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Aspects of (Post)Colonial Linguistics

Koloniale und Postkoloniale Linguistik

Colonial and Postcolonial Linguistics

Edited by Stefan Engelberg, Peter Mühlhäusler,
Doris Stolberg, Thomas Stolz and Ingo H. Warnke

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Liesbeth Zack

Arabic language guides written for the British Army during the British occupation of Egypt, 1882–1922

Abstract: This paper deals with Arabic language guides created for the British army during the British occupation of Egypt (1882–1922), when officers were sent to Egypt and the Sudan to head the Anglo-Egyptian army. They needed to communicate with Egyptian soldiers in Egyptian Arabic, as well as correspond with officials in Standard Arabic. This situation was complicated by the fact that Turkish was also used in the Egyptian army. This paper explores five language guides which were written for the British army, comparing them on points of vocabulary, Arabic grammar, and their general usefulness for the British officers.

Keywords: Egypt, British occupation, Arabic, language guides, army

1 Introduction¹

During the British occupation of Egypt (1882–1922), British officers were sent to Egypt and the Sudan to head the Anglo-Egyptian army. There they were confronted with a complex language situation: the Arabic dialects were used in communication with the soldiers, Standard Arabic was used in written correspondence with Egyptian officials, and some Turkish military terminology was used. These officers were not given any official training in Arabic before setting off for the East, although they did have to pass an Arabic exam. Soon after the British took over Egypt's administration, language guides aimed at these military personnel started to appear. This paper looks at five of these guides, describing the Arabic language as presented by them, and comparing the military terminology provided.

¹ I would like to thank Manfred Woidich, Caroline Roset, and Margreet Dorleijn for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. The research for this paper was done as part of a research project entitled "The making of a capital dialect: Language change in 19th century Cairo", which was funded by a VENI grant from The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

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2 Egypt and its language situation in the 19th century

The language situation in the Arab world is one of diglossia, where there are two varieties of the same language: a high and a low variety. In the case of Arabic, there is an official language, Classical Arabic or, for the modern period, Modern Standard Arabic, which is based on the language of the Quran and is used for writing and formal speech, but which is nobody's native language. The dialects are used in daily language situations such as informal conversation. When the term Egyptian Arabic is used in this paper, I intend the Arabic of Cairo, the capital of Egypt, unless otherwise specified.

The language situation in Ottoman Egypt was complicated by the fact that the language of administration was Ottoman Turkish. This was no longer the case in the period under discussion in this article, because in 1858 Arabic was introduced as the official language of administration: a slow process which was not completed until the end of the 19th century (Toledano 2003: 158). However, the Turkish language still played a role in the army during the British occupation, as will be expanded upon below.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw a great interest from foreign scholars in Egyptian Arabic, which was reflected in the publication of grammars, conversation guides, collections of stories and proverbs, etc. One of the reasons for this interest was the renewal of Egypt's relations with Europe under Egypt's ruler Khedive Ismail. One of the earliest grammars of Egyptian Arabic from this period is the *Grammatik des arabischen Vulgärdialektes von Aegypten* (1880) by the German scholar Wilhelm Spitta, who was director of Egypt's National Library. This was a solid work which set a high standard for other works to come. However, there were also French, Italian, and of course English language guides and grammars.² With the British occupation of Egypt, a whole new genre came into being: language guides for the army.

² A small sample: Finch-Hatton (1873), Hagenmacher (1892), Nallino (1900), Thimm (1898), Vollers (1890), Vollers & Burkitt (1895), Willmore (1901).

3 The British in Egypt

In the second half of the 19th century, Egypt's rulers initiated numerous large projects in order to modernize and westernize Egypt's infrastructure and architecture. A few examples are railroads, the Suez Canal, opened in 1869, and the building of new neighborhoods in Western style. This eventually caused severe financial problems for Egypt, when they had to default on loans from England and France. At the same time, discontent was growing in the Egyptian army. The higher ranks were reserved for the Turco-Circassian elite, while Arabic speaking Egyptians could only reach the rank of colonel. Displeasure with this system, as well as discontent about the growing European influence on Egypt, led to the revolt of the Egyptian army under the leadership of Colonel Ahmad Urabi in 1881 (Al-Sayyid Marsot 2007: 86). The British, responding to a call for assistance by the Khedive, decided to undertake measures in order to safeguard their financial assets. After bombarding Alexandria, defeating the Egyptian army, they assumed control of Egypt's administration. The British occupation of Egypt ended officially with Egypt's independence in 1922. However, British military presence lasted until 1956, when president Abd al-Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal, which had been the last part of Egypt still in British hands.

After the takeover of Egypt's administration in 1882, British administrators, armed forces, and specialists such as medical doctors and engineers, moved to Egypt. These British governmental employees needed to be able to communicate with Egyptians, creating a need for Arabic language guides. These were written with different purposes and with different user groups in mind, such as the army, the court system, the railways, or simply residents and travelers. Because of the wide scope of these books, this paper will focus on only one type, namely the Arabic language guides written for British officers.

4 The language situation in the army

Sir Evelyn Wood, appointed *sirdār* (Commander-in-Chief) of the Egyptian army in 1882, was given the task of reorganizing the army. High ranks were given only to British officers, while the lower officers and soldiers were recruited from among the Egyptian population (Baring 1908 II: 473–477). White (1899: 293) described the language situation in the Egyptian army as follows:

British officers join the Egyptian army with the rank of *bimbashi* (major). As the medium of intercourse with their Native subordinates is Arabic – the words of command being given in Turkish – the first duty of an Anglo-Egyptian officer is to acquire a knowledge of that difficult language. Official correspondence between English officers is, of course, carried on in English; but, between them and the Native officers or non-commissioned officers, Arabic is employed. Orders are given out both in English and Arabic.

This shows the complexity of the language situation: conversation with Egyptians was in (Egyptian) Arabic; official correspondence with Egyptian officers was in (Modern Standard) Arabic, while the commands were given in Turkish.³ There was no official system in place for teaching officers Arabic, but they did have to pass examinations, as this account by Hulme-Beaman (1898: 72) reveals:

At the present day there are hundreds of officers and others in Her Majesty's Service having a very fluent acquaintance with the [Arabic] language, but at that period I was one of about half a dozen official Britons with a real "possession," as the French call it, of both the written and spoken tongue. One of the rules of the new Egyptian Army was that the English officers should pass an Arabic examination, and I therefore offered to teach and prepare any of them for the test.

As this quotation shows, some officers had already learned Arabic elsewhere. Hulme-Beaman himself had learned Arabic in Constantinople from a Persian teacher, and during his subsequent stays in Beirut and Damascus. Horatio Kitchener, the later *sirdār* (1892–1899) of the Anglo-Egyptian army, had learned Arabic while on survey in Palestine in the 1870s (Jerrold [1916]: 21). Wingate, Kitchener's successor as *sirdār*, had learned Arabic while stationed in India and Aden in 1881–1883, and passed the Higher Standard Arabic Examination in 1883 (Daly 1997: 9). However, when he arrived in Egypt, Wingate knew neither colloquial Arabic, nor the Turkish commands used in the army (Daly 1997: 17). All this led to confusing situations, as described by Scudamore (1925: 69):

[...] with the exception of Kitchener, who was already proficient, and Wingate – a linguist ingrain – none of [the officers] knew any Arabic. This indeed produced a curious anomaly in the earlier ceremonial parades of the new troops. There was a native Egyptian Brigadier, Schudi Pasha, who had been educated in Berlin, and it chanced that Lord Grenfell – then Major and Brigadier – knew some German. Thus Sir Evelyn had to give his orders, as Commander of the Forces, in the one language common to his two Brigadiers – i.e. Ger-

³ Besant (1934: 162) mentions: "The words of command were Turkish. The only modification to this was the substitution of the word 'march' (which was pronounced 'marsh') for 'yuru,' the latter not being conducive to smartness of movement as a word of executive command". Note that *yuru* should be *yürü*.

man; Schudi afterwards giving his words in Arabic, Grenfell in English, and the four English commanders in Turkish [...].

For soldiers of the British Army of Occupation,⁴ the situation was even more complex, as Lamothe (2011: 139) points out:

Whereas British officers in the Egyptian Army studied colloquial Arabic, could speak French, and knew the Turkish words of command, soldiers in the British Infantry Division of the Anglo-Egyptian army – the Warwicks, Lincolns, Camerons, Grenadiers, and others – had no fluency in Arabic whatsoever.

A logical result of this situation was an established need for language guides to teach the British military Arabic, both written and spoken, and Turkish military terminology.

5 Language guides for the army

This paper will discuss five language guides intended for use by the military. In order of date of publication:

- Tien, Anton. 1882. *Egyptian, Syrian, and North-African hand-book: A simple phrase-book in English and Arabic for the use of the armed forces and civilians*. London: W. H. Allen & Co.
- Green, Arthur Octavius. 1883–1885 (1909). *Practical Arabic grammar for the use of English officers in Egypt*. 2 vols. Vol 1 1883, vol. 2 4th ed. 1909 (1st ed. 1885). Cairo: Boulack Printing Office, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Mosconas, Demetrius. 1884. *English & Arabic dictionary accompanied by dialogues & useful notes for the use of the British Army of Occupation*. Cairo: s.n.
- Watson, C. M. [1885]. *English-Arabic vocabulary and dialogues for the use of the Army and Navy*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Scudamore, Frank. 1915. *Arabic for our armies: Words and phrases with their equivalent in Colloquial Arabic (phonetic pronunciation) in daily requirement by H.M. Forces serving in the Near East*. London: Forster Groom.

There are other language guides in which military terminology is mentioned, for instance Thimm's *Self-Taught* series, but the abovementioned five books were selected because they were written especially for the army.

⁴ This numbered around 5,000 soldiers (Mak 2011: 18).

5.1 Tien, Anton. 1882. *Egyptian, Syrian, and North-African hand-book: A simple phrase-book in English and Arabic for the use of the armed forces and civilians*

The Reverend Anton Tien (1835–1920) was born into an ancient Lebanese Maronite family in Beirut. He converted to Anglicism and went to England to study theology at St. Augustine’s College in Canterbury. He served in the Crimean War, and after his ordination joined the Anglican mission in Constantinople.⁵ In 1879 he published a curious book, entitled *The Levant interpreter: A polyglot dialogue book for English travellers in the Levant*. Keeping in mind that the Levant encompasses modern Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan, all of which are Arabic-speaking countries, it is surprising – to say the least – that this book contains conversation in Turkish, Greek, and Italian, but not in Arabic. However, because this book does not deal with either Egypt or the army, we will not further consider it here. In 1885, Tien published a *Manual of Colloquial Arabic* which, despite its title and the preface which promises to focus on the dialects of Syria and Egypt, predominantly discusses Standard Arabic grammar.

Tien’s *Egyptian, Syrian, and North-African hand-book* is, as indicated in the title, a small book, but it is more than a phrase book, as it also contains an English-Arabic vocabulary. As the title indicates, it was intended for use in Syria, Egypt, and North-Africa. Anybody familiar with colloquial Arabic knows that these three dialect families differ greatly. Tien’s only comment on this subject is (Tien 1882, after title page):

The great difference between the Syrian and Egyptian Arabic is that the latter hardens the soft consonants, e.g.: –

Syria		Egypt	
<i>kawi</i>	becomes	<i>gawi</i>	strong
<i>jib</i>	"	<i>gib</i>	bring
<i>shajarah</i>	"	<i>sagarah</i>	tree

He does not comment on any other differences except for this phonological remark. The pronunciation he gives here for Egypt is ambiguous: *gawi* is used in the countryside, as in Cairo this would be pronounced *’awi*.⁶ However, the *g* in

⁵ See Boggis (1907: 195–196, 228) and *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1921: 487).

⁶ The transcriptions from the language guides are quoted as in the originals, but a standardized transcription is provided where necessary. This transcription follows the system of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Versteegh et al. 2006 I: viii). A macron indi-

gib and *sagarah* indicates the pronunciation of Cairo, as this sound would be pronounced *j*, *ǧ*, *ǰ* or even *d* in rural areas (Woidich 1996: 334). The book contains no further explanation of the Arabic pronunciation, except that “the pronunciation of the Arabic words in Roman letters is similar to that of Italian” (Tien 1882, after title page). Stress is not indicated. The transcription is not very accurate: for instance, Tien uses the letter *p* in several words, though *p* does not exist in Arabic. One example is “wait patiently – ospor” (Tien 1882: 59) which should be *uṣbur*. The voiceless pharyngeal fricative *ħ* is transcribed as *h*, making no distinction between it and the voiceless glottal fricative *h*, while the voiced pharyngeal fricative *ʕ* is rendered with *ʿ*, e.g. “a soldier – ‘askari” (Tien 1882: 53), which is also used for the glottal stop, thus creating non-existing homonyms, e.g. “ask – sa’al” (Tien 1882: 93) versus “to cough – sa’al” (Tien 1882: 33), the latter being *sa’al* in correct transcription.

The Arabic is a mishmash of Syrian and Standard Arabic. For instance, the pronouns (Tien 1882: 1) are given in Standard Arabic, while the names of the months (Tien 1882: 4) are the Aramaic names of the Babylonian calendar, which are used only in the Levant but certainly not in Egypt or North Africa, where English- or French-derived names of the months are used.

- (1) Tien (1882: 69)
 “kho [sic] qadah halīb”
xud *qadaḥ* *ḥalīb*
 take.IMP.SG.M glass milk
 ‘take a glass of milk’

“kho” is a typo and should read “khod”. “qadah” and “halīb” are both Levantine or Standard Arabic, the Egyptian equivalents being *kubbāya* and *laban*.

- (2) Tien (1882: 80)
 “a’tiridoon an tashraboo ashshai”
a-ti-riḍ-ūn *an* *ta-šrab-ū* *aš-šāy*
 Q-2-want-IND.PL.M CNJ 2-drink-SBJV.PL.M DEF-tea
 ‘do you wish to have tea?’

The second example is mostly Standard Arabic, with the question particle *a*, and the distinction between the indicative in the first verb and the subjunctive

cates a long vowel; a dot under a consonant indicates that the consonant is emphatic, except for *ħ*, which is the voiceless pharyngeal fricative *ħ*. *ʔ* indicates the glottal stop; *ʕ* indicates the voiced pharyngeal fricative *ʕ*. *ǧ* is the voiced velar fricative *ǧ*. *ɖ* and *ɟ* are interdental fricatives (*ð* and *θ*). *ʃ* is the voiceless fricative *ʃ* and *ʒ* is the voiced palato-alveolar affricate *ʒ*.

ruled by the conjunction *an* in the second verb, a distinction which no longer exists in the dialects. However, the *ti-* prefix in *ti-rid-ūn* is dialectal, as this would be *tu-* in Standard Arabic.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section contains word lists, ordered by topic. These lists provide useful words on subjects such as the division of time, the senses, parts of the body, and accidents and diseases, as well as a section on “Military Profession” (Tien 1882: 52–55). The second section contains dialogues, while the third is an English-Arabic vocabulary. The dialogues, six in total, seem rather haphazard, and show a great pre-occupation with eating and sleeping, as these were given the following titles: “Going to bed and rising”, “breakfast”, “dinner”, “eating and drinking”, and “at an inn” (the first dialogue is not titled). The first dialogue contains some phrases for military use (Tien 1882: 62–64), as does the last one (Tien 1882: 87–88). Some sample sentences from the military sections: “I see foot-soldiers advancing – ara il-’askar yotakaddam”, “to what regiment do you belong? – min ayn alay int?” (Tien 1882: 63), “I am shot – taqawast” (Tien 1882: 64), “we assure you that no harm will happen to you if you surrender – nahaqiq lak in laisa ’alaik khatar iza sallamt” (Tien 1882: 87), all displaying the same kind of simplified Standard Arabic.

5.2 Green, Arthur Octavius. 1883–1885 (1909). *Practical Arabic grammar for the use of English officers in Egypt*

Arthur Octavius Green (1847–1924) was sent to Egypt with the military expedition as an engineer in the summer of 1882. In 1884, he joined in an expedition to the Sudan, where he was severely wounded during the battle of El Teb. Subsequently he was promoted to the rank of Major (Porter 1889 II: 65–72), and at the end of his service he had reached the rank of Colonel. He died in 1924 in Camberley, England.⁷ He is also the author of *A Practical Hindustānī Grammar*, and of *A Collection of Modern Arabic Stories, Ballads, Poems and Proverbs, for the Use of English Officers in Egypt*.⁸

According to its preface, Green’s *Practical Arabic Grammar* was first distributed as loose sheets to “the Officers and Men of the Army of Occupation, to the English Officers serving in the Egyptian Army, the Gendarmerie, and the Police” – 150 copies in total, before being published as a two-volume book in 1883–

⁷ See Western Daily Press (1924).

⁸ As the latter is merely a new edition of Spitta-Bey’s collected stories (1880 and 1883), it will not be discussed here.

1885.⁹ The work seems to have been rather successful, as it went through four editions (the last reprint was published in 1915).

The book was not based on original material, but rather was copied from several existing works such as those by Forbes, Shidyāq, Wahrmund, Wright, and Nakhlah (Green 1883: Preface). The works of Forbes, Shidyāq, and Wright deal with Classical Arabic, while Wahrmund's contains Classical Arabic as well as the Syrian and Egyptian dialects, and Nakhlah's work is a conversation manual of Egyptian Arabic. Most of these works were themselves based on other, older works.

The first part of Green's book deals with grammar and introduces with the Arabic alphabet. The grammar is explained using Arabic script and transcription, while the exercises are only in Arabic script. The transcription is accurate, and indicates the *h* and the emphatic consonants with dots underneath. The exercises consist of Arabic-English and English-Arabic translations. The keys to these exercises can be found in volume 2, which also contains "Selections from Arabic Authors and Newspapers", "English and Arabic Letters and Manuscripts", English-Arabic and Arabic-English vocabularies, and a table comparing "Classical and Modern Arabic Forms and Expressions". The author often shows Egyptian and Standard Arabic side by side, e.g. "*hāza el-bait lak, el-bait da b'tâ'ak* this house belongs to you" (Green 1883: 36), which does not indicate that the first part is Standard Arabic and the second is dialect, or "*نحننا ehna* we" (Green: 1883: 20), which does point out the difference between the two varieties. Green's sample sentences are sometimes a mixture of both varieties, as the following examples illustrate. Colloquial features are underlined, and Standard Arabic ones are in boldface. The parts not underlined or bold faced are neutral:

- (3) Green (1883: 22)
 "hāzee el-bint kwyeeseh"
hāzī *el-bint* *kuwayyis-eh*
 DEM.SG.F DEF-girl pretty-SG.F
 'this girl is pretty'
- (4) Green (1883: 86)
 "heeyeh gāliseh bikoorbee"
hiyyeh ***gālis-eh*** ***bi-qurb-ī***
 she sit.PTCP-SG.F at-vicinity-POSS.1SG
 'she sits near me'

⁹ The 1909 edition of vol. 2 will be used here, as the 1885 edition was not available to the author.

In example 3, the demonstrative is Standard Arabic (Egyptian Arabic would be postposed *di*, as Green explains on p. 23), but the *z* instead of interdental *ḏ* is the Egyptian Arabic pronunciation. The vocabulary item *kuwayyiseh* is dialect as well. The pronunciation of the feminine ending *-a* as *-eh* (called “final *imāla*”) in *kuwayyis-eh* and *gālis-eh* is typical for colloquial Arabic. An interesting example is *gāliseh* in example 4: as a vocabulary item it is Standard Arabic, as is its form: CāCiCa(eh) would have become CaCCa(eh) in Egyptian Arabic. However, the pronunciation of *g* instead of *j* is Egyptian Arabic, as is the pronunciation of the feminine ending *-eh*.

Although the title indicates that the book is meant for English officers in Egypt, the contents are for the most part intended for general use and do not contain specific army-related information. An exception is the section “English and Arabic Letters and Manuscripts” in part 2, for this contains letters dealing with army matters. The vocabulary in part 2 also contains army-related terminology.

The letters are handwritten in different hands in Arabic and a transcription and translation are provided. The letters are written in Standard Arabic; however, the vocalization used in the transcriptions is mostly Egyptian Arabic, and the declensions are not transcribed.¹⁰ This is possible because the Arabic script is defective, meaning that short vowels are not written. Therefore, the text can be written in Standard Arabic but read using Egyptian Arabic pronunciation.

- (5) (Green 1909: 92–93)
 ننتشرّف بان نخبر حضرتكم أنه قد صار تسفير الفين عسكري انكليزي من هنا
 “natasharraf b’inn nukhbir ḥaḍritkum innoh qadd šār tasfir alfēn ‘askarī
 inklizī min hena”
 ‘It is an honor for us to inform you that 2000 English soldiers have travelled from here’.

A transcription following Standard Arabic pronunciation would read:

*natašarrafu bi’an nuxbira ḥaḍratakum ’annahu qad šāra tasfiru alfayni
 ‘askariyyin inkliziyyin min hunā.*

All considered, Green’s work was useful for people who wanted to learn Arabic, although sometimes it was confusing due to his mixture of Standard Arabic and dialect, probably caused by the variety of sources used for the work.

¹⁰ Standard Arabic has declensions, while Egyptian Arabic has not.

5.3 Mosconas, Demetrius. 1884. *English & Arabic dictionary accompanied by dialogues & useful notes for the use of the British Army of Occupation*

Demetrius Mosconas (1839–1895) was a Greek Orientalist who came to Egypt as a young man. He was a student of the famous German Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch.¹¹ Mosconas worked for some time as an interpreter for Thomas Cook.¹² In 1880, he is mentioned as consul of the United States at Suakim (a port in the North Eastern Sudan),¹³ while in 1883 he was living in Kassala in the Sudan, sinking wells for the Egyptian government (Williams 1884: 148, 151). On the title page of his *English & Arabic Dictionary* Mosconas calls himself “Interpreter to the Commissariat and Transport Staff”. In 1893, he was responsible for the reproduction of the Temple of Luxor at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago.¹⁴

The book is dedicated to the British army:

To those brave officers, non-commissioned officers & men of the British Army who took part in the Egyptian campaign of 1882 and the Soudan expedition of 1884 this book is dedicated as a slight mark of esteem for and appreciation of their services to Egypt in general and Cairo in particular in the hope that those who hesitated not to shed their blood in the cause of law and order will now take up and study the language of the people with whom they sojourn.

In the preface, the author briefly explains the language situation in Egypt and states the purpose of the work to be “the instruction of the British Army of occupation in order that the Soldiers composing it, may make themselves properly understood amongst its people.” Mosconas’ book, like Tien’s, pays no attention to typical Arabic consonants such as the *ḥ* and *ʿ*, or the emphatic consonants *ṭ*, *ḍ*, *ṣ*, and *ẓ*. When learners of Arabic would have used the pronunciation presented in these books, their Arabic would have been hard to understand for Arabic speakers. The lack of indications of stress must have made it even harder to get the pronunciation right.

The first half of the book consists of three parts: parts one and three contain general information, part one on grammatical rules, and part three on “familiar phrases and conversation”. Part two is dedicated to military terminology and is

¹¹ Brugsch was director of the Cairo School of Egyptology from 1870 to 1879 (see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

¹² See Carstens (2014: 486).

¹³ See Bonola (1880: 86).

¹⁴ See Delamaire (2003: 133) and *Campbell’s Illustrated Weekly* (1893: 128).

entitled “Reconnaissance questions”. This is divided into eight sections, entitled “The road”, “a mountain”, “Ford Ferry”, “Bridge”, “Marsh”, “Fortress”, “The enemy”, and “Foragin [sic]”. The second half of the book is an English–Arabic dictionary.

The grammar in part one gives a short explanation of Egyptian Arabic grammar, focusing mostly on verbs. The Arabic used in it is correct, as is that of the third part with the familiar phrases. However, the second part, containing the “Reconnaissance questions”, contains many grammatical errors and incongruities. Although at first this discrepancy in quality seems baffling, it is easily explained, because the grammar and familiar phrases are copied almost verbatim from Yacoub Nakhlah’s *New Manual of English and Arabic Conversation* (1874).¹⁵ As Nakhlah was a Coptic Egyptian and therefore a native speaker of Arabic, it is not surprising that the parts copied from his manual contain correct Arabic. However, Mosconas’ own Arabic was apparently far from perfect, shown by the examples from the “Reconnaissance questions”, which he could not have copied from Nakhlah and therefore would have had to have produced himself:¹⁶

- (6) (Mosconas 1884: xxvii):
- | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| as-sikket | di | yirôohh | ala | fain |
| <i>as-sikkit</i> | <i>di</i> | <i>yi-rûh</i> | <i>‘ala</i> | <i>fên</i> |
| DEF-road | DEM.SG.F | 3SG.M-go | to | where |
- ‘where does this road lead to?’

There are two problems here: first, the ending *-it* in the word *as-sikkit* which can only be used in the construct state; it should be *as-sikka* here. The second problem is the lack of agreement between the subject and the verb: the verb has the masculine prefix *yi-* instead of the feminine prefix *ti-*.

Lack of agreement is a common problem in this book; another example is:

- (7) (Mosconas 1884: xxx):
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| el-kantârah | tayib |
| <i>el-qanṭara</i> | <i>ṭayyib</i> |
| DEF-bridge | good.SG.M |
- ‘Is the bridge good?’

¹⁵ In the Preface, Mosconas declares that he has extracted “the most perfect method of the grammatical rules similar to those published by Mr Yacoub Nakhleh”. “Similar” seems somewhat of an understatement here.

¹⁶ The Dictionary is also for a large part copied from Nakhlah.

The word *qaṅṭara* is feminine, as can be seen from its ending *-a*, and therefore the adjective should also be feminine: *ṭayyiba*.

The article is also used incorrectly:

- (8) (Mosconas 1884: xxxi):
 ez-zabit-hoom min-huwa
ez-ṣabiṭ-hum *mīn huwwa*
 DEF-commander-POSS.3PL who he
 ‘what is the name of their commander?’

The article cannot be used in combination with the possessive suffix and should have been omitted.

The verbs are especially interesting. In the imperfect, some of the verbs have the extra *-u* suffix in the first person plural, which is characteristic for the Western Arabic dialects of North Africa, while others do not have this suffix. The dialect of Cairo, like most of the other Egyptian dialects, belongs to the Eastern type.

Tab. 1: Affixes of the 1st person imperfect in Eastern and Western Arabic

	Eastern Arabic	Western Arabic
I write	<i>a-ktib</i>	<i>ni-ktib</i>
we write	<i>ni-ktib</i>	<i>ni-ktib-u</i> ¹⁷

The prefix *ni-* is ambiguous, as can be seen in the table, and can mean ‘I’ or ‘we’ depending on the dialect. In Mosconas’ work, the two varieties are mixed for the first person plural form, sometimes displaying the Eastern type, sometimes the Western type, even within one sentence:

- (9) (Mosconas 1884: xxviii)
 “negdar nem-shoo ala riglaina”
ni-gdar ni-mš-u ‘ala riglē-na
 1PL-can-∅ 1PL-walk-PL on feet-POSS.1PL
 ‘Can we go on foot?’
- (10) (Mosconas 1884: xxix)
 “nikdarôosh ne’addy ala riglaina”
ni-gdar-ū-š ni-‘addy ‘ala riglē-na
 1PL-can-PL-Q 1PL-CROSS-∅ on feet-POSS.1PL
 ‘Can it be crossed on foot?’ [literally: ‘can we cross it on foot?’]

¹⁷ The vowel of the *n*-prefix can vary from dialect to dialect.

Note also the incongruity in the spelling of “negdar” and “nikdar” (*nigdar*). The 1SG form is always *ni-*, never *a-* in Mosconas (1884):

- (11) (Mosconas 1884: xxvii):
- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| “nâraf | nitkellim, | shoowâya” |
| ni-’raf | ni-tkallim | <i>šuwayya</i> |
| 1SG-can | 1SG-speak | a bit |
| ‘I speak very little’. | | |

It is unclear on which dialect Mosconas based the Reconnaissance part of the book. He lived in at least three different Arabic speaking regions: Alexandria (Delamaire 2003: 133); Cairo, where he studied; and Eastern Sudan. In the latter two, the *aktib-niktib* paradigm is used,¹⁸ while Alexandria used to have *niktib-niktibu* (nowadays almost disappeared in favor of the forms used in Cairo) (Behnstedt 1980: 37–38). It is possible that this difference of dialectal input might have confused Mosconas, leading to the mixed information given in the book. Yet other characteristics point in the direction of Egyptian Arabic, e.g. “eh”, “ey” *ē* ‘what’ (Mosconas 1884: xxviii), where Sudanese has *šinu, šin*,¹⁹ and the negation using *ma-...š* in “manish-fâ-hem” *ma-niš fâhim* ‘I do not understand’ (Mosconas 1884: xxvii).

As the whole Reconnaissance part, the only original part of the work, is just six pages out of a book of more than a hundred, and is of dubious quality, it can be concluded that Mosconas’ work was not much of an addition to the existing collection of Egyptian Arabic text books.

5.4 Watson, C. M. 1885. *English-Arabic vocabulary and dialogues for the use of the Army and Navy*

Sir Charles Moore Watson (1844–1916) joined the Royal Engineers in 1866 and was sent to Egypt in 1882. He assisted Sir Evelyn Wood in creating the new Egyptian army and was acting *sirdār* for some time. In 1886 he acted as Governor General of the Red Sea Littoral in Suakim (King 1916: 387–388).

Watson had already joined General Gordon for a survey in the Sudan in 1874, and started learning Arabic there. Back in England, he continued to work on his Arabic and took lessons with Rizq Allāh Ḥassūn (Lane-Poole 1919: 71). Ḥassūn (1825–1880) was a native of Aleppo and lived some time in Russia and

¹⁸ For Sudan, see Bergman (2002: 23), and for Egypt, see Woidich (1996: 338).

¹⁹ See Amery (1905: 396) and Bergman (2002: 377).

England (Al-Zirikli 2002 III: 19). Watson made good use of the Arabic he had learned and began instructing his fellow passengers while on board the ship en route to Egypt:

I gave a lecture on the grammar and pronunciation this morning of over an hour to a large party [...]. The idea of poor me coming out in this line is rather amusing, but, as you know, “among the blind the one-eyed man is a prophet.”²⁰

After arriving in Egypt, his linguistic skills remained in demand, as he remarks in a letter to his wife: “I have become a regular dragoman!”²¹ It was therefore a logical decision to publish a work on the Arabic language. The *English-Arabic Vocabulary and Dialogues* starts with the Arabic alphabet and pronunciation of the consonants and vowels, followed by a short grammar (8 pages) dealing with the article, noun, adjective, pronoun, and verb. Short remarks are made about the difference between Standard Arabic and dialect. The pronouns (personal and possessive) mentioned are Standard Arabic (without dual and feminine plural, which exist in the standard language but not in Egyptian Arabic). The verbs are also in a simplified Standard Arabic (e.g. *nasartu* ‘I helped’, with the *-tu* suffix of Standard Arabic, as opposed to the *-t* suffix in Egyptian Arabic), not including the plural feminine forms and the dual forms. A note on page 17 mentions that “the Egyptian dialect has been adhered to in this vocabulary”.

The second part of the work is the Vocabulary, which has word lists on general topics such as the numbers, the days of the weeks, etc., but also army-related vocabulary such as “Divisions of Troops” and “Arms and their Accessories, – Fortification Terms, &c.”. The dialect represented is not that of Cairo, as can be demonstrated in the two words for ‘very’: “kawi” and “jiddan” (p. 25). In “kawi”, the **q* is written with *k*, perhaps representing the *g* of the countryside; it is pronounced *’awi* in Cairo. In “jiddan”, the **j* is written with *j* (*giddan* in Cairo). Also “how? – kayf?” (p. 25) is rural, as Cairo has *izzāy*. The months (p. 30) are the Coptic ones, which also points to the rural background of Watson’s Arabic knowledge: the Coptic months were (and still are) only used in matters related to farming (e.g. when to harvest), whereas Western style months (*yanāyir*, *fibrāyir*, etc.) were used in daily life in the towns.

The third part, Dialogues, starts with “Useful Sentences”, followed by “Reconnaissance Questions”, and other dialogues useful for the army, such as “Foraging”, and “On Patrol”, as well as some vocabulary relating to purchases,

²⁰ Letter from Watson to his wife, dated 8 August 1882, quoted in Lane-Poole (1919: 106–107).

²¹ Letter from Watson to his wife, dated 22 September 1882, quoted in Lane-Poole (1919: 131).

etc. Watson’s “Reconnaissance questions” have been taken from Mosconas’ “Reconnaissance questions”, with some changes and additions.²² Both men lived in Suakim for some time, though we do not know exactly where Mosconas was in 1883, when Watson was residing in Suakim as governor. However, it is possible that they knew each other; or perhaps Watson had picked up Mosconas’ book while in Suakim. In any case, Mosconas’ influence on Watson becomes clear when comparing the two books:

Tab. 2: Comparing part of the “Reconnaissance questions” of Mosconas and Watson

Mosconas p. xxviii		Watson p. 60	
what is the name of this mountain?	<i>esmoo-ey-el-gâbal di</i>	what is the name of this mountain?	<i>al jabal di ismuh ey?</i>
is it steep? wooded?	<i>huwa mâyil, fih ashgâr</i>	is it steep?	<i>huwa mâyil?</i>
		" wooded?	<i>fih ashjâr?</i>
is it high; low?	<i>huwa âly, waty</i>	" high?	<i>huwa 'alî?</i>
		" low?	" <i>watî?</i>
is there a defile?	<i>fih khanik</i>	is there a defile?	<i>fih chânik?</i>
what is it called?	<i>esmoo-eh</i>	what is it called?	<i>ismuh ey?</i>
can a cart pass?	<i>el-'arabieh y'akdar yeroôh 'alaih</i>	can a cart pass?	<i>'arabiah yakdir yaruh 'alaih?</i>
whither does it lead?	<i>et-tareêk yewoddi fayn</i>	whither does it lead?	<i>at tarik di yawadi ila fain?</i>
is there any fort here?	<i>fih kala'a henâk</i>	is there any fort there?	<i>fih hisn henak?</i>
can we go round (avoid) it?	<i>yemkinna ni tajânnab minnoo</i>	can we go round (avoid) it?	<i>mumkin an natajannab minhu?</i>

The most obvious difference between the two texts in the table is the way the Arabic is transcribed. However, linguistically, the only substantial difference is the word for ‘fort’: “kala’a” *qal’a* in Mosconas, “hisn” *ḥiṣn* in Watson. In the first sentence, Watson inverted the word order (both word orders are correct), while in the last sentence, Watson uses the Standard Arabic conjunction “an”.

Like Mosconas, Watson mixes up Eastern and Western Arabic patterns of the verb for the first person:

- (12) (Watson 1885: 56):
 “ana ārid”
ana a-rîd
 I 1SG-want
 ‘I want’.

²² E.g. Watson has added a section entitled “Examination of prisoners”.

- (13) (Watson 1885: 57):
 “mā nakdirsh”
mā na-gdir-š
 NEG 1SG-can-NEG
 ‘I cannot’.

As we see in these two examples, the 1st person singular is either indicated with *a-* or *na-*. The interesting thing, however, is that in the chapter “Arabic Grammar” Watson gives the paradigm *ansur* “I help” and *nansur* “we help” (p. 15) and thus, as Mosconas, does not follow his own grammar rules in the “Dialogues” section of his book.

Watson uses *na-* to indicate the 1st person plural. However, the 1st person plural form *na-...-u* is not found in Watson’s work (see also Nakao 2013: 5–6):

- (9) again (Mosconas 1884: xxviii):
 “negdar nem-shoo ala riglaina”
ni-gdar ni-mš-u ‘ala *riglē-na*
 1PL-can-∅ 1PL-walk-PL on feet-POSS.1PL
 ‘Can we go on foot?’

- (14) (Watson 1885: 60):
 “nakdur namshi ’ala riglaina”
na-gdur na-mši ‘ala *riglē-na*
 1PL-can-∅ 1PL-walk-∅ on feet-POSS.1PL
 ‘Can we go on foot?’

Again as in Mosconas, there are issues with subject-verb agreement:

- (15) (Watson 1885: 59):
 “arabiah yakdir an tamshi ’ala at tarīk di?”
 ‘arabiyya *ya-gdir* *an* *ta-mši* ‘ala *aṭ ṭarīq di?*
 cart 3SG.M-can CNJ 3SG.F-go on DEF road this?
 ‘Is it difficult for a cart?’

The word ‘*arabiyya* is feminine, but the first verb is masculine, while the second is feminine. Note also the very free translation (literally it says ‘is it possible for a cart to go on this road?’). The conjunction *an* is only used in Standard Arabic, not in the dialects. The source text of Mosconas contains this same sentence twice, once correct, once incorrect (Mosconas 1884: xxviii): *el-a’arabiyeh tegdar tim-shi* (correct, both verbs have the feminine prefix *t-*) and *el-’arabieh y’akdar yeroōh ’alaih* (incorrect, both verbs with masculine prefix *y-*). Perhaps Watson was confused by this and confused Mosconas’ two sentences.

It can be concluded that for the Grammar part, Watson probably relied on the Standard Arabic he learned in England, while the rest of the book contains rural Egyptian Arabic. It is unfortunate that Watson did not cast a critical eye on the Vocabulary, which contains many errors. This can probably be explained by him having learned Standard Arabic from a teacher, while he had probably picked up the dialect in the streets of Egypt, without any formal instruction.

5.5 Scudamore, Frank. 1915. *Arabic for our armies: Words and phrases with their equivalent in colloquial Arabic (phonetic pronunciation) in daily requirement by H.M. forces serving in the Near East*

Frank Scudamore (1859–1939) was the son of Frank Ives Scudamore (1823–1884), the Post Office administrator responsible for nationalizing the British telegraph industry. In 1875, when Scudamore Jr. was 16 years old, his father was appointed by the Ottoman government to reorganize the Turkish post office (Perry 2004). The family spent some time in Constantinople. Scudamore reported his first war, the Russo-Turkish war, in 1877 (Roth 1997: 277), and in 1882 went to Egypt as a war correspondent (Scudamore 1925).

Scudamore's *Arabic for our Armies* is a booklet of 24 pages containing word lists on the subjects of “food and drinks, general wants, travel by river or sea, travel by land, Red Cross, camp terms and phrases, sentences and words, and numerals”.²³ The Foreword (p. 3) starts with the interesting statement that “There are several forms of the Arabic language, and of them ‘Egyptian Arabic’ has been termed ‘bastard’”. Scudamore does not explain why Egyptian Arabic deserves this dubious honor. It is possible that “bastard” refers to the lack of respect felt for the dialects as opposed to Standard Arabic, but this is the case for all Arabic dialects, not exclusively Egyptian Arabic. Scudamore (1915a: 3) continues to say that

The matter of pronunciation is extremely difficult. There are many complicated vowel²⁴ sounds, which cannot be rendered by any possible combination of English letters, and such endeavour to explain them as could be given in a tiny manual would confuse without helping the reader. All that is attempted here is to convey the sounds of Arabic words *as nearly as possible* [...].

²³ Scudamore wrote similar booklets about Turkish, French and German, see the *References*.

²⁴ He obviously means consonant, because the vowels in Arabic are rather straightforward, whereas the consonants are a whole different matter.

This overview shows that Scudamore did not follow any logical system in reproducing Arabic sounds, let alone convey them as nearly as possible:

- ‘: this is rendered in a number of ways, none of them very accurate, e.g.:
 - e: “veal – e-idj]” [‘ijl] (p. 7),
 - dg: “make broth – udg-mel-marakā” [i‘mil maraqa] (p. 7),
 - zoö (?): “grapes – zoö-nab” [‘inab] (p. 7),
 - y: “how far – kām bay-id” [kām ba‘id, grammatically also incorrect] (p. 15),
 - h: “forty – arr-bah-een” [arbi‘in] (p. 24),
 - ø: “I want – eyes” [‘āyiz] (p. 16).²⁵
- ħ:
 - gh: “apple – tō-fagh” [tuffāḥ] (p. 8),
 - ø: “yesterday – embarra” [imbāriḥ] (p. 22),
 - k: “open the door – if tak²⁶ el bab” [iftaḥ el bāb] (p. 20).
- x:
 - h: “store house – māh zān” [maxzan] (p. 18),
 - kh: “chicken – farkh” [farx] (p. 7). It is unfortunate that he sometimes uses kh but leaves a space, as if kh is supposed to be pronounced as two separate letters: “a pillow – muk hād dā” [muxadda] (p. 9), “tobacco – dook hān” [duxān] (p. 10),
 - k: “thread, twine – kait” [xayf] (p. 9).²⁷
- j:
 - j: “kid – jad-ee” [jady] (p. 7),
 - dj: “auxiliaries – nādj-dā” [najda] (p. 18).
- q, pronounced in Cairo as a glottal stop and in most of the rest of Egypt as g:²⁸
 - c: “a lamp – can-deel” [qandīl] (p. 8),
 - k: “a water carrier – sāk-kāh” [saqqa] (p. 9),
 - kh: “a spoon – mih-lākhā” [mi‘laqa] (p. 9),
 - g: “writing paper – wārrāg” [waraq] (p. 9).
- p: does not exist in Arabic and is pronounced as b in loan words, but is used by Scudamore: “orange – portoo-gal” [burtugāl] (p. 8).

²⁵ Scudamore has a habit of using the spelling of familiar English words to convey the sounds of the Arabic, for instance “alive – high” [ḥayy] (Scudamore 1915a: 17), “dinner – rudder” [ḡada] (Scudamore 1915a: 20).

²⁶ Notice the same word with a completely different transcription on p. 21: “open! – efftāh!”.

²⁷ The same word, but translated as “string”, is given on p. 10 with the spelling “khā-īt”.

²⁸ The following examples seem to indicate that Scudamore was not describing the dialect of Cairo. However, this is contradicted by the word “ā-we” in “cold (very) – bard (ā-we)” [bard ‘awi] (p. 19), which seems to indicate the glottal stop for the *q, like in Cairo.

The indication of long and short vowels seems to be random. The incorrect use of spaces makes clear that Scudamore did not know the word boundaries. Often he uses spaces within words, e.g. “battle – mō har eb bey” [*muḥāraba*] (p. 18), but also spaces between words are given in the wrong places, e.g. “give me (something) to drink – gib lē shish rūb” [*gib li šī (a)šrab*] (p. 19) where the *š* of the root ŠRB ‘to drink’ is attached to the previous word.

Some words are transcribed in such far-fetched ways that it is almost impossible to recognize their Arabic counterparts: “roast – mack-swee” (p. 7) (*mašwi?*), “cheese – jā-boom” (p. 7) (*jubn?*), “artichokes – hark-ssoof” [*xaršūf*] (p. 8), “flour – dāgh-n” [*ṭaḥīn?*] (p. 8), “arm – sāthād” [*sā'id?*] (p. 16), “bind! – hāss-üb!” [*ḥazzim?*] (p. 16). Typos are also common, e.g. “a glass – koo-bāgā” [*kubbāya*] (p. 9), “fog – shab-ooza” [*šabbūra*] (p. 12), “the doctor – tā-beel” [*ṭabīb*] (p. 15).

Incorrect translations and grammar are rife as well, e.g. “a horse – high wann (or) huss-an” [*ḥayawān* or *ḥuṣān*] (p. 13), *ḥayawān* meaning ‘animal’, not ‘horse’; “being without anything – sā kit” [*sākit*] (p. 22), *sākit* means ‘silent’, not ‘poor’; “to dig – očh-for; dig (command) – očh!” (p. 19): the imperative ‘dig!’ is *uḥfur*, no infinitive exists in Arabic. The *-fur* in *uḥfur* can in no way be deleted from the rest of the word, as Scudamore suggests here.

It is clear that the many problems of this booklet, such as faulty translations, incorrect grammar, and botched transcriptions, cannot have done anything to improve communication between the British and the Egyptians, and must even have complicated it further.

6 Comparison of some military terminology

This paragraph compares a sample of 18 terms from the five works. Most of these are military ranks, while others are words commonly used in the army. The term is followed by the page number.

Tab. 3: Comparison of some military terminology

English term	Tien	Green vol. 2	Mosconas	Watson	Scudamore
artillery	tobjieh, madf'ajieh 53	ṭobgīyah 118	tupgi, tupgieh 17	tupjī 43	top-jee-ya 17
barracks	kishlah 53	qishlah, qishlāq 119	keeshlāk 22	kishlah 44	kāz-lā 18
battalion	tabour 52	ōrṭah 119	taboōr 23	ordā tabur 43	boo-look 17
brigade	liwa 52	liwā 122	–	liwa 43	lee-wā 17

English term	Tien	Green vol. 2	Mosconas	Watson	Scudamore
captain ²⁹	yoozbashi 52	qabṭān, yūzbāshī 123	kaptān 41	yuzbashi 42	youz-bashi 18
colonel	mir-alaïy 52	mīr ālāï 125	mīralay 48	miralai 42	meer allie 18
garrison ³⁰	'oordi 53	ḥāmiyah 143	asākeer-el- mahāfezah 86	urdī (camp) 46	sīch na, rā-bee-tā 18
general	sari 'askar 52	mushīr, sar'askar 143	fereék 87	pasha 42, pasha ferik (gen- eral, lieutenant), pasha liwa (gen- eral, major) 43	emeer 18
infantry	biyadeh- 'askar 53	biyādah 148	biyādah 107	biyada 44	pee-yādā 17
lieutenant	milazim 52	mulāzim 153	moolazim 120	mulāzim 43	–
major ³¹	binbashi 52	bīnbāsha 155	bembāshe 127	bimbashi 43	bimbashi 18
regiment	allaiy 52	orṭah; alāï 174	'ā'lay 177	alai 44	allie 17
rifle	shishkhanah 'askar 53	–	shesh- khanah 180	sheshchanah 45	–
sergeant	shawish 52	shāwīsh 178	–	–	–
sergeant- major	bash-shawish 52	bāsh shāwīsh 178	shawush- bashi 191	chawush bashi 43	–
soldier	'askari 53	'askarī 181	asscarī 203	'askari 42	āsker (army) 17
squadron	boolook 52	orṭat sawārī 182	būlook 207	buluk 44	ta-boor 18
staff	arkani harb 52	arkān ḥarb 182	arkaneḥarb 207	arkhan al harb 44	–

The various works agree reasonably well on a number of terms, such as ‘barracks’, where all mention a form of the (Ottoman) قشلا *qišla* or قشلاغ *qišlāg* (see Redhouse 1880: 49a), or some ranks such as ‘lieutenant’ *mulāzim* (Arabic), ‘captain’ *yuzbāshī* (Ottoman, from *yüz* ‘100’ and *baš* ‘chief’), and ‘colonel’ *mīralay* (Ottoman, from *mīr*, abbreviation of *amīr* ‘commander’, and *alay* ‘regiment’). The difference is mostly in the transcription used or in the word order (e.g. ‘sergeant-major’: *baš-šawīš* versus *šawūš-bāša*, from Ottoman *baš* ‘chief’ and *çawuš* ‘sergeant’). In ‘artillery’, Tien is the only one who mentions the Arabic “madfajieh” *madfa'iyya* besides the Ottoman *ṭubgiyya* (*topçu*). More interesting are the words on which the various works differ considerably. These terms, for ‘battalion’, ‘garrison’, ‘general’, and ‘squadron’, will be briefly discussed here:

²⁹ Translations of the type *qabṭān* (Green, Mosconas) refer to the naval term, not the army rank.

³⁰ Either ‘military post’ or the troops stationed there.

³¹ Major (*bimbāshī*) was the lowest rank with which an English officer entered the Egyptian army. In the Sudan, where many native soldiers did not speak Arabic as their mother tongue, the British used a kind of pidginized Arabic called ‘Bimbashi Arabic’, which according to Nakao (2013) formed the basis for Arabic creole languages such as Juba Arabic.

- ‘battalion’ and ‘squadron’: The words used by the five works for ‘battalion’ and ‘squadron’ all go back to three terms: *bulūk*, *ṭabūr*, and *orṭa*. These were originally terms used in the Ottoman Empire by the Janissary corps. When Sultan Selim III established the new army in 1794 as part of the Nizam-i Cedid (‘New System’), an *orṭa* consisted of 1602 men, divided in two *ṭabūrs* of 800 men each, which were again divided into smaller companies (*bölük* in Ottoman) of 100 men (Shaw 1965/1966: 176). The word *sawārī* mentioned by Green means ‘cavalry’.
- ‘garrison’: In the word ‘garrison’, the difference in the translations can be partially explained by the meaning of the word in English. A garrison can either be a military post or the troops stationed there. Mosconas took the meaning of ‘troops’: his translation “asàkeer-el-mahàfezah” *‘asākīr al-muḥāfaẓa* correlates to ‘soldiers of protection’. Green uses another Arabic word for protection, “ḥāmiyah”. Tien and Watson use the Turkish word for ‘camp’, اردو *ordu* (Redhouse 1880: 60). The first term given by Scudamore, “sich na”, is probably an incorrect representation of the word شحنة *šihna* ‘troop, garrison’ (see e.g. Steingass 1884: 531). The second term given by Scudamore is the Arabic رابطة *rābiṭa* ‘band; bond; confederation’.
- ‘general’: For the term ‘general’, Tien and Green use the translation *sar* ‘*askar* which is a mix of the Persian *sar* ‘head’ and the Arabic ‘*askar* ‘soldiers’. The *sar* ‘*askar* was the commander in-chief and minister of war of the Ottoman Empire (see Lewis). However, during the period under discussion, the function of commander-in-chief was called *sirdār* in Egypt,³² not *sar* ‘*askar*. Green also uses the Arabic *mušīr*, which was used in the Ottoman army with the meaning of “Field Marshal”, the highest rank in the army (see Deny). Mosconas uses the Arabic *farīq*, which means ‘lieutenant general’.³³ Scudamore uses *amīr* ‘commander’, which was not an official rank in the army. Watson gives *pasha*, which is incorrect, as pasha was an honorific title accorded to the commander-in-chief and generals, but not a rank.³⁴

It is clear that most of the differences in terminology are caused by a choice the authors made from the available Ottoman and Arabic terms. Some confusion about the interpretation of the English terms played a role as well.

³² See Lamothe (2011: xv), Amery (1905: 416), and Baring (1908 II: 283).

³³ See Lamothe (2011: xv) and Wingate (1891: 209). Amery (1905: 146) gives ‘General of Division’, which coincides with Mosconas’ ‘general’.

³⁴ See Lamothe (2011: xv) and Wingate (1891: 209–213). The latter gives an excellent overview of the composition of the new Egyptian army and an explanation of the origin of the ranks.

7 Conclusion

The complicated linguistic situation in Egypt during the British occupation is reflected in the language teaching materials that were available for British officers. These officers had to deal with an amalgam of Standard Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, and Turkish, with no formal system of teaching these languages in place at the time.

The quality of the five books discussed in this paper varies greatly. This has to do with the different backgrounds of the authors, the variety of Arabic they had learned, their teachers and informants, and their (lack of) proficiency in the language. This makes them unreliable sources of information for dialectologists who are interested in the Arabic dialects of that time, although it does make them interesting from a historical and sociolinguistic point of view.

The purpose of the works also differs: on one end of the spectrum we find a complete course of Arabic grammar, including Arabic script, intended to give a thorough knowledge of written and spoken Arabic (Green); on the other end, we have a simple word list containing basic vocabulary, intended for providing the bare minimum of Arabic needed for dealing with everyday situations (Scudamore).

The military terminology presented in the five works is only partly standardized, as has been shown with a sample of terms. This has to do with several factors: the choice of either the Ottoman Turkish or the Arabic terms; the confusion about the exact meaning of English ranks and terms; and the reorganization of the Egyptian army which caused some terms to disappear.

Abbreviations

CNJ	conjunction	NEG	negation
DEF	definite	PL	plural
DEM	demonstrative	POSS	possessive
F	feminine	PTCP	participle
IMP	imperative	Q	question particle
IND	indicative	SBJV	subjunctive
M	masculine	SG	singular

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