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# ARABIC VARIETIES: FAR AND WIDE

## Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference of AIDA Bucharest, 2015



editors

**GEORGE GRIGORE  
GABRIEL BIȚUNĂ**

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*Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> International*  
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# NINETEENTH-CENTURY CAIRO ARABIC AS DESCRIBED BY QADRĪ AND NAḤLA

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**Abstract:** This paper compares two 19<sup>th</sup> century works, Muḥammad Qadrī's *Nouveau guide de conversation française et arabe* (1868) and Ya'qūb Naḥla's *New Manual of English and Arabic Conversation* (1874). These works have some common aspects: both were written by prominent Egyptians, had the dual purpose of teaching Arabic to foreigners and teaching the foreign language to Egyptians, and tried to achieve these aims by presenting word lists and dialogues. The dialogues are especially interesting, as they contain valuable information about Egyptian Arabic as it was spoken in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paper examines how the two works present both the foreign and the Arabic language, and how they deal with the use of Egyptian Arabic versus classical Arabic. It also describes similarities and differences in the colloquial Arabic as presented by these works, focusing on some phonological, morphological, and syntactic features, and concludes with a sample of words that have become obsolete in Cairo Arabic.

**Keywords:** *Egyptian Arabic, 19<sup>th</sup> century, textbooks, language description, language change*

## Introduction

This paper presents two hitherto little-known 19<sup>th</sup> century sources of Egyptian Arabic.<sup>1</sup> The first is Muḥammad Qadrī's<sup>2</sup> book *Nouveau guide de conversation française et arabe*,<sup>3</sup> or *al-Durr al-naḥs fi luḡatay al-'arab wa-l-faransīs* ("The precious pearls concerning the languages of the Arabs and the French"), published in 1868. The other is Ya'qūb Naḥla's<sup>4</sup> *New Manual of English and Arabic Conversation*,<sup>5</sup> or *al-Tuḥfa al-murḍiya fi ta'allum al-luḡa al-ingilīziyya* ("The pleasing treasure for learning the English language") from 1874.

Most descriptions of Egyptian Arabic from the 19<sup>th</sup> century were written by orientalist, such as Wilhelm Spitta and Karl Vollers. Works by non-native speakers always raise the questions of how well they mastered Arabic, how much time they spent in the Arab world, how and from whom they learned Arabic, etc. Likewise, books written by native speakers pose problems of interpretation, such as possible interference from the written language, and influence from other (for instance rural) dialects. An interesting example is al-Ṭantāwī's *Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire* from 1848. Al-Ṭantāwī was originally from the Delta, and went to live in Cairo at the age of 13. The question whether the dialect presented in his book is Cairo Arabic has been discussed by Blanc (1973–74: 383) and Woidich (1995: 285), and both came to the conclusion that this indeed must have been the case. While Naḥla was from Cairo, Qadrī was born in Middle Egypt. The question of influence from a rural dialect therefore plays a role here as well. The difference between al-Ṭantāwī's work and those of Qadrī and Naḥla is that al-Ṭantāwī's was written in Arabic script, while Qadrī and Naḥla's works

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<sup>1</sup> 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 is funded with a VENI grant from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

<sup>2</sup> Written as Mohamed Cadri on the title page. He also used the alternative spelling Mohamet/Mohammed Cadry in his publications. I will write the names of the authors according to the academic Arabic transcription.

<sup>3</sup> Subtitled: *Ouvrage élémentaire et classique, contenant une nouvelle méthode très facile pour apprendre aux Indigènes à parler le français et aux Européens à parler l'arabe en peu de temps*. Hereafter referred to as *Nouveau guide*.

<sup>4</sup> Written as Yacoub Nakhlah on the title page.

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter referred to as *New Manual*.

contain both Arabic script and transcription. The transcribed texts will provide more phonological information about the dialect than can be retrieved from a text written in Arabic script.

Qadrī and Naḥla's books have some common aspects: both authors were prominent Egyptians who mastered foreign languages and had teaching experience. Both books were written for a dual purpose: they were meant to be a guide for foreigners learning Arabic, and for Egyptians learning a European language (French and English, respectively). They therefore constitute excellent material for a comparison, both in methodology and in contents, i.e. the language as it is described in the two works.

The paper will start by describing the two authors. Then the two books will be compared with respect to contents, methodology, and transcription systems. Lastly, the paper will highlight some phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features, comparing the data given in the two books, and comparing these data with modern Cairo Arabic.

## 1. The authors

Muḥammad Qadrī Pasha (1821–1888) was born in Mallawī in the province of Al-Minyā by an Anatolian father and an Egyptian mother. He was educated in his home town and in Cairo, where he studied English, Italian, French, Turkish, and Persian at the famous *Madrasat al-'alsun* ("the School of Languages"), and Arabic and Islamic law at the Azhar University. He was an important figure in Egyptian society: he was private teacher to the crown prince, worked as an advisor to the Mixed Courts, and held the posts of Minister of Public Instruction (*wazīr al-ma'ārif*) and Minister of Justice (*wazīr al-ḥaqqāniyya*). Qadrī wrote several works on law, including a work on Islamic Personal Status Law.<sup>6</sup> He also wrote several conversation books for Arabic, such as the one under discussion in this paper.<sup>7</sup>

Ya'qūb Naḥla Rūfayla Bey (1847–1905/1908) was a Copt from Cairo. He attended the Coptic School, where he became a teacher of English and Italian after he graduated, and later was appointed director of the school. Thereafter he held posts at the governmental press and the press of the Tawfiq Society, as well as several other governmental posts, such as secretary of the Fayyūm railways. He founded the newspaper *al-Waṭan* and established several schools in Cairo and the Fayyūm. His most famous publication is *Tārīḥ al-'umma al-qibṭiyya* ("The History of the Coptic Community"), while he also wrote several other books on language. He was the founder of *al-Nādī al-miṣrī al-ingilīzī li-l-muḥāwarāt* ("the Anglo-Egyptian Discussion Club"), where young Egyptians could practise their English conversation.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. The books

### 2.1. Contents of Qadrī's *Nouveau guide* (1868)

Qadrī's *Nouveau guide* starts with a long preface in French about the history of Egypt and ends by stating the purpose of the book: to make it easier for Europeans to learn Arabic and for Arabic speakers to learn French (MQ xiv).<sup>9</sup> The book consists of more than 800 pages, published in two volumes. Part one is a vocabulary divided into categories, such as "des fruits", "des meubles", "des domestiques", "maladies et accidents", and many others. This is followed by a section entitled "exercices pratiques sur la conjugaison des verbes avoir et être", which contains sample sentences rather than conjugation tables. Part two, which takes up the biggest part of the book (pp. 218–839) is entitled "phrases familières et conversations sur les verbes". It contains sixty chapters with phrases in the form of dialogues, which all revolve around a verb, such as "répondre", "demander", "donner", "acheter", etc.

<sup>6</sup> See al-Ziriklī (2002: 10) and Cilaro (2009).

<sup>7</sup> For the other titles see Galtier (1905: 33–34, nos 7–8, 19). These were unfortunately not at my disposal.

<sup>8</sup> See al-Miṣrī (1992: 380) and [http://arz.wikipedia.org/wiki/يعقوب\\_نخلة\\_روفيلا](http://arz.wikipedia.org/wiki/يعقوب_نخلة_روفيلا).

<sup>9</sup> I will henceforth refer to the works as MQ (Muḥammad Qadrī) and YN (Ya'qūb Naḥla) followed by the page number.

## 2.2. Colloquial and literary Arabic in Qadrī's *Nouveau guide*

In the preface (MQ xv), Qadrī states that “J’ai traduit chaque phrase littéralement et vulgairement”. The kind of ‘vulgar Arabic’ which is used, is not further specified. The author explains neither how Arabic is pronounced, nor the transcription system that he uses. Neither did he take into account Arabic learners of French who did not know the Latin alphabet or how to pronounce French, as they are given no hints about the pronunciation of French. It is therefore clear that this book could not be used to learn French or Arabic without the help of a teacher.

In the vocabulary, the French word is given in the left column, followed by transcribed (colloquial) Arabic, and in the right column, literary Arabic. The words given in the vocabulary are sometimes pure classical Arabic, even in transcription, and sometimes colloquial, even in Arabic script. For instance, “le visage” is given as *al wadj-ho*<sup>10</sup> in transcription (MQ 2), including the case ending, and not the colloquial *wišš*. However, a typically dialect item is *al hanak* [*al-ḥanak*] for “la bouche” (MQ 3), which is also written in the right column containing literary Arabic, beside *fam*. The division between colloquial in transcription and literary Arabic in Arabic script is therefore not applied very rigorously.

For \*ǧ, Qadrī often uses the transcription *dj*, for instance in *al djism* “le corps” (MQ 1), and *maramhoum yrouhou il djinéneh* “they want to go to the park” (MQ 260). Sometimes he uses the letter *g* for \*ǧ, indicating the pronunciation of Cairo, e.g. *al fagr* “l’aurore” (MQ 16), although *dj* remains the transcription he uses the most frequently. This raises the question whether this is a reflection of literary Arabic, or of another dialect, for instance Qadrī’s rural dialect from the Minyā region<sup>11</sup> or Levantine Arabic. Qadrī uses *dj* in purely colloquial context, where a pronunciation according to literary Arabic would be wholly unexpected, so it is more likely that it is a reflection of non-Cairene colloquial Arabic.

Noticeable is also that Qadrī writes \*q with *c*, *ck* or *k*, e.g. *wact* “temps” (MQ 300), *dakik* “exact” (MQ 76). However, this does not have to mean that he realised \*q as *q* or *k*.<sup>12</sup> There are many other early works that represent ’ < *q* with *q* (e.g. Spitta 1880) or *k* (e.g. Probst 1898), which is merely used to indicate a glottal stop that was historically \*q, in order to distinguish it from original *hamza*. Naḥla also uses *k* for \*q.

The familiar phrases are given in four columns spread over two pages: French and Arabic transcription on the left page, and colloquial Arabic in Arabic script, and literary Arabic on the right page, e.g. MQ 578–579:

Voulez-vous me répondre?	biddakchi tidjāwibni	بدكشى تجاوبنى	هل تريد أن تجيبنى
--------------------------	----------------------	---------------	-------------------

Many of the supposedly colloquial phrases contain some classical Arabic, such as the use of *abi* and *yourīd an* in the following example (MQ 208–209):

Mon père veut que je soit médecin	abi yourīd an akoun hakīm	أبى يريد أن أكون حكيم	ان أبى يود أن أكون طبيباً
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This is especially the case in the first part containing the sample sentences with “être” and “avoir”. In the second part, the colloquial contains fewer literary Arabic features.

Sometimes the colloquial phrases in transcription and in Arabic are not the same, as in the following two examples (MQ 336–337 and 618–619):

<sup>10</sup> I will cite the transcribed Arabic from these two works as it is written in the originals. Only when the original is ambiguous, I will add an academic transcription between square brackets. The transcription method used by the two authors will be explained in section 3.1.

<sup>11</sup> Mallawī is in the area where \*ǧ is pronounced *ǧ / ǧ / d* (see Behnstedt–Woidich 1985: map 10).

<sup>12</sup> In his home town, \*q is realized as *g* (see Behnstedt–Woidich 1985: map 6).

Jusqu'à quelle heure êtes-vous resté au bal?	hal caadt zamàn thawil fil ballou	قعدت للساعة كام في البالو	الى أى ساعة مكثت فى البالو
Que demandez-vous? Je ne demande rien.	enta thablib [sic; read thalib] èh Manich thalib hadjeh	انت عاوز انه مانيش عاوز شئ	ماذا تطلب – ماذا تروم لا أطلب شيئاً

In the first example, the colloquial in Arabic script is a literal translation of the French, while the transcription gives a slightly different meaning. In the second example, the transcription has *thalib* [tālīb] and *hadjeh* [hāḡeh], while the Arabic has 'āwiz and šē' or šay'. It is unclear why the colloquial phrases in transcription and in Arabic do not match, as Qadrī does not explain this. However, one possible explanation is that it was done to give the reader more than one option, without wasting too much space by giving both alternatives in transcription and in Arabic script.

### 2.3. Contents of Naḥla's *New Manual* (1874)

Naḥla's *New Manual* was intended both for foreigners who wanted to learn Arabic and for Egyptians who wanted to learn English (YN Preface). This is very similar to Qadrī's purpose, as is the title of the book, which suggests that Naḥla knew and was inspired by Qadrī's book. Naḥla provides a preface in both English and Arabic. In the Arabic preface, Naḥla praises the study of languages, because, as he writes: *man ta'allama luḡata qawmin 'amina makrahum li'annahu bi-ma'rifati luḡatihim yumayyizu ḥayrahum wa-šarrahum* "whoever learns a nation's language is safe from their cunning, because with the knowledge of their language he can distinguish between the good and the bad". In the English preface, he explains that the grammatical rules he gives "are so framed, that in observing them they will render the student competent to speak the language and make himself clearly understood by all classes of Arabs." What Naḥla refers to as "the language" here is, therefore, the Arabic language. This confirms what can be noted from the rest of the contents of the work. It caters more to the needs of learners of Arabic than to learners of English, as it starts with a grammar of Egyptian Arabic, but no grammar of English is given. The grammar (42 pages) describes the "article", "noun", "gender", "number", "adjective", "pronouns", "verb", "adverbs", "prepositions", "conjunctions", and "the negative" in a clear and accurate way.<sup>13</sup>

The second part of the work is an English–Arabic vocabulary. The vocabulary is not divided into subjects, like Qadrī's, but is arranged alphabetically. The third part contains "familiar phrases and conversations" which cover such topics as "meeting", "blame", "the laundress", and "in a shop". While the grammar is only given in transcribed Arabic, the second and third parts contain both transcription and Arabic script. With 277 pages, Naḥla's work is not as voluminous as Qadrī's.

### 2.4. Colloquial and literary Arabic in Naḥla's *New Manual*

While Qadrī referred to both literary and 'vulgar' Arabic, Naḥla is less clear in the preface about the type of Arabic he describes. He only refers to neutral "Arabic" and writes that the Arabic in the grammar is "not strictly applicable to the Grammatical construction of the language". The meaning of this statement becomes clear in the heading with which the grammar starts: "rules adapted to vulgar conversational Arabic" (YN i).

In Naḥla's vocabulary, the division between colloquial and literary Arabic is more clear-cut than in Qadrī's. For instance, the distinction is made between colloquial *bad bokrah* and classical *ba'd ḡad* "after tomorrow", or colloquial *zay baad* [zayyā ba'd] and classical *miṭl ba'd* "alike", or the loanword *contrato* "agreement" which is only given in transcription but not in Arabic script (YN 4). The same can be said about part three containing the "familiar phrases": the dialect is given in transcription, and the text given in Arabic script is in literary Arabic, although it contains some colloquial features, such as the frequent use of the verb راح, e.g. (YN 206):

<sup>13</sup> Naḥla's grammar, as well as many of his "familiar phrases", were copied almost verbatim by Mosconas in his *English & Arabic Dictionary*, see Zack (2016: 12).

I was going to your house. | *ana kont rāyih lak fil beit – kont rāyih beit-kom* | كنت رايحا الى بيتكم

The right column contains the dialectal lexical item *rāyih*, although the construction with the predicate in the accusative and the preposition *'ilā* is classical Arabic.

### 3. Linguistic comparison of the works

This section will compare the language in the two works on a few points of transcription, phonology, morphology, and syntax. These points have been chosen because the language of the two books, when compared side by side, shows some remarkable differences, even though the books were published in the same city and only six years apart.

#### 3.1. Transcription

The following table shows a comparison of the transcription systems used by Qadrī and Naḥla.<sup>14</sup>

Table 1

Comparison of transcription methods

	Qadrī	Naḥla
short vowels	a, e, i, o, ou	a, e, i, o
long vowels	â, ê, î, ô, ou	â, ee <sup>15</sup> , ay/ei, <sup>16</sup> î, ô, oo <sup>17</sup>
ğ	dj, g	g
ḥ	h	h, hh
x	kh	kh
s	s, ç	s
š	ch	sh
š	s, c	s, ss
ḍ	d	d, dd
ṭ	t, th	t, tt
ẓ	dh	z
'	ø, ', 'e (final) <sup>18</sup>	ø, ', a, h, circumflex on the following or preceding vowel <sup>19</sup>
ğ	gh	gh
q	c, ck, k	k
y	y	y

Neither of these are systems in which one phoneme is represented by one letter.<sup>20</sup> There are differences in transcription that are caused by influences from the spelling of French in Qadrī's case and English in Naḥla's. For instance, the use of *ou* in Qadrī's work for both *u* and *ū* indicates the French spelling of this phoneme, while Naḥla uses *ee* for *ī* and *oo* for *ū*, as is usual in English. These differences are also found in the consonants: Qadrī sometimes uses *c* and *ç* for *s* and *š*, while Naḥla doesn't, and Qadrī uses *ch* for *š*, while Naḥla uses *sh*. The phonemes that are most foreign to English

<sup>14</sup> I have only included here the phonemes which are of interest; so I have left out *l, m, n*, etc.

<sup>15</sup> For *ī*.

<sup>16</sup> For \*ay > *ē*.

<sup>17</sup> For *ū*.

<sup>18</sup> Qadrī sometimes uses *ü* to render the combination *i'*, e.g. *tūrafch irradjil deh* [ti'rafš irrāğil deh] "Connaissez-vous cet homme?" (MQ 474). Also double *i* is used for this purpose: *samiitich il kalam illi coultou lak* [sami'tiš ilkalām illi qultūlak] "Avez-vous entendu ce que je vous ai dit?" (MQ 528). It is possible that the *ü* is a typo (of which there are plenty in Qadrī's work), as it resembles *ii*.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. *îmil mâroof* [i'mil ma'rūf] "Do me the favour" (YN 215).

<sup>20</sup> This was done for the first time for Egyptian Arabic by Spitta in his *Grammatik* (1880).

and French, i.e. the emphatics, ‘*ayn*, and *ḥā*’, show inconsistencies in how the authors write them. An example is the *ṭā*, which is written by Qadrī with *t* or with *th*, and by Naḥla with *t* or with *tt*. The ‘*ayn* is the least stable, and is either not represented at all, or with a letter or symbol that does not reflect its pronunciation very accurately, such as *h*, *a*, or an apostrophe.

### 3.2. Phonology

This paragraph will highlight one phonological feature, namely the pausal ‘*imāla*. This is a phenomenon in which the final *-a* is raised to *-eh* or *-ih* before a pause. It is well known that Cairo had pausal ‘*imāla* until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; it was of the type that does not occur after guttural or emphatic consonants. Its disappearance around the turn of the century has been described by Blanc (1973–74), who consulted a great number of 19<sup>th</sup>-century sources, but not the two under discussion here. It is therefore interesting to see if they confirm Blanc’s findings.

The ‘*imāla* is reflected inconsistently in Qadrī’s word list, as we see for instance in the list of fruits on p. 20, with some ending in *-eh*, and others in *-a(h)*: *lozeh* “amande” and *abou-farweh* “chataigne” reflect ‘*imāla*, while *moza* “banane”, *kharrouba* “caroube”, *kirèsah* “cerise”, *lamouna* “citron”, *safardjala* “coing” and *tīna* “figue” do not have ‘*imāla*. Theoretically, there could be three reasons for this:

1. It reflects the gradual disappearance of pausal ‘*imāla*, here in a state of transition;
2. It is a mixture of colloquial pronunciation with final ‘*imāla* and literary Arabic pronunciation without it;
3. Some forms are given in their context form and others in pausal form.

This question is answered when looking at the phrases. There, the pausal ‘*imāla* is applied rather systematically. For instance, in *issā’a zîada an khamseh* [*issā’a ziyāda ‘an ḥamseh*] “il est plus de cinq heures” (MQ 796), *khamseh* is in pausa and therefore has ‘*imāla*, while *zîada* is not in pausa and therefore has no ‘*imāla*.<sup>21</sup> There are many more examples like this which prove the existence of pausal ‘*imāla*. It is therefore likely that in the word list, a combination of pausal forms and context forms is given.

Naḥla’s work gives a very different picture of pausal ‘*imāla*. He explains in the grammar (YN ii) that feminine words end in *-ah*, e.g. *gineinah* “garden”, *medīnah* “town”, *sanah* “year”. He does not hint at the existence of the pronunciation *-eh*. Nor do we see any pausal ‘*imāla* in the rest of the book, except once when Naḥla writes *kilmeh* “word” (YN 227), and more regularly in the demonstrative *deh* (“that” m.), e.g. *izzay êreft deh* “how did you know that?” (YN 233). *deh* has been noted by Blanc (1973–74: 380–381) to be one of the lexical items to have survived the longest with pausal ‘*imāla*, together with *kide* “so”, *hine* “here” and *ge* “he came”, which he indicated as vestiges of the old feature in a situation of transition.

### 3.3. Morphology

#### 3.3.1. Pronominal suffixes

This section discusses three pronominal suffixes: *-Vha* “her”, *-Vkum* “your (pl.)” and *-Vhum* “their”.<sup>22</sup> Nowadays these suffixes have undergone vowel harmony, meaning that the first vowel has taken on the same quality as the second vowel: *-aha*, *-ukum*, and *-uhum*. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century these suffixes existed in two forms: the ones in use today, and forms with *i* as their first vowel, i.e. *-iha*, *-ikum*, and *-ihum*.<sup>23</sup> Table 2 gives a comparison of the two works.

<sup>21</sup> *issā’a* has no ‘*imāla*, because ‘*imāla* did not occur after the ‘*ayn*.

<sup>22</sup> V = vowel. These are the forms used after two consonants.

<sup>23</sup> These forms are still seen in many locations in the Delta, see Behnstedt–Woidich (1985: map 157).

Table 2

## Comparison of the pronominal suffixes

	Qadrī	Naḥla
3rd sg. f.	-iha / -aha • <i>inta rouhtiha maa min</i> “Avec qui y êtes-vous allé?” (MQ 266) • <i>mà rouhtahàch aslan</i> “Je n’y ai jamais été” (MQ 246)	-iha / -aha • <i>issmaha ayh</i> “What is her name?” (YN 97) • <i>nafsi-ha</i> “herself” (137)
2nd pl.	-ukum • <i>intou kân andokoum mich-mich</i> “Vous aviez eu des abricots” (MQ 134)	-ikum • <i>intom andikoum</i> “you have” (YN 63)
3rd pl.	-uhum • <i>hommà kân andohoum innàb</i> “Ils avaient eu des jujubes” (MQ 134)	-ihum • <i>ây-wa ya-seedi gibtehom</i> “Yes Sir, I have [brought them]” (YN 252)

Table 2 shows that both Qadrī and Naḥla use the two forms of the 3rd person sg: *-iha* and *-aha*. However, in the 2nd and 3rd person plural, Qadrī only has the forms with *u* which are used nowadays, and Naḥla only uses the old forms with *i*.

### 3.3.2. Future markers

Qadrī consistently uses the future marker *rāyih* in its declined form, e.g. *yàtara ashàbak rāyhin yfdalou kitir firrif?* “Vos amis resteront-ils long temps à la campagne?” (MQ 338). Naḥla only uses the simple imperfect for indicating the future, e.g. *al bosta sâfret [?] – te-sâfir al nehâr deh bâd addohr.* “Is the post gone?” – “It will go this afternoon” (YN 262).<sup>24</sup> However, he uses (once) the prefix *ha-* or *ha-*:<sup>25</sup> *konna ha-ne-geeb feekom cabboot* “We were near being a capot”<sup>26</sup> (YN 275). *ha/ha* is a shortened, grammaticalized form of *rāyih* (which was first shortened to *rah*, giving the historical path *rāyih* > *rah* > *ha*). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the three forms existed side by side (e.g. Spitta 1880: 353 mentions all three of them).

### 3.4. Syntax

In this section, one specific syntactic matter will be discussed, namely the interrogative use of *-š*.<sup>27</sup> Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *-š* was placed after the verb or pseudoverb<sup>28</sup> to indicate a polar question. Spitta states that the *-š* indicated a negative meaning, and that it is actually the negation *ma-...-š* with omission of the *ma-*:

<sup>24</sup> In the grammar (YN xiv), he writes: “The form of the present, which is also used for the future, is made a real present by prefixing the letter *b*, as, *ana b-aktib*, I am writing”. Most phrases given by Naḥla with the English translation “will” or “shall” can actually be interpreted as having a modal rather than a real future meaning, for example *addeek talâteen gineih fil koll* “I will give you thirty pounds for the whole” (YN 263).

<sup>25</sup> It is unclear which one, as Naḥla sometimes writes *h* with one *h* and sometimes with *hh*. The use of the future marker *ha-* in combination with the verb *kân*, as in the following example, indicates that something was about to happen (but didn’t, in the end).

<sup>26</sup> Capot (in piquet, a card game): to win all the tricks (see Oxford English Dictionary Online [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)).

<sup>27</sup> I will only focus on the use, and not on the origin of the particle; the latter has been the subject of two recent monographs (Diem 2014 and Wilmsen 2014) with quite different views.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. a preposition, in the case of a prepositional sentence, or *bidd-* “to want”.

In negative questions (nonne<sup>29</sup>), often the first part of the negation, *mâ*, is omitted, and only the second part *š*, *šî*, *šê*, is kept, e.g.: ‘*andakšê qiršên* “don’t you have two piasters?” (Spitta 1880: 415–6) [my translation from German]

A similar view was expressed by Willmore:

*Mâ* is not infrequently omitted, especially in interrogative sentences, where an affirmative answer is expected or astonishment implied at the existence of something, as *ma’aksh fulûs? haven’t you any money? lakshe ikhwa? have you no brothers? kuntish henâk? weren’t you there? [...]*. (Willmore 1901: 298)

Other grammars also translate the questions introduced with *-š* with the negation, and state that this kind of question is used when expecting an affirmative reply (e.g. Vollers 1890: 150 and Nallino 1900: 72). It is tempting to link this *-š* to *ma-...-š* and translate it with a negation, but this is not the way Qadrî and Naḥla translated this particle. They both translated sentences with only *-š* without a negation, in English or French, as well as in literary Arabic,<sup>30</sup> as in these two examples from Qadrî:

- *inta andakchi hodoum* هل تمتلك ثيابا “As-tu du linge?” (MQ 156–157)
- *biddokoumchi tirouhou mahall innahardeh* هل تريدون ان تتوجهوا اليوم الى جهة “Voulez-vous aller quelque part aujourd’hui?” (MQ 256–257)

Qadrî gives negative questions with *ma-...-š*:

- *yâni anâ ma andich maïa* ليس لي ماء “N’ai-je pas d’eau?” (MQ 156–157)
- *ma andoukoumchî rîcha tiçallifouha-li* أما عندكم ريشة تعيروننى ايها “N’avez-vous une plume à me prêter?” (MQ 158–159).

Contrary to Qadrî, Naḥla has some sentences that show that for him, questions with and without *-š* had the same meaning:

- *tê-raf râh wa illa lâ – têrafsh huwa râh wa illa lâ* هل تعرف اذا كان هو ذهب أو راح “Do you know if he is gone?” (YN 208)
- *karayt al gornâl – karaytsh fil gornâl* هل قرأت الجورنال “did you read the papers?” (YN 233)

A similar example is found in Haggenmacher (1892: 47): *ḥadd (ḥaddisch) ga w ana bârra* “has someone come while I was out?”. Naḥla, moreover, has one puzzling example of a question with *ma-...-š*:

- *ma tekhalliksh lamma*<sup>31</sup> *tetghadda way-yâna – ma tekhalliksh netghadda sa-wa* هل تفضل وتتغدى معنا “Will you stay and take dinner with us?” (YN 245).

At first sight this sentence appears to have the negation *ma-...-š*, but this does not fit with the meaning of the sentence, as it is not meant as a prohibitive. I therefore suggest that rather than the negation, the *ma-* needs to be interpreted as the *ma-* which is placed before the imperfect in order to give the imperative more emphasis.<sup>32</sup> This, in combination with the question particle *-š*, gives the sequence *ma-txallikš*. However, I have not found evidence in any other sources for this construction, and therefore this analysis must remain speculative.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4. Vocabulary

Some vocabulary used in the two works has become obsolete. As Ottoman Turkish was replaced by Arabic as the language of administration in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the role of Turkish became less dominant in Egyptian society, and many Turkish words started to disappear from

<sup>29</sup> This is the particle used in Latin when expecting an affirmative reply.

<sup>30</sup> Also the “dubitativen Sinn” attested by Woidich (2006: 358), e.g. *ma’akše sigāra salaf* “kannst du mir vielleicht eine Zigarette leihen?” (“could you perhaps lend me a cigarette?”) is less pronounced in many examples from the 19th century, e.g. *houwa louch arabieh?* “A-t-il une voiture?” (MQ 156) is merely asking a fact.

<sup>31</sup> For the meaning “in order to” for *lamma*, not attested in Badawi–Hinds (1986), see Woidich (2006: 379).

<sup>32</sup> E.g. *ma-tīgi* (see Woidich 2006: 298).

<sup>33</sup> A similar construction using *miš* for emphasis is well known, e.g. *miš tiḥalli bālak w inta sāyi* “paß doch auf, wenn du fährst” (“do be careful when you drive”) (Woidich 2006: 341).

Egyptian Arabic. The following are just a few examples: *bàch takhtah* “commode” (MQ 42);<sup>34</sup> *tozlok* “eye-glasses” (YN 153), nowadays *naḡḡāra*,<sup>35</sup> *khôdja* (MQ 146) / *hodja* (MQ 376) “teacher”, nowadays *mudarris*; *îlchi* “ambassador” (YN 5), nowadays *safîr*; *djanbâz* “maquignon” (“horse-dealer”) (MQ 65); *mir yakhur* “écuyer” (“stableman”) (MQ 67).

However, it was not only Turkish vocabulary that disappeared. There are also many Arabic words in the two works that are not in use anymore today in Cairo, such as:

- *bidd* + suffix / *yirîd* “to want” (many examples, e.g. *anà biddi adjàwbak* “Je veux vous répondre” (MQ 578), *tereed* or *biddak ayh* “what do you wish?” (YN 191)), which was used besides *‘āwiz/‘āyiz*;
- *‘aṭa* “to give” (e.g. MQ 460);
- *waddar* “to lose” (MQ 352);
- *‘adr ‘ē* “how much”, e.g. *abouk omrou cadr èh* “Quel âge a monsieur votre père?” (MQ 232), *kâm* or *kadr ayh* “how much?” (YN 66) (*‘add ē* nowadays);
- *min šān* “for, in order to” (e.g. MQ 318, YN 260) (nowadays *‘a(la)šān*);
- *wa’t* “weather” (only Qadrī, e.g. MQ 268 *arouh in màkanchi il wact radi* “J’irai, s’il ne fait pas mauvais temps”) and *hawa* “weather” (only Naḡla, e.g. YN 238 *al ha-wa itghayyar* “the weather is changed”). *wa’t* is a calque of the French *temps*, which means both “weather” and “time”; this word never gained popular use.<sup>36</sup> *hawa* is still in use with the meaning of “wind”, but has been replaced with the word *gaww* for “weather”;
- *ḡanak, fumm* “mouth” (e.g. MQ 3, YN 95). The former is nowadays only used for the mouth of an animal or in a pejorative way for the mouth of a person, while the latter is still used in Cairo for the mouth of an object (e.g. a pipe), but not for the mouth of a person,<sup>37</sup> except in certain expressions;<sup>38</sup>
- *marā* “woman” (e.g. MQ 10, YN ii), nowadays only used pejoratively;
- *‘am nawwil* “last year” (e.g. YN 197 *am-na-oo-wil*); this was the usual word for “last year” (with a remnant of *tanwīn*; nowadays, only *issana lli fātīt* is used);
- *kitīr* “very” (e.g. MQ 352, YN 181);
- *maḡzam* “towel” (YN 172 *mahzām, mahâzim* محزم). I have found only one other instance in Chagavat (19?: 312), while the other sources from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that I consulted only give *fūṭa*;<sup>39</sup>
- *haggāla* “widow” (YN 190 *haggālah*), a North-African word<sup>40</sup> that I haven’t found in other dictionaries of Egyptian Arabic (the usual word is *‘armala*).

Many of these lexical items, although now obsolete in Cairo, can still be found in the Egyptian countryside, such as *bidd*, *‘aṭa*, *ḡanak*, and *marā*.<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

Qadrī and Naḡla wrote their books with the intention to teach Arabic to foreigners, and a European language (French and English respectively) to Egyptians. With respect to design and purpose, the two works are very similar, and it is likely that Qadrī’s French book inspired Naḡla to write a similar work in English. The idea of how to teach a foreign language, however, was rather underdeveloped in both works. In providing only a vocabulary and dialogues, Qadrī’s work could only be useful for looking up certain words or phrases as the need arose, but did not do much in the way of teaching the

<sup>34</sup> The word *taḡta* is still used with the meaning of “school bench” or “blackboard”, see Badawi–Hinds (1986: 123).

<sup>35</sup> From Turkish *gözlük*. The *t* in *tozlok* is probably a typo, as Spiro (1897: 455) has *kuzluk*.

<sup>36</sup> Newman (2002: 5) mentions *zaman*, which was used with the same meaning by Rifā’a al-Ṭaḡṭāwī, one of the pioneers of the translation movement. This word did not survive either.

<sup>37</sup> See Badawi–Hinds (1986: 229).

<sup>38</sup> See Badawi–Hinds (1986: 672).

<sup>39</sup> Spiro (1895: 133) has “apron”. This is related to *ḡizām* “belt”, as the apron is tied around the waist. This could also be the link with Naḡla’s meaning of “towel”, as this can be tied around the waist as well.

<sup>40</sup> It is mentioned in Marcel (1869: 560).

<sup>41</sup> See Behnstedt–Woidich (1985: maps 385–386, 406) and Woidich (1995: 281–284).

languages. Naḥla went one step further, providing a grammar of Egyptian Arabic, but failed to give an English grammar for his Arabic speaking readers.

The colloquial Arabic presented in the two books is typical for the dialect of Cairo in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, except for Qadrī's use of *dj* for \*ǧ, beside occasional *g*, which points to a different dialect. When comparing the two works, some differences come to light. Pausal *'imāla*, which according to Blanc (1973–74) disappeared from Cairo Arabic at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is still preserved in Qadrī (1868), but is almost totally absent from Naḥla (1874), which indicates that its disappearance started somewhat earlier than Blanc indicated. Also in the use of the future marker, Naḥla's language shows a closer link to modern Cairo Arabic than Qadrī's, as the latter used the declined forms *rāyih*, *rayha*, *rayhīn*, while the former used the shortened prefixed form *ḥa-* which is in use nowadays. However, in other respects Qadrī's language is closer to the dialect of Cairo of today, especially in the use of the object/possessive suffixes.

There are several explanations for the differences in language use between Qadrī and Naḥla. Although they were both prominent Egyptians residing in Cairo, their religious background, upbringing, education, and age (Qadrī was 26 years Naḥla's senior) were very different, which must certainly have led to differences in language use. The dialect of Cairo was a dialect in a transitional stage, in a period of time in which some features disappeared and new features emerged. Therefore, it is not surprising that these two sources give different accounts of certain features. The subject of language change in Cairo in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is complex, and the scope of this article only allowed us to discuss a few interesting items. A monograph on this subject is currently being prepared by the author, which will hopefully shed more light on this interesting period in the history of Cairo Arabic.

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