṭfəl] ‘boy’ (but [ṭəvl-u] ‘his boy’).

2.1.6 Stress
Stress is on the third mora from the end of the word, e.g., on the first syllable in *mäktäb* ‘desk’, on the second in *mäktūb* ‘written’. It is strongly marked only on long vowels (accent of length rather than intensity). A lot of grammatical morphemes are clitics.

2.2 *Morphology*

2.2.1 Pronouns
The gender opposition is never marked in the 1st person.

2.2.1.1 Personal independent pronouns (Table 3)

Table 3. Personal pronouns

		singular	plural
3rd	masc.	*huwwä, hūwä*	*hūmä*
	fem.	*hiyyä, hīyä*	*hūmāti*
2nd	masc.	*(ə)ntä*	*(ə)ntūmä*
	fem.	*(ə)nti, (ə)ntiyyä*	*(ə)ntūmāti*
1st		*ānä*	*(ə)ḥnä, naḥnä*

2.2.1.2 Possessive/object suffixes (Table 4)

The clitic pronoun of the 1st person singular has two different forms, after a verb (*šāv-ni* 'he saw me') or after a preposition (*vī-yä* 'in me') or noun (*ktāb-i* 'my book'). In certain special contexts (e.g., after *mā-* 'not', *mən-* 'who?'), a short form of the independent pronoun is used for the 3rd person singular: masc. *-hu*, fem. *-hi*. The possessive pronouns consist of a base that varies according to gender in the singular (masc. *līl-* fem. *līlt-*; pl. *lwāyl-*) and of an affix pronoun: *līl-i* 'mine'.

Table 4.Possessive/object suffixes

			singular		plural
			after a consonant	after a vowel	
1st		object suffixes	-ni		-nä
		possessive suffixes	-i	-yä	
2nd	masc.		-ak	-k	-kum
	fem.		-ək		
3rd	masc.		-u (-ū-)	-h	-hum
	fem.		-hä (-hā-)		

2.2.1.3 Demonstratives (Table 5)

Table 5. Demonstratives

	masc. sg.	fem. sg.	pl.
proximity or neutral use 'this'	*ḏä*	*ḏi*	*ḏu*
proximity (*hā-*) 'this one, this'	*hāḏä*	*hāḏi*	*hāḏu*
distance (*-k*) 'that one, that'	*ḏāk*	*ḏīk*	*ḏūk*

2.2.1.4 Presentatives

The presentatives consist of an independent personal pronoun (in the sg,, short or long form), preceded by a demonstrative or a particle with a verbal origin: *ḏähu(wwä)* 'here', *ḏākhu(wwä)* 'there', *(a)ṛahu(wwä)* 'there he is': *ḏīkhi(yyä) maṛyäm* 'there is Mariem'.

2.2.1.5 Relative pronoun

The relative pronoun is invariable in gender and in number: *lli* (sometimes *əl*) 'who, what'.

2.2.1.6 Interrogative pronouns

Interrogative pronouns include *mən* 'who?' (*mən-hu* 'who is it?'); *š(ə)-* 'what?' and its variants: *-āš* after a preposition; *šən-* in *šən-hu* 'what is it?'; *äyy* (invariable) 'which one?' (*äyy-kum* 'which one of you?').

2.2.2 Adverbs

i. Interrogative adverbs: *mnäyn* et *wäyn* 'where?', *äyntä* 'when?', *kämm* 'how much?', *əˁl-āš* 'why?', *škīv* 'how?'.
ii. Adverbs of place: *hūn*, *hūnāti(yyä)* 'here', *vämm*, *vämmāti(yyä)* 'there', *hōᵂk*, *hōᵂkāti(yyä)* 'over there', *ilāh* 'toward there', *l-gäddām* 'in front of', *ət-taḥt* 'under', *əl-väwg* 'above'.

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iii. Adverbs of time : *ḍaṛk, ḍaṛkāti(yyä)* 'now', *l-yäwm* 'today', *ġdä* 'tomorrow', *əṣ-ṣəbḥ* 'tomorrow morning', *yāməs* 'yesterday', *əl-bārəḥ* 'yesterday night', *əl-läylä* 'tonight'.

iv. Adverbs of quantity: *yāsər* 'a lot', *ḥattä* 'very', *šwäyy* 'little/few'.

2.2.3 Particles

The *l* of the definite articles *əl-* assimilates to all 'sunletters' and to *ž*. There is no indefinite article and no particle of the genitive. The verbal negative form is *mā* in assertive sentences (without a second element), *lā* with the imperative. In a nominal sentence, the negative form is combined with the suffix pronouns (*mā-ni, mā-n-ak*, etc.).

i. Prepositions: *və* (*vī-* + pronoun) 'in', *'lä* (*ə'lī-*) 'on', *bə* (*bī-*) 'with', *mən* 'de', *'and* 'by', *šäwṛ* 'toward', *gäddām* 'in front of', *uṛa* 'behind, after', *sābəg* 'before', *taḥt* 'under', *väwg* 'above'.

ii. Subordinating conjunctions: *'an, änn* 'that', *mnäyn* 'when', *bī(h)əlli* 'because', *äyyāk, bbāš* 'for', *ilā, iḍa* 'if' (condition), *(yä)kān* 'whether' (indirect interrogation).

iii. Coordinating conjunctions : *wə / u* 'and', *waḷḷa* 'or', *(ya)ġäyr/(ya)qäyr* 'but'.

2.2.4 Nouns

The singular feminine form of nouns and adjectives ends in *-a(t)* with a few exceptions such as *'anz* 'goat', *xādəm* 'woman slave', *'ayn* 'eye', *dāṛ* 'house', and *xandūd* 'good milker', *ḥāməl* 'pregnant' (but *ḥāmlä* '[who] wears').

Apart from the broken plurals there is an external plural: masculine *-īn* and feminine *-āt*; there are some —> pseudo-duals such as *uḏnäyn* 'ears, two ears'.

Numerous Berber loanwords have special affixes: prefixes in *a(a)-/i(i)-* for masculine, *ta(a)-/ti(i)-* for feminine nouns; suffixes *-t* for feminine singular and *-ən* for plural nouns.

The pattern C1aC2C2āC3 (nouns of habit, profession) is very frequent: *käḏḏāb* 'liar'.

Adjectives of color and defect: masc. sg. aCCaC, *aḥmaṛ* 'red', fem. sg. CaCCa, *ḥamṛa*, comm. pl. CəCC, *ḥəmṛ*.

aCCaC is also the pattern of the comparative form (invariable): *akbaṛ* 'taller', *aḥmaṛ* 'more red'.

The diminutive formation is very productive and very differentiated for nouns and adjectives: CCayC *kläyb* (< *kälb* 'dog'), CCayyəC *ktäyyəb* (< *ktāb* 'book'), CCayCəC *'gäyrəb* (< *'agrəb* 'scorpion'), CCayCīC *bzäyzīl* (< *bäzzūl* 'udder'), aCayCəC *aḥaymər* (< *aḥmaṛ* 'red').

2.2.5 Numerals

Cardinals 1 and 2 agree in gender: 1 masc. *wāḥəd* fem. *waḥdä*; 2 masc. *äṯnäyn* fem. *ṯäntäyn*. The dual is still productive: *kälb-äyn* 'two dogs'. Certain cardinals have two forms. From 3 to 10, the long form in *-a* is used in the absolute state.

	absolute state	construct state
3	*(ä)ṯlāṯä*	*äṯlət*
4	*aṛb'a*	*aṛba'*
5	*xamsä*	*axməs*
6	*səttä*	*sətt*
7	*säb'a*	*äsba'*
8	*(ä)ṯmānyä*	*äṯmən*
9	*təs'a*	*ətsa'*
10	*'ašṛa*	*ə'šəṛ*

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From 11 to 19, the cardinals are used without final -*ǝ̣r* in the absolute state.

	absolute state	construct state
11	*aḥdaʕš*	*aḥdaʕšǝ̣r*
12	*aṯnaʕš*	*aṯnaʕšǝ̣r*
13	*aṯlǝṭṭaʕš*	*aṯlǝṭṭaʕšǝ̣r*
14	*aṛbaʕṭaʕš*	*aṛbaʕṭaʕšǝ̣r*
15	*axmǝsṭaʕš*	*axmǝsṭaʕšǝ̣r*
16	*sǝṭṭaʕš*	*sǝṭṭaʕšǝ̣r*
17	*äsbaʕṭaʕš*	*äsbaʕṭaʕšǝ̣r*
18	*äṯmǝnṭaʕš*	*äṯmǝnṭaʕšǝ̣r*
19	*ätsaʕṭaʕš*	*ätsaʕṭaʕšǝ̣r*

The number 100 is *miyyä* in the absolute state and *mīt* in the construct state. The other cardinals have an invariable form: 20 *ʕǝšrīn*, 30 *ṯlāṯīn*, 40 *aṛbʕīn*, 50 *xamsīn*, 60 *sǝttīn*, 70 *sähʕīn*, 80 *ṯmānyīn*, 90 *tǝsʕīn*, 200 *mītäyn*, 1,000 *älv*.

With the exception of *äwwäl* 'first', the ordinals have the pattern of the participle *fāʕǝl*: *ṯāni* 'second'.

2.2.6 Verbs

2.2.6.1 Patterns/stems

2.2.6.1.1 Pattern I: 3-radicals
The stem vowels are /a/ or /ǝ/; there are 3 subclasses, the most frequent being that of verbs with a harmony between the two vowels: type a: *ktǝb/yǝktǝb* 'to write' (often root without back consonant); type b: *vtaḥ/yavtaḥ* 'to open'; type c (mixed): *ṛgaṣ/yǝṛgǝṣ* 'to dance'.

The diminutive form **aC1ayC2aC3/yaC1ayC2aC3**: *äkäytäb/yäkäytäb* 'to write with a bad handwriting' is rare.

2.2.6.1.2 Pattern I : 4-radicals
This type is unique, with two stem vowels /a/: *gaṛmaṣ/igaṛmaṣ* 'to pinch'. Particular cases are: (R2 = R4) *baxbax* 'to burst out laughing', (R3 = R4) *baḥšäš* 'to strangle'.

2.2.6.1.3 Derived patterns (Table 6)
The derived forms are numerous and productive. In many cases, there is a correlation between active and reflexive (forms with/without *t-* or *-t-*) and a systematic relation between active and passive (forms with/without *n-* or *u-*). The internal passive has disappeared in Ḥassāniyya (as in most dialects), but a new system of formal oppositions has developed to denote the distinction between middle/reflexive/reflexive-passive, on the one hand, and a real passive form, on the other. Only form 'XI' (expressing a change of state) is isolated in this system.

The stem vowel of the derived forms is always that of the perfect of Form I. Form VIII (rare as middle, *ǝštġal* 'to work') is used as passive of Form I if the first radical is *l, m, n, r, ṛ, w* or an original *hamza*: *(ǝ)rtdǝm* 'to be buried', *(ǝ)ltʕan* 'to be cursed'. Form VII is the regular passive of the theme I: *(ǝ)nktǝb* 'to be written', *ǝnvtaḥ* 'to be opened'.

Table 6. Derived forms

	active meaning*	reflexive meaning	passive meaning
3-radicals	I: C1C2ə/aC3	VIII: (ə)C1**t**C2ə/aC3	VII: (ə)**n**C1C2ə/aC3
doubling R2	II: C1a**C2C2**aC3	VI: **t**C1a**C2C2**aC3	**u**C1a**C2C2**aC3
lengthening V after R1	III: C1**ā**C2əC3	VI: **t**C1**ā**C2əC3	**u**C1**ā**C2əC3
prefix *s-*	'IV': **s**aC1C2aC3	X: **st**aC1C2aC3	**us**aC1C2aC3
lengthening V after R2	'IX': (ə)C1C2**ā**C3	—	—
quadriradicals	C1aC2C3aC4	**t**C1aC2C3aC4	**u**C1aC2C3aC4

Form II is very frequent as causative-factitive and iterative of Form I or denominative: *gaṭṭaˤ* 'to have it cut; to cut in small pieces', *baṛṛag* 'to make it shine'. Form V is frequent as middle or reflexive of Form II: *tgaṭṭaˤ/yətgaṭṭaˤ* 'to cut itself in small pieces'; *u-*II: *ugaṭṭaˤ* 'to be cut in small pieces; to be made to go across'.

Form III is quite frequent as extensive of Form I or causative-factitive of Form VI: *vārəg* 'to separate one from the other'. Form VI is frequent as reciprocal, middle or reflexive of From III: *tvārəg* 'to separate ourselves from one another'; *u-*III: *uvārəg* 'to be separated from one another'.

Form 'IV' has some causatives-factitives of form X): *saˤṛab* 'to arabize', *saḥmaṛ* 'to get it reddish'. Form X is quite frequent as reflexive, middle, and inchoative: *staˤṛab* 'to arabize itself', *staḥmaṛ* 'to become reddish'.

Form 'XI' is rare: *gṣāṛ* 'to become short'.

Examples of derived forms of quadriradical verbs are *baˤṛaṣ* 'to fluster', *tbaˤṛaṣ* 'to fluster oneself', *ubaˤṛaṣ* 'to be flustered'.

2.2.6.2 Inflection of aspects and moods

2.2.6.2.1 Perfect (Table 7)

Table 7. Perfect verb

	Triradicals: type a	Triradicals: type b and c	Quadriradicals:
3rd sg. masc.	*ktəb*	*vtaḫ*	*baˤṛaṣ*
3rd sg. fem.	*kətbət*	*väṯẖət*	*baˤᵊṛṣət*
2nd sg. masc.	*ktəbt*	*vtaḫt*	*baˤṛaṣt*
2nd sg. fem.	*kətbi*	*väṯẖi*	*baˤṛaṣti*
1st sg.	*ktəbt*	*vtaḫt*	*baˤṛaṣt*
3rd pl.	*kətbu*	*väṯẖu*	*baˤᵊṛṣu*
2nd pl.	*ktəbtu*	*vtaḫtu*	*baˤṛaṣtu*
1st pl.	*ktəbnä*	*vtaḫnä*	*baˤṛaṣnä*

2.2.6.2.2 Imperfect (Table 8)

The prefix vowel of the imperfect is always /ə/ for derived verbs beginning with two consonants (V, VI, VII, VIII, X and 'XI'), *yətbaʕraṣ* 'he flusters himself'. The vowel *u-* of the passive form is constant, *yubaʕraṣ* 'he was flustered'.

Table 8. Imperfect verb

	Triradicals: type a and c	Triradicals: type b	Quadriradicals
3rd sg. masc.	*yəktəb*	*yävtaḥ*	*ibaʕraṣ*
3rd sg. fem.	*təktəb*	*tävtaḥ*	*tbaʕraṣ*
2nd sg. masc.	*təktəb*	*tävtaḥ*	*tbaʕraṣ*
2nd sg. fem.	*təkᵊtbi*	*tävᵊthi*	*tbaˤᵊṛṣi*
1st sg.	*nəktəb*	*nävtaḥ*	*nbaʕraṣ*
3rd pl.	*yəkᵊtbu*	*yävᵊṭhu*	*ibaˤᵊṛṣu*
2nd pl.	*təkᵊtbu*	*tävᵊṭhu*	*tbaˤᵊṛṣu*
1st pl.	*nəkᵊtbu*	*nävᵊṭhu*	*nbaˤᵊṛṣu*

2.2.6.2.3 Imperative

	Triradicals: type a and c	Triradicals: type b	Quadriradicals
2nd sg. masc.	*ktəb*	*avtaḥ*	*baʕraṣ*
2nd sg. fem.	*kᵊtbi*	*ävᵊthi*	*baˤᵊṛṣi*
2nd pl.	*kᵊtbu*	*ävᵊṭhu*	*baˤᵊṛṣu*

2.2.6.3 Participles and elatives

Table 10. Participles and elatives

	active	reflexive	passive	elative
—	I	VIII		I and VIII
	C1**ā**C2əC3	məC1**t**C2ə/aC3	mä C1C2**ū**C3	**a**C1C2**a**C3
doubling R2	II	VI		
	mC1a**C2C2**aC3	**mət**C1a**C2C2**aC3	**mu**C1a**C2C2**aC3	**a**C1a**C2C2**aC3
lengthening V	III	VI		
after R1	**m**C1**ā**C2əC3	**mət**C1**ā**C2əC3	**mu**C1**ā**C2əC3	**a**C1**ā**C2əC3
prefix *s-*	'IV'	X		
	msaC1C2aC3	**məst**aC1C2aC3	**mus**aC1C2aC3	**as**aC1C2aC3
quadriradicals	**m**C1aC2aC3aC4	**mət**C1aC2aC3aC4	**mu**C1aC2aC3aC4	**a**C1aC2aC3aC4

All derived verbs have a participial form in *m-* except VII and 'XI'. The participles form their plural form with the suffixes *-īn* and *-āt*. The suffix of the feminine (**-at*) is in *-a*, except before a direct object clitic pronoun: *hiyyä šārbä* 'she drank', *hiyyä šārᵊbt-u* 'she drank it'.

Elatives (invariable) exist for all participles, with an identical form for the forms with/without *t* (Taine-Cheikh 1984:284-290): I (*vāhəm*) *äfhäm mən* 'understanding better

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than'; VIII (*məštmaṛ*) *äšmaṛ mən* 'demonstrating more courage than'; II/V (*mˤalläm, mətˤalläm*) *äˤalläm mən* 'teaching/studying better than'; III/VI (*mvārəg, mətvārəg*) *ävārəg mən* 'separating (themselves) from one another better than'; 'IV'/X (*msaˤrab, məstaˤrab*) *äsaˤrab mən* 'arabizing (oneself) more than'; quadriradicals (I and with *t-*) (*mbaˤraṣ, mətbaˤraṣ*) *abaˤraṣ mən* 'flustering (oneself) more than'.

2.2.6.4 *Verbal nouns*

With the exception of Form 'XI', verbal nouns usually exist for all verbs with a non-passive meaning. The forms vary for I (long or short vowel): *vähm* 'understanding', *ḥsāb* 'act of counting', *ġrīg* 'act of sinking', *rsūl* 'act of sending'. One form prevails for all other cases, often common to verbs with/without *t*: II/V **tə**C1C2**ā**C3, *təbṛāg* 'act of making something shine'; III/VI **t**C1**ā**C2**ī**C3, *tvārīg* 'mutual separation; act of separating from one another'; 'IV'/X **st**aC1C2**ī**C3, *staˤrīb* 'arabization, act of arabizing oneself'; quadriradicals (I and with *t-*) **t**C1aC2C3**ī**C4, *tbaḥšīš* 'strangling, the fact of strangling (oneself)'.

The instance noun is generally in -*a*. It may be accompanied by a pattern change for I (*räslä* '(a) sending') and regularly so for II/V: **tə**C1C2**ī**C3a, *təbṛīgä* 'act of making something shine once'.

2.2.7 Weak verbs

Table 11. Weak verbs

	geminate	I *w/y*	II *w/y*	III *w/y*
type a	2 cas: *ḍall/iḍall* 'to while away the time', *tämm/itämm* 'to go on'	R1 = *w* *uṣal/yäwṣal* 'to arrive'	(rare) R2 = *w*: *xāf/ixāf* 'to be scared' R2 = *y*: *bāt ibāt* 'to spend the night'	R3 = *w/y* (rare) *nsä/yänsä* 'to forget'
type b	—	R1 = *w*: *uzən yūzən* 'to weigh' R1 = *y*: *ibəs yībəs* 'to dry'	R2 = *w*: *gāl igūl* 'to tell' R2 = *y*: *gās igīs* 'to head for'	R2 = *w/y* (frequent) *šrä yəšri* 'to buy'
Type c	R2 = R3 *baṭṭ ibəṭṭ* 'to beat'			
particularities	1st, 2nd pers. perfect in -*äy*-: *baṭṭäyt*	perfect 3rd pers. f., pl. in *w*-: *waṣlət wəznət / ūznət*	1st, 2nd pers. perfect in -*ə*-: *gəlt*	3rd pers. pl. imperfect type a: *yänsāw* type b: *yəšru*
active participle	*bāṭṭ*	*wāzən*	R2 = *w* > /y/: *gāyəl*	*nāsi* (fem. *nāsyä*) *šāri* (fem. *šāryä*)
passive participle	*mäbṭūṭ* (pl. *mbaṭṭa*)	*mäwzūn*	R2 = *w* > /y/: *mägyūl*	*mänsi(yy)* *məšri(yy)*

The derived verbs are generally well attested.

i.   Geminated verbs: Derived forms include Forms III and VI: *sātt/isātt* 'to put per sixes'; *tmāss mˤa* 'to adjoin something'; X: with a joint form *stäxaff* 'not to take something seriously' or disjunctive *stägläl* 'regard as rare'.

ii.   I *ʔalif*: In integrated borrowings from Classical Arabic, the first radical of this verbs is represented by *ā* : *āḏ̣ən əl* 'to authorize'; X: *stāxaṛ* 'to move back'.

iii.   I *w/y*: Form VIII has a passive meaning: *ūtzən yūtzən* 'to be weighed'.

iv.   II *w/y*: The alternation *ā~ə* attested in the perfect of Form I likewise occurs in the derived forms VII, VIII and IX; VIII: *ḥtāl* 'he was crafty', *ḥtəlt* 'I was crafty'; Form X: with *ā*, *stävād* 'to take advantage of'; with *w* or *y*, *stälyän* 'to become suppler'.

v.   III *w/y*: The vowel of the 3rd person sg. is always /ā/ in the perfect. In the imperfect /ī/ is used in forms II, III, 'IV' and single quadriradicals verbs; /ā/ is used in forms V, VI, VII, VIII, X, quadriradicals verbs with *t-* and all the *u*-forms.

vi.   Irregular verbs: There are two verbs with 'mixed' conjugation (perfect of II *w*, imperfect of I *w*) *kāl yäwkäl* 'to eat', participles *wākəl* and *mäwkūl*, and *xāḏ̣/yäwxaḏ̣* 'to get out'. *žä/iži* 'to go', participle *žāy*.

2.3 *Syntax*

The syntax of the dialect shows only a few specificities when compared with the other Bedouin dialects of the Maghreb.

2.3.1 Noun phrase
The main characteristic of the noun phrase is the preservation of the synthetic construction.

2.3.1.1 Expression of definiteness and indefiniteness
The presence/absence of the definite article *əl* marks definiteness, except in the construct state and with certain masculine nouns borrowed from Berber (generally beginning with *a(a)-* or *i(i)-*): *kälb* '(a) dog' ~ *əl-kälb* 'the dog', *ävūk* '(a ~ the) veal'.

The demonstrative generally precedes the noun, which is always determined: *ḏīk-əd-dāṛ* 'this house'. Sometimes, it follows the noun, especially with proper nouns: *ṭəvl aḥmäd ḏāk* 'this son of Ahmad', 'the son of this Ahmad'. There is no indefinite article. The partitive is expressed with *mən* 'of': *wāḥəd mən lə-ktūb* 'one of the books', *ktāb mən lə-ktūb* 'any of the books'.

2.3.1.2 Construct state
Possession is expressed by the construct state: *ktāb əṭ-ṭfəl* 'the book of the boy', *ktāb-u* 'his book'. There is no genitive particle in Ḥassāniyya, except, infrequently, in Morocco: *dyāl* (Taine-cheikh 1999:98-99), *ntāˤ* (Heath 2002:7).

2.3.1.3 Numeral phrase
If the counted noun is indetermined, the numerals (from 3 upward) are always constructed as nouns in annexion: *ˤašrīn žmäl* 'twenty camels'. The form used is the one of the construct state: from 3 to 10 short and/or contracted (*axməs äklāb* 'five dogs''; with a *-t* suffix before some masculine forms with an original *hamza*, *axməs-t äyyām* 'five days'); from 11 to 19 long with *-əṛ* (*axməṣṭaˤšəṛ ktāb* 'fifteen books').

If the counted noun is determined, the numeral is constructed as an adjective (invariable in gender from 2 upward): *l-äklāb l-äṯnäyn* 'the two dogs', *ktūb aḥmäd əl-ˤašrīn* 'the twenty books of Ahmed', *žmāl-u l-miyyä* 'his hundred camels'. The form used is the one

of the absolute state: from 3 to 10 long in -a (*l-äklāb l-xamsä* 'the five dogs'); from 11 to 19 short without -*ər* (*lə-ktūb l-axməsṭaʕš* 'the fifteen books').

2.3.1.4 Adjectives phrases
The order is noun + adjective. Adjectives agree in gender and number with the noun they determine: *ṛāžəl msäggäm* '(a) fair man', *ṛažžālä msäggmīn* '(some) fair men', *mṛa msäggmä* '(a) fair woman', *ʕläy(y)āt msäggmāt* '(some) fair women'. They are preceded by the definite article when the noun is determined, *ən-nāgä l-bäyḍa* 'the white female camel', *nyāg aḥmäd əl-bīḍ* 'the white female camels of Ahmad', or when it is highly referential, *maṛyäm əš-šäybāniyyä* 'Maryem, the old woman'.

2.3.1.5 Elative constructions
Followed by *mən* (introducing the second term of the comparison), the elative expresses the comparative: *äkbaṛ mən xū-h* 'taller than his brother'. Followed by a determined noun (or pronoun), it expresses the relative superlative: *äkbaṛ-hum* 'the taller among them', *äkbaṛ əṭ-ṭavilāt* 'the taller of the girls'. When it is definite, it expresses the absolute superlative: *l-äkbaṛ* 'the tallest', *lə-mṛa l-äkbaṛ* 'the tallest woman'.

2.3.1.6. *Relative clauses*
The relative pronoun does not appear with an undetermined antecedent: *mšä mʕa ḥadd mā gaṭṭ šəfnā-h* 'he is gone with someone we have never seen', but *mšä mʕa əṛ-ṛāžəl lli vətnä šəfnä* 'he is gone with the man we had already seen'. Note the absence of the referential pronoun in relative clauses with *lli*.

2.3.2 Verbal phrase
The direct object precedes the indirect object, which is introduced by *əl*: *əʕṭa žmäl l-xāl-u* 'he gave a camel to his maternal uncle', *əʕṭā-h l-u* 'he gave it to him'. However, the indirect object is expressed without *əl* when it is the only suffix: *əʕṭā-h žmäl* 'he gave him a camel'.

2.3.3 Verbal aspect: Time and tense
Innovations are very limited. There is no indicative prefix.

2.3.3.1 Future intent prefixes
The predicted future is expressed with the invariable particle *lāhi* (+ imperfect) which corresponds etymologically to the participle of *lhä* 'to keep oneself busy doing something': *lāhi ngīs nwākšōṭ əš-šhaṛ əd-dāxəl (in-šā-aḷḷāh!)* 'I'll go to Nouakchott next (God willing!)'. Combined with past modality (perfect of *kān* 'to be'), *lāhi* express the future in the past, *kənt lāhi ngīs nwākšōṭ mnäyn ʕədt mäwžūʕ* 'I was about to go to when I fall ill'. The imperfect of *dāṛ* (verb of desire) is also used, especially for the intended future: *ndōṛ nəmši* 'I am going (willing) to leave'.

2.3.3.2 Use of active participle
In its predicative use, the active participle has the meaning of a concomitant action. Depending on the verb, it expresses a concomitant action in the unaccomplished [= progressive present or past] (*huwwä ṭāləʕ əl-kədyä* 'he is going up the mountain', *hiyyä kānət ṭālʕa əl-kədyä* 'she was going up the mountain') or in the accomplished [= resultative perfect] (*huwwä məṭġaddi* 'he had lunch' [= he is not hungry anymore]). The participle is sometimes used for an imminent action, as if the agent was already engaged in the action: *ānä māši (ṣ-ṣəbḥ)* 'I am going (tomorrow)'.

2.3.3.3 Negation

The usual negative form is *mā*, but *lā* is used in several cases: for prohibitions, with the imperfect (*lā təbki!* 'don't cry!'); after the coordinator *wə/u* 'and' (*mā žä u lā ktəb* 'he didn't come and he didn't write'; for a negative wish, with the perfect, in some expressions (*lā qərzu nyāg-hum!* 'I wish the milk of your camels doesn't dry up!'); sometimes, as an 'expletive' negation after *xāf* 'to fear'.

The negation is not discontinuous but the affix pronoun appears regularly in the absence of a conjugated verbal form (non-verbal predicate or presence of *lāhi*): *mān-ak gaṛṛāy* 'you are not a teacher', *mā-ni xāyəv* 'I am not afraid', *(aḥmäd) mā-hu lāhi yəbki* '(Ahmad) he won't cry'.

2.3.4 Word order SVO, VSO

In the absence of thematization, the order of the verbal sentence is VSO. This is the only possible order if the subject is totally undetermined (Taine-Cheikh 1998). The interrogatives *mən* 'who?' and *əš* 'what?' come at the beginning of the sentence.

2.3.5 Existential sentences

The dialect has several 'pseudo-verbs' consisting of a preposition and an affix pronoun, in particular *ʿand-* (possession, hence 'to have'), *l-* (attribution and alienable possession), *mʿa-* 'with', *vī-* (location). The order is VO (SVO with a thematized 'subject' noun) and the negative form is *mā*: *(ʿayšä) mā ʿand-hä vaḍḍa* '(Aïsha) she doesn't have money'. The present participle of *xləg* 'to exist' expresses existence: *(mā-zāl) xāləg mbūṛu* 'there is (still) bread'.

3. LEXICON

The Ḥassāniyya lexicon is rich and well-structured around a relatively limited number of high frequency schemes (cf. Taine-Cheikh, *Dictionnaire Ḥassāniyya-Français*, 1988-...). It seems to have always had a tendency to enrich itself, either through borrowings (from Berber, closely related African languages, Literary Arabic, French, etc.) or through internal development. However the majority of the lexicon, at least 80% of the lexical items and maybe 90% of the roots (if one only takes into account those who correspond to families of names), is still of an Arabic origin. A quite important part of this vocabulary is more or less characteristic of the Maghrebi dialects, especially of the Bedouin type, e.g. *ʿatrûs* 'goat', *bġa* 'to desire', *gḍəv* 'to vomit' or *yāməs* 'yesterday'.

The Arabic core is very stable and can be found, for its essential parts, across the whole Ḥassāniyya-speaking area. Borrowings, calques, neologisms, semantic shifts and other innovations are often less stable and more localized (for the eastern region, cf. the lexicons of Pierret 1948 and Heath 2004). The history of those forms, hard to reconstruct, is often more autochthonous than it seems. The Ḥassāniyya dialect has certainly borrowed more to the Berber (especially the Zenaga) than to any other non-Arabic language, but many creations seem to have appeared, if not first in Ḥassāniyya, at least simultaneously in Ḥassāniyya and in Zenaga. Indeed, they are often absent from the Berber and Arabic lexicons.

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