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Egyptian Railway Vocabulary

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Abstract

This paper discusses an English–Egyptian Arabic–Standard Arabic vocabulary of words and phrases related to railways and trains. This booklet, titled *English-Arabic vocabulary compiled in connection with the Egyptian State Railway Signalling School Lectures* was published by the Egyptian State Railways in the late 1920s or the early 1930s. The vocabulary includes many general, well-known vocabulary items such as ‘exit’, ‘goods’, ‘work’, etc., which are obviously all needed when working in the railways, but not of great interest. However, the vocabulary items that concern us here are those that are specific to railways, trains, train signals and train stations. While some of these can be found in the Egyptian–Arabic dictionary of Badawi and Hinds (1986), many others, especially the more technical terms, are not mentioned therein. Some other terms that are mentioned in Badawi and Hinds are still of interest to us, for instance because their etymology can tell us something about how the vocabulary used in the railways came about and how it was connected to the different foreign nations that had some involvement in the history of the railways in Egypt. For this purpose, a short history of Egypt’s railways will be given. The paper will then look at the technical vocabulary given in the booklet, focussing on the etymology (loanwords from English, French, Ottoman Turkish and Italian), calques/loan translations, and semantic extension.

Keywords: Egypt, Railways, Arabic, Vocabulary, Etymology, Lexical innovation

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1. Introduction

The work under discussion in this paper is the *English-Arabic vocabulary compiled in connection with the Egyptian State Railway Signalling School Lectures* (قاموس موجز: انجليزي – عربي عن مفردات محاضرات مدرسة البلوك بمصلحة سكك حديد (الحكومة المصرية)¹ I acquired a scan of this booklet from the Library of Congress in 2013.² It is undated and has no author, nor does it have an introduction or any other information that could shed some light on its purpose or publication date. There is also no information about it online or in the literature on the Egyptian railways. The only information available is that it was published by the Egyptian State Railways and, as the title indicates, was part of the Signalling School³ lectures. There are, however, a few signs that indicate the age of the book. It contains a bookseller's stamp from Sheikh Yūsuf Tūmā al-Bustānī.⁴ The publisher of the booklet, the Egyptian State Railways, was part of the Ministry of Communications, which was established in 1919.⁵ The signalling school is described in Lionel Wiener's history of the Egyptian Railways, which was published in 1932, as a recent innovation (Wiener 1932: 171), so it must have been established in the late 1920s or early 1930s.⁶ Another, more technical, indication for the age of the book is that it contains no vocabulary related to diesel engines. The first diesel engines were introduced in Egypt in 1936.⁷ It would be unlikely that no diesel related entries would be included in the *Vocabulary* if diesel engines were already in use when it was written. Therefore we can narrow the publication date down to somewhere between the late 1920s and 1936.

The vocabulary consists of the word list and some ruled paper (5 leaves in total) bound with the book, for the students of the Signalling School to use for

¹ Hereafter referred to as *Vocabulary*.

² Call number TF9 .E54 1900z. I thank the staff of the Library of Congress for their kind assistance and for giving me permission to scan the book. WorldCat lists only one other library that has this work in their collection, so it must be quite rare, although it can probably be found in libraries in Egypt.

³ Or *madrasat al-bulūk* in Arabic. The etymology of the word *bulūk* will be discussed below.

⁴ The stamp on the last page states مكتبة العرب لصاحبها الشيخ يوسف توما البستاني بشارع الفجالة "Maktabat al-^sArab for its owner Sheikh Yūsuf Tūmā al-Bustānī in Faggāla Street in Cairo". Yūsuf Tūmā al-Bustānī was born in Lebanon in 1892 and died in Egypt in 1952 (see the catalogue of the Library of Congress for his date of birth and death).

⁵ See Al-Hay²a al-^sĀmmah (1977: 10).

⁶ Wiener (1932: 162) has two pictures of the interior of the then newly established Signalling School.

⁷ Ten units, and another ten in 1937. See Al-Hay²a al-^sĀmmah (1977: 109). However, according to Day (1964: 73), a small diesel locomotive was put into service in 1934 on the Delta lines. It had a maximum speed of only 20 mph.

notes.⁸ The vocabulary consists of 32 pages, containing a total of 1,143 entries.⁹ The text is divided into three columns: English in the left column, transcribed (Egyptian) Arabic in the middle, and Standard Arabic on the right. The English words are alphabetized, making it useful for looking up the terms from English to Arabic, but not the other way around.

The entries in the vocabulary concern anything related to the running and maintenance of railways, trains and stations. They include technical vocabulary related to mechanical parts of trains, to the manoeuvring of the trains and to railroads. The vocabulary also contains lexical items needed in the administration and public services, as well as any other vocabulary anybody would need in and around a train station or the railways. This paper will focus on vocabulary that is specific for the railways. The booklet contains many words that were used in the context of the railways but were of more general use as well, items such as ‘exit’, ‘work’, ‘goods’, ‘window’, ‘lamp’, ‘paint’, ‘passenger’, ‘pen’, etc. These lexical items will not be taken into account, unless it concerns a word or expression that is not mentioned in the Egyptian–Arabic dictionary of Badawi and Hinds (1986) or if it is interesting from an etymological point of view.

The main question that will be discussed in this paper is the etymology of the words that were used in the Egyptian railways. When new technology is invented, special vocabulary will of course be needed to refer to all the components of this innovation. As Newman (2002: 2–3) states, “[t]he most obvious was, of course, to borrow both the invention (sc. *signifié*) and the term denoting it (*signifiant*)”. With such an enormous undertaking as the creation of the railways in Egypt, with all its machinery, tracks, signals, etc., the question is how a vocabulary for all these components was created. It is to be expected that many influences from foreign languages can be found, such as from English, because the British played an important role in creating and administering the Egyptian railways, as will be discussed below. Furthermore, influences from French, Ottoman Turkish and Italian can also be expected, as these languages have been important providers of loanwords in Egyptian Arabic throughout the ages. As various nationalities have influenced the history of Egypt’s railways and are therefore likely to have left traces in the form of loan words in the language, a short overview of the history of Egypt’s railways will be given below.

⁸ The owner of the booklet has indeed written down notes, but these are not always on topic. On the first page of ruled paper, he wrote down things like “handsome statue”, “elegant shape”, “rosy cheeks”, “joined eye brows”, “dazzling the sight *يبهر النظر*”, and other such phrases. Clearly, he had other things on his mind than railway signalling!

⁹ The owner of the *Vocabulary* has added some entries, e.g. “Curtains *ستائر*” on p. 8, and on p. 10 “dunnage” (without translation) and “drums (*طبله للموسيقى*)?”

2. A short history of the Egyptian Railways

In 1834, a proposal to build a railway from Cairo to Suez was made by the British and accepted by Egypt's ruler Muhammad Ali.¹⁰ For the British, it would be advantageous to have a railway that connected the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, in order to create a shorter route to India. Up until that time, there had been three routes to India that were both long and, sometimes, dangerous: overland from the Mediterranean through Egypt to the Red Sea, or through Syria and Iraq to the Persian Gulf, or the sea route around Cape of Good Hope. Cairo could be reached from the port of Alexandria through the Mahmoudiyah Canal and the Nile, but the trip from Cairo to the Red Sea had to be made by camel. A railway would shorten the time between Cairo and Suez from three days to merely three hours.¹¹ The materials for building the railway were ordered and delivered to Egypt, but they remained unused for 15 years.¹² The reason why Muhammad Ali cancelled the plan is that he realized that all the materials, such as the wood and steel for building the railways, the expertise, the locomotives and carriages, and the coal would have to be imported. He would need to borrow foreign money, and he thought it would be unwise to give foreign governments power over Egypt in this way. Another aspect is that Muhammad Ali had to consider whether to have the railways built by the English or to let the French dig the Suez Canal, for which they had been lobbying. In the end, to avoid any form of foreign influence in Egypt, he decided to not grant either party their project.

In 1851, two years after Muhammad Ali's death, his grandson Abbas I signed a contract with Robert Stephenson for establishing a railway connection between Alexandria and Suez.¹³ In 1854, the first stage of the railway was completed: the line between Alexandria and Kafr al-Zayyāt, the halfway point between Cairo and Alexandria. This was the first railway on the African continent as well as in the Middle East. At the same time, Said, Abbas's successor, gave the French a concession for digging the Suez Canal, which was inaugurated in 1869. In 1856, the line from Alexandria to Cairo was completed. It was 200 kilometres long, single track and standard gauge (4 foot 8.5 inch).¹⁴ The Cairo-Suez line was opened in 1858,¹⁵ and many other lines followed. The British now had their short

¹⁰ Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this section is taken from Al-Hay²a al-⁶Āmmah (1977: 2–10).

¹¹ See Goldfinch (2010: 14).

¹² Goldfinch (2010: 14–15). According to Wiener (1932: 59) a portion of the materials was used for a steam tramway for the Khedive.

¹³ Robert Stephenson was the son of George Stephenson, the inventor of the steam locomotive. The complete text of the contract can be found in Wiener (1932: 641–644).

¹⁴ Goldfinch (2010: 17–18). See also Ayrton (1857: 23–24).

¹⁵ This line was removed in 1878, because the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made it superfluous, only to be built again in 1934. See Day (1964: 60).

route to the Red Sea. They also remained the main suppliers for rolling stock and engineers, as the knowledge needed was not available in Egypt. In the 1870s, Egypt's financial situation became precarious, and from 1876 on no more railways were established. Britain took over Egypt's administration, including the administration of the railways, in 1882, and it declared a protectorate over Egypt at the beginning of World War I in 1914.

After the war, in 1919, the railways came under the control of the newly established Ministry of Communications. This was in the period when Egypt's struggle for independence from Great Britain started, which led to the end of the protectorate in 1922. In 1924, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Sulaymān Pasha was appointed as the first Egyptian general director of the Egyptian Railways. This was the start of a trend to replace foreigners, who had always kept the higher administrative and engineering posts in the railways, with Egyptians. This meant that Egyptians needed to be trained and were therefore sent abroad to study. Arabic replaced English in all correspondence in the various departments of the railways. It is logical that the next step would be to establish the Signalling School, so Egyptians could be trained in Egypt rather than being sent abroad. It is very likely that the publication of the word list must be seen in the context of this movement of Arabizing and Egyptianizing the railways. As this is the period from which the vocabulary dates, our description of the Egyptian railways ends here, but interested readers are referred to the works of Goldfinch (2010) and Al-Hay'a al-Ṣamma (1977) for information on the period after the 1930s.

As this short historical overview shows, the British had a great influence on the Egyptian railways, by building it, by providing rolling stock, and by administering it from 1882 onwards. However, the second biggest provider of rolling stock was France, while most bridges were built by French or Belgian companies.¹⁶ How this international setting influenced the vocabulary used in the railways will be the subject of the discussion below.

3. Strategies for creating new words

The conception and application of innovative technologies invariably leads to linguistic changes. Words and figures of speech denote objects and processes, which were previously unknown but are now necessary in order to ease communication. Special terminology is created to describe these objects and processes and—at least at the linguistic level—to ensure compatibility. Case in point: the invention of the steam engine. (Roskothen 2008: 152)

The nineteenth century was an era of great inventions, not the least of which was the invention of the railways. This new way of travelling, with its complex system of railways and signals, locomotives and carriages, of course meant that for all the

¹⁶ French: Daydé et Pilé, Belgian: Baume et Marpent; see Wiener (1932).

new concepts, parts, and technologies, including things such as carriages and their parts, signalling, etc., new words were needed. As Roskothen (2008: 153) states, “Until around 1860 there was an abundance of previously unknown components and processes that needed to be named.” As has been shown above, the introduction of the railways was linked to several foreign countries, the most important of which were England and France. It is therefore to be expected that some terminology would be borrowed from English and French. Besides this, as Roskothen (2008: 153) notes, “The nomenclature was borrowed from existing, somewhat related terminology from other areas (carriage construction and mechanics),” which would explain why certain existing Arabic terms would be used for new terms related to railways, as will be demonstrated in § 4.2.6. But before analysing the terminology used in the Egyptian railways, the organization of the *Vocabulary* will be discussed.

4. The Vocabulary

4.1. Dialect versus Standard Arabic and the various systems of transcription

As mentioned above, the word list is given in English and both transcribed Egyptian Arabic and Standard Arabic (SA). As can be expected, there are differences between the two translations. The following are a few examples from the first page:¹⁷

English	transcription	Arabic
accident	<i>hadsa (p) howadess</i>	حادثة (ج) حوادث
accounts department	<i>alam el hesabat</i>	قلم الحسابات
acknowledge	<i>irsil elm el wosool</i>	ارسل علم الوصول. افاد بالوصول
anonymous letter	<i>gawâb menn ghare emda</i>	خطاب غير ممضى

Table 1: Comparison of dialect and SA.

When comparing the second and third column, we see the Egyptian pronunciation *hadsa* [*hadsa*] with the pronunciation of *t̥ as *s*, elision of the *i* and shortening of the *â*. In the word *alam*, the *q is not transcribed, indicating the pronunciation with a glottal stop. The word choice in the two varieties is different as well: *gawâb* in dialect versus خطاب in SA,¹⁸ *menn ghare emda* versus غير ممضى, and the extra translation for ‘acknowledge’ in SA: افاد بالوصول. However, this strict division

¹⁷ All the English and transcribed Arabic words in the vocabulary are capitalized, but I have decided not to adopt this. Except for this detail, the words are represented here exactly as in the *Vocabulary*. The transcription is given in italics like in the original text.

¹⁸ But, also on p. 1, وصول الجواب ‘acknowledgement (of letter)’.

between dialect and SA is not always maintained. For instance, the word for ‘train’ is given as *atr* in the dialect and as قطار rather than قطار in the SA column.¹⁹

The transcription is not consistent, nor does it follow a fixed set of rules or a certain system, as shown in table 2:

<i>EALL</i> transcription ²⁰	Transcriptions used in the vocabulary, followed by examples		
<i>ā</i>	<i>â: gawâb</i> (p. 1)	<i>aa: amanaat</i> ‘lost property’ (p. 17)	<i>a: makas</i> ‘measure’ [maʔās] (p. 18)
<i>ē</i>	<i>ei: borneitet lamba</i> ‘lamp shade’ (p. 16)	<i>a: semaphore ghare moostamel</i> ‘off signal crossing’ (p. 8) [gēr]	
<i>ī</i>	<i>ee: noor khalfee</i> ‘back light’ (p. 2)	<i>i: bir ortuwasi</i> ‘artesian well’ (p. 2)	<i>ea: takrear el hadsa</i> ‘accident report’ (p. 1)
<i>ū</i>	<i>u: maksur</i> ‘broken’ (p. 4)	<i>ou: wabour</i> ‘engine’ (p. 4)	<i>oo: amood</i> ‘column’ (p. 7)
<i>ḥ</i>	<i>h: mahkamah</i> ‘law court’ (p. 16)	<i>∅: gareedet elmofta</i> ‘locking bar’ (p. 17)	
<i>x</i>	<i>kh: makhzan takhzin</i> ‘refuge siding’ (p. 22)	<i>k: ashghal daklaah</i> ‘indoor works’ (p. 14)	
<i>š</i>	<i>sh: fursha</i> ‘brush’ (p. 4)	<i>sch: afsch</i> ‘baggage’ (p. 2)	<i>ch: richah</i> ‘pen’ (p. 20)
<i>ṣ</i>	<i>c: raceef</i> ‘platform’ (p. 21)	<i>s: towassel</i> ‘connections’ (p. 7)	<i>ss: russass</i> ‘lead’ (p. 16)
<i>ʔ < *q</i>	<i>-: se-oot</i> ‘failure’ (p. 12)	<i>∅: maasha</i> ‘broom’ (p. 4) [maʔašša]	<i>k: warak</i> ‘paper’ (p. 20)
	<i>ck: mackfoolah</i> ‘closed’ (p. 6)	<i>-c: se-cot</i> ‘derailment’ (p. 9)	<i>g: mazlagan munfiz</i> ‘level [crossing]’ (p. 16)

¹⁹ See also § 4.2.6.

²⁰ *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*.

ʕ	-: <i>sa-ah</i> ‘clock’ (p. 6) [sāʕa]	∅: <i>omlah</i> ‘coin’ (p. 6), [ʕumla]; <i>el</i> ‘broad gauge’ <i>essafat el awaliah</i> (p. 17) [xatt ‘first aid’ (p. 1) wāsiʕ] [ilʕisʕāfāt ilʕawwaliyya]	<i>a: khatt wasaa</i> <i>el</i> ‘broad gauge’ <i>essafat el awaliah</i> (p. 17) [xatt ‘first aid’ (p. 1) wāsiʕ]
ġ	<i>h:</i> <i>tahteel</i> ‘interruption’ (p. 15) [taʕīl] ²¹	ʔ: <i>taʕeen</i> ‘appointment’ (p. 1) [taʕyīn]	
	<i>gh:</i> <i>ghalta</i> ‘fault’ (p. 12)	<i>g:</i> <i>gaga</i> ‘noise’ (p. 19)	

Table 2: The different types of transcription used in the vocabulary

These are only some of the discrepancies found in the transcription. The reason for this great variation in transcription systems can likely be attributed to more than one person contributing to the list. Some transcription styles are typically French, for instance the use of *c* for *ʕ*, *ch* for *x*, and *ou* for *ū*, while others are typically English, for instance writing *ī* with *ee* and *ū* with *oo*. Typical for German is *sch* for *š*. Another very clear proof that someone with a French background has contributed to the vocabulary is the silent *-e* which is sometimes found at the end of a word (like in French), such as in *hokme* ‘judgment’ [hukm] (p. 15), *lone* ‘colour’ [lōn] (p. 6) and *nakle* ‘conveyance’ [naʔl] (p. 7).

Although most of the vocabulary items display the pronunciation of the capital Cairo, there are some instances of non-Cairene features. One of these is the use of *g* rather than Cairene ^ʔ for *q in *mazlagan munfiz* ‘level [crossing]’ (p. 16), *ghaffir mazlagan* ‘level crossing keeper’ (p. 17), *loh gezaz* ‘panes of glass’ (p. 20) and *gezaset lamba* ‘lamp globe’ (p. 16). This feature is found everywhere in Egypt except in Cairo, in the Delta along the Damietta branch of the Nile and in the Nile Valley south of Cairo until al-Minyā and al-Fayyūm.²² The other salient feature is the use of final ^ʔ*imāla*, represented here by the shift of *-a* > *-eh* in the feminine ending, in *egraat tahzeerieh* ‘warning arrangements’ (p. 2), *taqdirat mizanieh* ‘budgetary estimate’ (p. 4), *waboor wardieh* ‘pilot engine’ (p. 20) and *egraat idarieh* ‘administrative (action)’ (p. 1). Although Cairo had final ^ʔ*imāla* until the end of the nineteenth century, it had most certainly disappeared completely by the 1930s.²³ The use of the ending *-eh* in these four examples must therefore be the

²¹ In casual speech, ʕ before a voiceless consonant is pronounced as its voiceless counterpart *h*. Therefore, *tahteel* could be the reflection of the pronunciation *tahtīl*.

²² See Behnstedt and Woidich (1985: map 8).

²³ See Blanc (1973–1974).

result of a non-Cairene person contributing to the vocabulary.²⁴ Non-Cairene is also *moyyah/moyah* ‘water’ (pp. 7, 8, 28).

The non-Cairene insertion of an extra vowel in -CC# is found in *fahem* ‘coal’ (p. 6) [faħm], *kaffel* in *ala-met kaffel el khat* ‘code blocking back’ (p. 6) [ʔaħf], *makhazan my-eet* مخزن ميت ‘dead end siding’ (p. 9) [maħzan], *makhazin nafadee* مخزن نفادي ‘loop’ (p. 17), *semaphore makhazin* سيمافور مخزن نفادي ‘loop signal’ (p. 17) and *akel* in *arabiat akel* اكل عربية ‘dining car’ (p. 9) [ʔaħl],²⁵ as well as in -CCa#²⁶ in *shohanah* ‘load’ (p. 13) [ʃuħna].

Interestingly, on p. 28, *mishamah* ‘tarpaulin’ [mišammaħ] is written with ج: مجمع, which suggests that this was written by someone who has ğ for *ğ in his own dialect.

4.2. The Vocabulary: Analysis of the entries

The entries are presented here in the following order: first the transcription, then the word or expression in Arabic script, followed by the English translation. These are all presented as found in the *Vocabulary*. The word under discussion appears in bold, and if that word is part of an expression or compound, the entry starts with the word under discussion, followed by the expression or compound. The *Vocabulary* often does mention the plurals, but because most of these are quite regular, they are not mentioned here unless their form is unusual.

Sometimes the normal word order in the *Vocabulary* has been altered, but without using a comma. For instance, the *Vocabulary* mentions ‘train shuttle’, but this should be read as ‘train, shuttle’, i.e. ‘shuttle train’. In such cases I have reversed the word order. This is also the reason why many compound entries are mentioned twice in the *Vocabulary*, e.g. *sibensa* is mentioned both on p. 3 as ‘brake van’ and on p. 31 as ‘van brake’.

As a more general comment, it is interesting to see that hardly any explanations are given. This can lead to entries such as this one: ‘stationery’ *sabet* ثابت او ادوات كتابيه (p. 27), in which the author realized that ‘stationery’ can either mean ‘writing materials’ ادوات كتابيه, or ‘standing still’ *sabet* ثابت (although this should be spelled *stationary*). Another such example is ‘steps’ *sallalem* سلالم او اجراءات (sic, read اجراءات) (p. 27), in which ‘steps’ can be interpreted as the steps of stairs سلالم or as steps in a process اجراءات. Note that in both cases only one of the options is given in transcription.

In the following five sections, loanwords from English, French, Italian, Ottoman Turkish and other languages are discussed.

²⁴ See Behnstedt and Woidich (1985: map 35) for the current distribution of *ʔimāla* in Egypt.

²⁵ See Behnstedt and Woidich (1985: map 45–52).

²⁶ The so-called *gahawa* syndrome, see De Jong (2011).

4.2.1. Loanwords from English

As mentioned above, the idea of the Egyptian railways was instigated by the British, and most of the engineers were British until at least the 1920s. The leading officials were also British, especially starting from the British occupation in 1882.²⁷ It is therefore to be expected that the vocabulary used in connection to the Egyptian railways will display some borrowing from English. The process of borrowing is called *ta'rib* in Arabic, a method of lexical expansion commonly used in the scientific field (see Newman 2002: 6–7). The following is an overview of the English loanwords in the *Vocabulary*.

bakem: *farmalet el bakem* فرمله الباكم ‘vacuum brake’ (p. 3). The word *bakem* is borrowed from English *vacuum*²⁸ with *v > b* shift.²⁹

ballangah بلنجه ‘fish plate’ (p. 21). The original meaning of *balanga* is a metal rod by which the depth of a ploughshare may be adjusted (see Badawi and Hinds 1986: 102a and the picture on p. 974). In railway terminology it is a metal bar that is bolted to the ends of two rails to join them together in a track.³⁰ Behnstedt (1981:83) mentions *balanġa/bilinġa*, referring to the part of the plough, and gives as its etymology the Roman *bilancia*, borrowed into Egyptian Arabic through Coptic. However, this word is not related to the word *ballangah* ‘fish plate’. According to Faraġ (2004:73–74), the word for fish plate is derived from the English *blank*, which means a piece of metal which is as yet unworked and needs to be adapted by the blacksmith to take its final form.³¹ It is also possible that it is derived from English *flange* or Italian *flangia* ‘flange’. Its etymology remains uncertain.

bogie بوجى ‘bogie’ (p. 3), *arabiyah bogie* عربيه بوجى ‘bogie truck’.³² Badawi and Hinds (1986: 111a) “railway truck or carriage”.

²⁷ Protheroe ([1914]: 633).

²⁸ See Badawi and Hinds (1986: 49b) “باكم *bākim* <perh Engl *vacuum*> hydraulic system. *zēt bākim* hydraulic fluid.”

²⁹ For more examples of *v > b* see Hafez (1996), e.g. ‘valve’ realized as *balf*. The shift from *v* to *b* or *f* is often seen in speakers with no knowledge of foreign languages, see Woidich (2006: 14).

³⁰ Spiro (1895: 58a) “*balanga*, iron fish-plate.”

³¹ Spiro (1904:21) mentions بالانكو “tackle” from Italian *paranco* (as do Badawi and Hinds 1986: 102a, but with the incorrect *palanco*), but I do not think there is a relation here. The word بلانجات is mentioned in this exam of *handasat al-sikak al-ḥadīdiyya* at Kafr al-Sheikh University: <http://www.kfs.edu.eg/engineering/pdf/221120169472824.pdf> (accessed 17 March 2019).

³² “A 4- or 6-wheeled truck used in pairs under long-bodied railway vehicles. The bogie has a central pivot point which allows it to turn as the track curves and thus guide the vehicle into the curve.” *The Railway Technical Website: Glossary* <http://www.railway-technical.com/glossary> (accessed 17 March 2019).

block بلوك. The word بلوك mentioned in the title of the *Vocabulary* is borrowed from the English *block*.³³ The word *block* refers to the absolute block system, in which the railway track is divided into short sections, called block sections. Each section has a signal at the end and a connection to the telegraph, and the system allows a train to pass into a section only when it is clear from other trains.³⁴ There are many vocabulary items that include the word *bulūk*:

- *amel block rosbeet* عامل بلوك روسبيت ‘relief signalman’ (p. 23);
- *eddet el block* عدة البلوك ‘block instrument’ (p. 3);
- *khareetet el block* خريطة البلوك ‘block card’ (p. 3);
- *kism block* قسم بلوك ‘block section’ (p. 25);
- *kooshk el block* كشك البلوك ‘signal cabin’ (p. 25);
- *morshed eddet el block* مرشد عدة البلوك ‘block indicator’ (p. 3);
- *noktet el block* نقطة البلوك ‘block post’ (p. 3);
- *tareeket el block el kata-ee-yah* طريقة البلوك القطعية ‘absolute block system’ (p. 1);
- *tareekit el block* طريقة البلوك ‘block system’ (p. 3 and 27).

disk دسك ‘signal disc’ (p. 25), *disk el muftah* دسك المفتاح ‘point indicator’ (p. 20). See Badawi and Hinds (1986: 289a) “*disk 2. semaphore disc.*”

halt: *mohatta halt* محطه هلت ‘halt station’ (p. 27). “halt, small railway station” (Badawi and Hinds 1986: 909a). The word was borrowed into English from German, long before the invention of the train.³⁵

lineman لينمان ‘lineman’ (p. 17). This is “a man employed to attend to the condition of a railway, telegraph, or telephone line”.³⁶

shuttle: *atr el shuttle* قطر الشتل ‘shuttle train’ (p. 29).

staff: *staff* اسطاف ‘staff’ (p. 26), *el istaff el kahra-ba-ee* اسطاف كهربائى ‘electric staff’ (p. 10), *el istaff el kahrabaee* الاسطاف الكهربائى ‘staff (electric)’, *tarikit el istaff* طريقة الاسطاف ‘staff system’ (p. 26). In Badawi and Hinds (1986: 21b), ‘staff’ is only translated as “staff (in an organization, school etc.)”. However, here it means a rod. The staff is a “visible token of a driver’s authority to enter a single line section between crossing places”.³⁷ This is part of the *tarikit el*

³³ See Badawi and Hinds (1986: 100b): “بلوك bulukk <Eng block> [...] 2. (also *kuške bulukk*) railway signal-box. ‘*āmil bulukk* signalman.”

³⁴ See *The Railway Technical Website: Glossary* <http://www.railway-technical.com/glossary>, *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/20347> (both accessed 17 March 2019), and Jackson (1992: 25–26).

³⁵ Originally in the expression ‘to make halt’, from German ‘halt machen’, first used in 1591, see *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/83659> (accessed 17 March 2019).

³⁶ See *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/108631> (accessed 17 March 2019).

³⁷ Jackson (1992: 303).

istaff طريقة الاسطاف ‘staff system’ (p. 26), in which a token was handed to the engine driver of the train on single-line railways, to ensure that only one train was on the track at the time. This token often had the form of a staff, hence the name.

switch: This word has two different meanings:

1. *tableau or el switch* الطبلوه (سوتش) ‘switch’ (p. 27). Here what is meant is a switchboard.

2. *moftah* مفتاح او سويتش ‘switch’ (p. 27). The switch, or point,³⁸ is called *muftāḥ* in Arabic. The loanword سويتش is only given in Arabic script, not in transcription.

trolley: *arabiyah trolley bil nafas* عربيه ترولى لنفس [sic] ‘trolley motor’ (p. 29), *anfaar el trolley* انفار الترولى ‘trolley boys’ (p. 29). From English *trolley* “A low truck without sides or ends, esp. one with flanged wheels for running on a railway, or a track of rails in a factory”.³⁹ The addition *bil nafas* ‘with air’ (lit. ‘with breath’) indicates that this is a steam engine.

trunk: *khatt el trunk* خط الترنك ‘truk [sic] line’ (p. 30). A trunk line is “a main railway line”.⁴⁰

wabeel: *wabeel, manifesto* منافستو واييل. ‘invoice’ (p. 15). The meaning of “invoice” here is that of “A list of the particular items of goods shipped or sent to a factor, consignee, or purchaser, with their value or prices, and charges”.⁴¹ *wabeel* is derived from the English *waybill*, with lengthening of the last syllable, and shortening of the first. For *manifesto*, see § 4.2.3 Loanwords from Italian.⁴²

4.2.2. Loanwords from French

There are also some loanwords that were originally French. However, it is likely that some of them have come into Arabic through English (“mediated loans”, see Newman 2002: 13), as the entries below will show.

³⁸ Points: “the moving parts of a turnout (qv) which control the route to be followed, consisting of a pair of switch or tongue rails each tapered to fit a stock or side rail” (Jackson 1992: 219).

³⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/206619> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁴⁰ See *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/206981> (accessed 17 March 2019). Badawi and Hinds (1986: 128a) only gives the meaning of trunk telephone system/call.

⁴¹ *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/99171> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁴² Waybill: “a detailed statement of goods entrusted to a public carrier for delivery at stated destinations,” *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/226477>; Manifest: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113482> (both accessed 17 March 2019).

capsool كبسولة ‘detonator’ (p. 9), *capsool el shaboora* كبسول الشابورة ‘fog signal’ (p. 12). A fog signal is a detonator which is placed on the rails when there is fog ahead, so when the train drives over it, it gives a bang to warn the engine driver.⁴³ It is hard to say whether Arabic borrowed this word directly from the French *capsule*, or from English, which borrowed it from French (see Room 2002: 90).

kababeet: *kababeet or manafeekh el arabiyat* كبابيت أو منافخ العربيات ‘bellows’ (p. 3). The singular *kabbūt* is not given. Badawi and Hinds (1986: 730a) ‘convertible top’, from French *capote*. Spiro (1904: 13) mentions *kabbūt* with the meaning of ‘overcoat’ and traces it back to Italian *cappotto*, but this could also have been borrowed from French *capote*. A folding roof, for instance of a carriage, has the same folding mechanism as bellows, which is how the word could have been transferred to meaning ‘bellows’.

minowrah مناورة ‘shunting’ (p. 25). Shunting is the action of manoeuvring the rolling stock in order to form a complete train, or change the order of the carriages, etc.⁴⁴ According to Badawi and Hinds (1986: 891b) and Hafez (1996), it is derived from the French *manoeuvre*, while according to Vollers (1896: 626) it comes from Italian *manovra*.⁴⁵ It is mentioned in several entries:

- *shehadet minawra* شهادة المناورة ‘shunting certificate’ (p. 5).
- *minowra bil shattah* مناورة بالشطه ‘fly shunting’ (p. 12) and *minowrah bill shuttah* مناورة بالشطه ‘fly shunting’ (p. 25). For *šatt* see Badawi and Hinds (1986: 465a) “to strike off course, veer away”. Fly shunting is done by uncoupling the wagons from the engine, letting the engine push them along the track, and then stopping the engine, leaving the wagons to roll on.⁴⁶
- *amel minowrah* عامل مناورة ‘shunter’ (p. 25).
- *meyeet minowrah* ميت مناورة ‘shunting neck’ (p. 19). This is “a length of track allowing shunting movements to be made into a group of sidings without fouling the running lines, to which it may have a connection”.⁴⁷ For *meyeet* see § 4.2.6.
- *naboot el minowra* نبوت المناورة ‘coupling pole’ (p. 8).
- *rais el minowrah* ريس المناورة ‘head shunter’ (p. 14).

⁴³ This device was invented by the Englishman Edward Alfred Cowper in 1841; see Romanenko (1978: 134).

⁴⁴ See 446 *Railroad-Related Terms* <https://parovoz.com/spravka/RailroadDefinitions.html> (accessed 17 March 2019). Although in most cases *minawra* is used for shunting, sometimes *tawdīb* is used, e.g. *moawen towdeeb* معاون توضيب ‘shunter (head)’ (p. 25).

⁴⁵ Chagavat (n.d.: 143) *manawra*, وحركة ومناورة, [sic], which he translates with Italian ‘manovale’.

⁴⁶ *Quora: What is fly shunting in railways?* <https://www.quora.com/What-is-fly-shunting-in-railways> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁴⁷ Jackson (1992: 127) (“headshunt”).

semaphore سِمَافور ‘semaphore’ (p. 25). Short for semaphore signal, a “mechanical signal with a moving arm”.⁴⁸ Although the word is originally French, it is more than likely that Arabic borrowed it from English, because the semaphore signal was a British invention.⁴⁹ The word is found in many terms, such as *semaphore talab el atarat* طلب القطارات ‘calling on arm’ (p. 4), *semaphore mooshtarrack* سِمَافور مشترك ‘controlled or slotted signals’ (p. 7), *semaphore ghare moostamel* سِمَافور غير مستعمل ‘off signal crossing’ (p. 8), *semaphore bi azro kasseerah* سِمَافور بذراع قصير ‘dwarf signal’ (p. 10).

waboor: see Loanwords from Italian.

4.2.3. Loanwords from Italian

The following are loanwords from Italian:

dereesah: *askary dereesah* عسكري دريسه ‘platelayer’, —*ganger ostah dereesah* اسطى دريسه —*gang firket el dereesah* فرقة الدريسه (p. 21). A platelayer (or trackman in American English) is a railway employee whose job it is to lay and maintain the rails and permanent way of a railway.⁵⁰ Badawi and Hinds (1986: 288a) mention that *dereesah* is possibly derived from Italian *terrazziere*, which means ‘digger’. Another possible explanation is that it comes from Italian *traversa*, or French *traverse*, which means ‘railway sleeper’. The *askari dirisa* would be the person who installs these.

fowreekah فاوريقه ‘factory’ (p. 12), *fowreekah* فاوريقه ‘manufactory’ (p. 18), from Italian *fabbrica*. Note that it is written with a *bāʾ* in Arabic script in the first entry, but with *w* in transcription and *wāw* in the second Arabic entry. This is consistent with the two pronunciations mentioned by Spiro (1904: 20): *fabryqa* and *fawryqa*. The consonants *w* and *b* can be interchangeable in loanwords where they stand for original *v*, e.g. *wabūr* and *babūr* ‘vapour’, *kowerta* and *koberta* ‘couverture’ (see Hafez 1996).

komsaree el atr كمسارى القطر ‘train guard’ (p. 29). From Italian *commissario* (see Badawi and Hinds 1986: 764b).

manifesto منافستو ‘invoice’ (p. 15). From the Italian *manifesto* ‘shipping bill’. In Badawi and Hinds (1986: 836b) *manafistu* is only given with the meaning of “bus conductor’s ticket control sheet”, see however Spiro (1895: 553a) “مانيفستو manifest”.

⁴⁸ See *Scot-Rail: Glossary* <http://www.scot-rail.co.uk/page/glossary> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁴⁹ The first railway semaphore signal was erected in 1842 by Charles Hutton Gregory at New Cross, London, see Dendy Marshall (1936: 64).

⁵⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/145359> (accessed 17 March 2019).

mellawenah ملاويينه ‘lever’ (p. 17). From Italian *manovella* ‘crank’,⁵¹ with metathesis of *n* and *l*.⁵² Also in:

- *yadd el malaweenah* يد الملاويينه ‘catch handle’ (p. 5);
- *hawash el malweenah* حواش الملاويينات ‘catch plate reminder’ (p. 5);⁵³
- *farsch el mellaweenat* فرش الملويينات ‘locking frame’ (p. 17). “A mechanical locking system that effects the interlocking between the levers of a mechanical, electric or electro-pneumatic interlocking machine.”⁵⁴ The word *farš* is not given in Badawi and Hinds (1986) or Spiro (1895) with this meaning.
- *terbass el mellaweenah* تريباس الملاويينه ‘plumber lock’ (p. 20).

rosbeet: *moawen rosbeet* معاون روسبيت ‘relief A. S. M.’ (p. 23) (Assistant Station Master) and *amel block rosbeet* عامل بلوك روسبيت ‘relief signalman’ (p. 23). *ruzbit* means reserve and is suggested by Badawi and Hinds (1986: 336a) to be derived from Italian *rispetto*. Spiro (1895: 223a) “رزيبط ruzbyt, or رسيبب rusbyt*, extra, reserve, duplicate, spare piece of machinery; محاسبجي رسيبب mahasibgy rusbyt, comptable de reserve.” In Italian, it is a nautical term used for the spare anchor *ancora di rispetto*.⁵⁵

sebensah سبنسه ‘brake van’ (p. 3), also spelled *sibensah* (p. 31), found also in the following compounds:

- *el sebensah el immamee ah* [sic] السبنسه الاماميه (p. 13) ‘head break’;
- *el sibensah el khalfeeyah* سبنسه خلفيه ‘tail brake’ (p. 28);
- *fowanees el sibensah* فوانيس خلفيه ‘tail lamps’.

The brake van is a van that is put at the end of the train to assist the locomotive with braking.⁵⁶ According to Badawi and Hinds (1986: 397b), Spiro (1904: 30) and Cifoletti (2011),⁵⁷ *sibinsa* is derived from Italian *dispensa* ‘pantry’. Cifoletti explains the elision of the first syllable *di-* as follows: “the deleted syllable corresponds to an Italian preposition or to a prefix.” Vollers (1896: 631) mentions “Das neuere *sibinsä*, Bremze am Eisenbahnwagen, ist mir

⁵¹ See Spiro (1895: 578b) and (1904: 20) *malawyna*. Badawi and Hinds (1986: 836b) *manafilla* crank. According to Farağ (2004: 402) it is derived from French *manivelle*.

⁵² Hafez (1996) mentions other examples of metathesis of *l* and *n*: *falenna* for *fanella*, *belenti* for *benalti*.

⁵³ The *howaash* حواش ‘scotch block’ (p. 24) is a triangular wooden block “placed in front of wheels to stop movement when stabled” (Jackson 1992: 255).

⁵⁴ Joern Pacht, *Glossary of Railway Operation and Control* <http://www.joempacht.de/glossary.htm#L> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁵⁵ See Stratico (1814: 6) and *The Oxford Dictionaries* <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com> (accessed 5 April 2019). I thank Leston Buell for pointing this out to me.

⁵⁶ Bluebell Railway, Southern Railway 25 Ton Goods Brake Van No. 55993 <http://www.bluebell-railway.co.uk/bluebell/wagon/55993.html> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁵⁷ The latter probably used Spiro as his source.

unklar”. In my opinion, *sibinsa* does not derive from *dispensa*, but from Italian *spinta* ‘push’, as the brake van could be used not only to provide extra breaking power, but also to push a train. This is corroborated by Fiorentino (2013) who, in his description of the trains of the Tranvia del Renon railway line, mentions that the *spinta* ‘pushing’ engine had both the function of pushing the train, and providing extra breaking power:⁵⁸

Di qui, dietro ogni convoglio diretto sull’altipiano, si poneva la motrice di spinta, dotata di ruota dentata che spingeva il treno sulla ripida salita alla velocità massima di 7 chilometri orari.

Superato il dislivello di 910 metri che separa Rencio da Maria Assunta, la cremagliera terminava e lo “spintore” si allontanava pronto a porsi davanti ad un convoglio discendente con la funzione di freno.

“From here, behind every train heading to the plateau, the pushing engine (*la motrice di spinta*) was placed, equipped with a cogwheel, which pushed (*spingeva*) the train up the steep climb at a maximum speed of seven kilometres per hour.

After the 910-metre difference in altitude that separates Rencio from Maria Assunta, the cog railway ended and the ‘pusher’ (*spintore*) was moved away, ready to be placed in front of a descending train, functioning as a brake.” (translation my own)

tandah تندہ ‘cab (engine)’ (p. 4). From Italian *tenda*; see Badawi and Hinds (1986: 138b), who only mention the meaning of ‘awning’. The cab is “a small erection, somewhat like the head of a cabriolet, serving as a shelter to the drivers of locomotive engines, lorries, or cranes”.⁵⁹

tonilata: *mizan tonilata* ميزان تونلاطه ‘weighbridge’ (p. 31). Spiro (1895: 375a) ‘ton-weight’. From Italian *tonnellata* ‘a ton’, see Spiro (1904: 10) “تونيلاته” *tonylâta tonellata ton*”.

waboor وابور ‘engine’ (p. 11), ‘locomotive’ (p. 17). *waboor* ‘engine, train, locomotive’ is derived from Italian *vapore* ‘steam’ (see Badawi and Hinds 1986: 922a and Spiro 1904: 20), although Hafez (1996) suggests it is derived from French *vapeur*.⁶⁰ The word is used in many compounds, too many to mention them all here (see e.g. p. 11), but an example is *waboor el nafass* وابور

⁵⁸ Gennaro Fiorentino, *La tranvia del Renon* http://www.clamfer.it/02_Ferrovie/FerroviaRenonStoria/FerroviaRenonStoria.htm (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁵⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/25683> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁶⁰ Newman (2002: 11) rightly remarks that as many shipping terms “were drawn from the *lingua franca*, an Italian origin seems the most plausible”.

النفس ‘power station’ (p. 21). Sometimes also spelled *wabour*, e.g. *wabour el hareek* وابور الحريق ‘fire engine’ (p. 12).

wardia: *waboor wardia* وابور ورديه ‘pilot engine’ (p. 11), *waboor wardieh* (p. 20).⁶¹ *wardia* is derived from Italian *guardia* ‘guard’. The term ‘pilot engine’ has several meanings, e.g. a locomotive allocated to special duties such as shunting, or a locomotive assisting the train engine.⁶² Badawi and Hinds (1986: 932a) mention *wardiyya* ‘shift’ and Spiro (1895: 638b) ‘on duty’ or ‘sentry box’ for *wardiyya*, but not ‘pilot engine’. Spiro (1904: 16) mentions the related وردا *warda* ‘look out!’ from Italian *guarda* and غارديه *gardya* from *guardia* ‘guard’, as well as ورديان *wardyjân* from Italian *guardiano* ‘light-keeper’. Farağ (2004: 466) claims that *wardiyya* ‘shift’ is derived from Turkish *vardiya*; however, Turkish also borrowed it from Italian. It is therefore possible that Egyptian Arabic borrowed it from Turkish, rather than directly from Italian.

4.2.4. Loanwords from Ottoman Turkish

azan قزان ‘boiler’ (p. 3), from Turkish *kazan*. See Badawi and Hinds (1986: 698b) and Redhouse (1880: 700a) قزغان.

booslah: *booslah mostagillah* بوصله مستعجله ‘urgent message’. From Turkish “بوصله püssla a short note or letter” (Redhouse 1880: 477b).

bringi: *semaphore el bringi* سيمافور مسافه ‘distance signal’ (p. 10), *bringy muftah* برنجى مفتاح ‘outer points’ (p. 18). *bringi* from Turkish *birinci* means ‘first’ and is still used in the Egyptian army today. The distance signal is called the first signal because it is the first signal a driver sees when approaching a signal box. This is the only signal in the *Vocabulary* that is indicated with a Turkish adjective. The other ones are in Arabic, for instance ‘home signal *semaphore el wust* سيمافور الوسط’ (p. 14).

dongol دنجل ‘axle’ (p. 2) is derived from Turkish *dingil*, see Badawi and Hinds (1986: 304b), Prokosch (1983: 65) and Redhouse (1880: 568a). Interestingly, a verb has been derived from this noun: *dangil*, which means “to hang under a train (so as to travel without paying), stow away on a train” (Badawi and Hinds 1986: 304b).

falankah فلنكه ‘wooden sleeper’ (p. 26), from Turkish *felenk*; see Badawi and Hinds (1986: 671b). The word originated in the navy, where it meant “a cross piece of timber laid down as part of the slip ways for a slip or boat” (Zorlu 2008: 241).⁶³

-gee / -gy: There are some Arabic words in the vocabulary that have the Turkish suffix *-gee / -gy* [-gi] indicating a profession. In modern Turkish, the suffix /-ci/ (*meslek eki* ‘profession suffix’) can have eight different forms: voiced c

⁶¹ With final *ʾimāla*, see § 4.1.

⁶² Jackson (1992: 216).

⁶³ See also Zenker (1866–1876: 670c).

or unvoiced *ç* followed by *i*, *ı*, *ü* and *u*, according to the vowel harmony. However, in Ottoman Turkish, from which the Arabic dialects borrowed this suffix, only the forms *-ci* and *-cı* existed, which were borrowed into Egyptian Arabic as *-gi*.⁶⁴

- *ataşgee* عطشجي ‘fireman’ (p. 12) (this is the stoker, who puts the coals into the fire). From Ottoman أتشجي (see Prokosch 1983: 46). This is a folk etymology: the word عطش derives from Turkish *ateş* ‘fire’ (see Redhouse 1880: 386b), which was reinterpreted as Arabic عطش ‘thirst’.⁶⁵
- *aşargee* اشارجي ‘flagman’ (p. 12);⁶⁶
- *astifgy* استفجي ‘packer’ (p. 19). From the verb *sattif* ‘to pack’;
- *attargee* فطرجي ‘coupler’ (p. 8);⁶⁷
- *farmalgee* ‘brakesman’ (p. 4);⁶⁸
- *lustargee* لسنرجي ‘polisher’ (p. 21). From English *luster* or French *lustre*;
- *makhazangee* مخزنجي ‘goods clerk’ (p. 13);
- *muftahgee* مفتاحجي ‘pointsman’ (p. 21);⁶⁹
- *mahwalgee* محولجي ‘pointsman’ (p. 21).⁷⁰

kooshk كشك ‘cabin’ (p. 4). From Turkish *köşk*; see Badawi and Hinds (1986: 753b). It is used in other entries as well:

- *kooshk el block* كشك البلوك ‘signal cabin’ (p. 25);
- *el kooshk el immamee* الكشك الامامي ‘box in advance’, - *khalfee* الخلفي ‘- in rear’, - *mutawasset* المتوسط ‘- intermediate’ (p. 3);
- *kooshk el talombah* كشك الطلمبه ‘pump house’ (p. 14). Note also *talombah* ‘pump’ from Italian *tromba* with shift *l > r* (see Badawi and Hinds 1986: 538b).⁷¹

nashan نشان ‘mark on parcel’ (p. 18). From Turkish: “نیشان *nışân*, Zeichen, Marke, Orden” (Vollers 1896: 649). Although the word *nışân* is mentioned in Badawi and Hinds (1986: 864b) and Spiro (1895: 601b), e.g. as ‘aim’, ‘medal’, it is not mentioned with the meaning of ‘mark on a parcel’.

shorook شرك ‘crippled’ (p. 8) and *arabiyat el shoorok* عربيات الشرك ‘cripples’ (p. 8). A cripple is a “defective, damaged or worn vehicle”.⁷² From Turkish “چرك”

⁶⁴ See Procházka-Eisl (2018: 22–23).

⁶⁵ See also Procházka-Eisl (2018: 34).

⁶⁶ Procházka-Eisl (2018) mentions the forms *işargi* and *işaratşi* (p. 36) besides *aşargi* (p. 34).

⁶⁷ See also Procházka-Eisl (2018: 37).

⁶⁸ See also Procházka-Eisl (2018: 35), who also mentions *sibinsagi* with the same meaning (pp. 30 and 38). This word is not given in the vocabulary under discussion here, even though *sibinsa* ‘brake van’ is mentioned (see § 4.2.3).

⁶⁹ See also Procházka-Eisl (2018: 30, 37).

⁷⁰ See also Procházka-Eisl, who gives both *mihwalgi* and *maḥwalgi* (2018: 30, 37).

⁷¹ Given as *tolombah* on p. 22.

⁷² Jackson (1992: 67).

tcherek blessure” (see Bianchi and Kieffer 1835: 373b, Zenker 1866–1876: 371c and Badawi and Hinds 1986: 373b).

4.2.5. Loanwords from other languages

There is only one loanword from Persian:

جولق: *korsi el arabia* كرسى العربيه او جولق ‘axle box’ (p. 2). Note the discrepancy between MSA and dialect. The word is not mentioned by Badawi and Hinds (1986). Vollers (1896: 639) “جولق meist pl. جوالق und جواليق Tasche, Sack = *džōlah*,” also p. 615 “جولق Ledertasche und جوالق pl. جوالق”. Spiro (1895: 114a) ‘nozzle’. The relation between ‘axle box’ and the original meaning of ‘leather bag’ is unclear to me.⁷³

There is one possible loanword from Greek:

termesah, taramees ترمسه (ج) ترامس ‘burner’ (p. 4). It is unclear what kind of burner is meant. The word is not mentioned in the dictionaries of Egyptian Arabic with this meaning. There could be a relation with the Greek θερμος ‘hot’. Alternatively, the burner could be in the shape of a lupin seed, *tirmisa* (see Badawi and Hinds 1986: 127b).

4.2.6. Arabic – semantic extension

For many railway concepts, existing Arabic words were taken to include the new concept, a process called extension. Some examples are:

aba-eeb قباقيب لرفع ‘rerailling ramp’ (p. 22), *kabakeeb lerafah el arabiyat* قباقيب العربيات (p. 23). The word قباقيب originally meant ‘wooden pattens’. A rerailling ramp is a ramp used to get trains back on track after derailing. The word *ʾabaʾīb* is not given this meaning in Badawi and Hinds (1986: 683b), but they do give the related meaning “tilting blocks for a car”.

attr, attarat قطارات ‘train’ (p. 29). The word قطار originally meant ‘a file, string, or series, of camels’ (see Lane 1863–1893: 2601a) and by semantic extension got the meaning of ‘a file of train carriages’ > ‘train’. This is comparable to the etymology of ‘train’ in English, which originally meant ‘a body of attendants or followers’ and derives from the Latin *trahere* ‘to draw’ (see Room 2002: 639). Note that the plural in both varieties is unusual (the more common plural would be *ʾuṭurāt* قَطْرَات). In Arabic script, the Egyptian قطرات is given rather than MSA قطار, but the plural قطارات.

⁷³ In Persian, the word means ‘coarse woollen cloth’, see Zenker (1866–1876: 374b).

eddah اده ‘rail gauge’ (p. 22). The rail gauge is the spacing between the rails. This should be written قدة with *qāf*; the word is related to *ʿadd* ‘size’. Wehr (1994: 872b) gives قدة *qidda* ‘rail’.

el se-cot السقوط ‘derailment’ (p. 9). Literally ‘falling’.

- *ibret el seoot* ابرة السقوط ‘trap points’ (p. 29). These are “safety points provided in a line to prevent unauthorized movements on to another line” (Jackson 1992: 307);

- *ibret el secot* ابرة السقوط ‘safety point’. Safety points are “trailing points arranged to derail harmlessly any vehicle running in the wrong direction”.⁷⁴

faddoo ففو ‘clearance’ (p. 6). I have not found this word in any dictionary with this meaning, but a Google search yielded some hits, e.g.:

بقية الأرض بعد «فدو السكة» الفدو هو علامة السلامة في عرض الخطوط⁷⁵
 “the remaining part of the land after فدو السكة, the meaning of فدو is the safety sign across the lines”.

Also in:

- *faddoo el sika* or *el khatt* فدو السكة أو الخط ‘clearing point’ (p. 6);

- *alaamat fadoo el sikkah* علامة فدو السكة ‘fouling block’ (p. 12).

gueridah ‘bar’ جريدة (p. 3), **gereedah** ‘facing point bar’ (p. 12), **gareedah** ‘fouling point bar’. A facing point bar is “a lifting or clearance bar (qv) arranged to prevent movement of facing points when a train is passing over them” (Jackson 1992: 99). Metaphorical use of *girīda* ‘palm branch’. Also in *korsi el gareedah* ‘locking clip’ (p. 17) (for *kursi* see Badawi and Hinds 1986: 743a “4 [mech] 4a. seating 4b bearing”).

kasaa قصعه ‘pot sleeper’ (p. 21), **kassaa** ‘iron sleeper pot’ (p. 26). Pot sleepers are “circular iron supports like large inverted saucers used in some countries, without much success, as an alternative to transverse sleepers, to give track stability in sandy soil or to prevent destruction by termites”.⁷⁶ Originally *qasʿa* meant ‘a bowl’. Spiro (1895: 490b) mentions it as “bowl-sleeper”.

kattraḥ قطرة ‘coupling’ (p. 8). Badawi and Hinds (1986: 706b) mention the verb “*ʿaṭar* [...] 1b to hitch, couple”, but not the noun *ʿaṭra*.

- *wabour maattour* وابور مقطور ‘coupled engine’ (p. 8) (compare *maʿṭūra* ‘trailer’, Badawi and Hinds 1986: 706b);

⁷⁴ See Jackson (1992: 47). This is Jackson’s definition of ‘catch points’, which is synonymous with ‘safety points’ (ibid., p. 250).

⁷⁵ *Sudaress* <https://www.sudaress.com/alsahafa/40774> (accessed 17 March 2019). It is also mentioned in this exam from Kafr al-Sheikh University, subject: *handasat al-sikak al-ḥadīdiyya*: <http://www.kfs.edu/engineering/pdf/221120169472824.pdf> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁷⁶ Jackson (1992: 221). See also *1902 Encyclopedia*, “Metallic Permanent Way” <http://www.1902encyclopedia.com/R/RAI/railway-28.html> (accessed 17 March 2019).

- *atrah ingilizee* قطره انجليزي ‘coupling screw’ (p. 8) (and written as *atrah ingleezee* on p. 24);⁷⁷

- *attrat el arabiyat* قطرة العربيات ‘coupling of vehicles’ (p. 8);

- *attargee* قترجي ‘coupler’ (p. 8), see also § 4.2.4 for words ending in *-gi*.

legam لجام ‘shoe (gabbary)’ (p. 25), ‘sprag’ (p. 26). The shoe⁷⁸ is part of the brake or sprag.⁷⁹ The original meaning of the word لجام is ‘bridle’, which is used to make a riding animal slow down.⁸⁰ I have not found any references to this component of the brakes in the dictionaries, but there are several online sources that mention it, including a Syrian study that is dedicated to this subject,⁸¹ as well as an article about the train accident at Cairo’s main train station in February 2019.⁸² The meaning of the word ‘gabbary’ is unclear to me, but could refer to Gabbary (al-Qabbārī), the neighbourhood in Alexandria where the central permanent way workshops are, as well as the main freight station.⁸³ Alternatively, it could refer to the French *gabarit* ‘gauge’.⁸⁴

Legam is also mentioned in:

- *talgeem* تلجيم ‘spragging’ (p. 26);

⁷⁷ Coupling screw: “Two iron links with right and left hand screw between them and a lever in the centre allowing the coupling of passenger coaches and fitted wagons to be screwed taut until buffers press into one another, so preventing oscillation at high speed” (Jackson 1992: 65).

⁷⁸ “the part of a braking system which carries [...] the brake block in train brakes and bicycle brakes”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brake_shoe (accessed 5 April 2019).

⁷⁹ “sprag: a pole or bar hinged to the rear axle of a cart or the like in such a way that it can brace the vehicle against a road to prevent it from rolling downhill” *Dictionary.com* <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/spragging>; to sprag: “to prop, support, or immobilize (a vehicle) by means of a sprag”, “sprag: a pole or bar hinged to the rear axle of a cart or the like in such a way that it can brace the vehicle against a road to prevent it from rolling downhill.” <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/spragging> (both accessed 17 March 2019).

⁸⁰ In the Egyptian oases, a *liḡām* is a device used to slow down the flow of water in the irrigation canals; see Behnstedt and Woidich (1994: 430a).

⁸¹ See Younes (2006).

⁸² See محمد الصغير “مصر التي...”, *Al Jazeera*, 28 February 2019 <http://mubasher.aljazeera.net/opinion/مصر-التي> (accessed 19 March 2019).

⁸³ *Mike’s Railway History*, “Railways in the Nile Valley: Train Operation in Modern Egypt” <http://mikes.railhistory.railfan.net/r050.html> (accessed 17 March 2019). Earlier, it also served as the Alexandria station for passenger trains and was opened in 1854; see Day (1964: 60).

⁸⁴ *Wikipédia*, “Gabarit ferroviaire” https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabarit_ferroviaire (accessed 6 March 2019). الجباريت is used in the Egyptian railways with the meaning of the dimensions of the train; see e.g. النقل بالسكك الحديدية في الوطن العربي https://bouhoo.blogspot.com/2017/01/blog-post_98.html and تشغيل المترو المكيف <http://www.masalarabia.com/-النفق-تشغيل-604421-> اخبار-مصر <http://www.masalarabia.com/-النفق-تشغيل-604421-> (both accessed 17 March 2019).

- *amel legam* عامل لجام ‘wagon spragger’ (p. 31);
- *omaal ligam* عمال لجام ‘shoemen’ (p. 25).

maadawy: *alamet el maadawy* علامة معداوى ‘pilotmen’s badge’ (p. 2). *mi^ʿaddāwi* originally meant ferryman (and still does; see Badawi and Hinds 1986: 568b and Spiro 1895: 389b.). In railway terminology it is a pilotman, which is “a driver familiar with the route who joins a train or engine crew to give guidance and warnings”.⁸⁵

mayet / mayeet / my-eet: used in *racif mayet* رصيف ميت ‘bay platform’ (p. 3), *mayeet minowrah* ‘shunting neck’ (p. 19), *makhazan my-eet* مخزن ميت ‘dead end siding’ (p. 9).⁸⁶ A bay platform is a dead-end railway platform. *mayyit* is not given as ‘dead-end’ in Badawi and Hinds or Spiro’s dictionaries; it is a loan translation from English. In the Egyptian dialect the word *sadd* is used instead: *ḥāra sadd* ‘blind alley’. On p. 9, the *Vocabulary* gives the entry ‘dead end bay’ with the translation *racif mas-dood* رصيف مسدود, which is more in line with the usual Arabic expression.

mikassahah: *arabiyah mikassahah* عربييه مكسحه ‘trolley’ (p. 29). Badawi and Hinds (1986: 749 a–b) mention “2. *kassaḥ* 1 to cripple 2 to bend (metal)”. These do not seem to fit here. A Google web search did not yield any useful results either; *عربية مكسحة* is only found with the meaning of ‘beat-up old car’.⁸⁷

modda مده ‘decade’ (p. 9). Original meaning ‘period’, but in railway terminology specifically a period of ten days. Badawi and Hinds (1986: 814a) also mentions “unit of three minutes used for measuring long-distance telephone calls”, which indicates that it can also be a period of time used in a certain trade or context.

- *warrak el modda* ورق المده ‘ten daily statement’ (p. 9),
- *awraak el moddah* اوراق المده ‘ten daily statement’ (p. 28).

muftah مفتاح ‘point’ (p. 21). Points are “the moving parts of a turnout [...] which control the route to be followed, consisting of a pair of switch or tongue rails each tapered to fit a stock or side rail”;⁸⁸ these are also called switches. See Spiro (1895: 443a) and Wehr (1994: 812a).

nahr el tazaker نهر التذاكر ‘ticket tube’ (p. 28). *nahr* can mean ‘column of print’ (Badawi and Hinds 1986: 888a); however, it could also be related to the meaning of the verb ‘to flow’ (as in, the tickets flow from the machine). The expression نهر التذاكر did not yield any useful hits on Google.

⁸⁵ Jackson (1992: 216).

⁸⁶ Siding: “Any track which is not a running line (qv), and on which vehicles may be loaded, unloaded, stabled, shunted or marshalled” (Jackson 1992: 262).

⁸⁷ See, e.g., Steven Habib, *الانقلاب في مصر ومبدأ البطيخه القارعه*, كلام في السياسه (2) <http://afkar-steven.blogspot.com/2009/04> (accessed 6 March 2019).

⁸⁸ Jackson (1992: 219).

4.2.7. Loan translations

The following are loan translations or calques:

ghorab: *ghorab moyah* غراب مياه ‘water column’ (p. 7), *ghorab el moyyah* غراب المياه ‘water crane’ (p. 8),⁸⁹ *ghorab el winch* غراب الوثش ‘jib’ (p. 15) (jib = the projecting arm of a crane). The word *gurāb* is probably a calque of the English ‘crow’ as in crowbar, an iron bar with a bent end.⁹⁰

sikkah hadeed سكه حديد ‘rail road’ (p. 23), a calque from French *chemin de fer*.

4.2.8. Eponyms

There are two terms that are named after their inventors:

annett: *muftah annett* مفتاح أنت ‘Annett’s key’ (p. 1). “Key and lock for little-used siding connections, invented by J.E. Annett, L&SWR signal superintendent, in 1875” (Jackson 1992: 6).⁹¹

decauville: *arabiyah decauville* عربييه ديكوفيل ‘decauville truck’ (p. 30). This refers to the Decauville manufacturing company founded in 1875 by Paul Decauville (1846–1922). The Decauville railway system was a narrow gauge portable track system, originally with a 400 mm gauge.⁹²

Conclusion

There are different strategies to create vocabulary for describing innovations, in this case related to the railways. The first one of these strategies discussed here, is borrowing from foreign languages, a process called *taʿrīb*. As the sections on loanwords have shown, most foreign loanwords related to the railways came from English, which was to be expected, given the important role England played in the history of the Egyptian railways and, indeed, in Egyptian administration in

⁸⁹ Mentioned by Faraġ (2004:305) with the meaning of water tank for refilling steam locomotives. Jackson (1992: 325): “a lineside appliance fed from a water tank or cistern and fitted with flexible hose (or bag) for filling steam loco water tanks.” See also this picture of a steam engine taking water in Zagazig in 1915: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/124446949@N06/21606989303/in/album-72157654260037961> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁹⁰ Faraġ (2004:305) quotes from *al-Wasīf*: الغراب من كل شيء أوله وحده.

⁹¹ See a picture here: *Midland Railway Society*, “Annett’s key” <http://www.midlandrailway.org.uk/occasional-papers/annetts-key> (accessed 17 March 2019).

⁹² “Decauville... een beetje geschiedenis” <https://www.decauville.nl/decauville> and Martin Lovell, “The Decauville Railway System” <http://www.gagemaster.com/articles/guides/decauville-railway-system.html> (both accessed 17 March 2019).

general. The second most important provider of vocabulary is Italian, which was the lingua franca of the Mediterranean area up to the nineteenth century and an important provider of foreign vocabulary in general. Third came French, the language of science and technology in the nineteenth century, followed by Turkish. The second way to introduce vocabulary for new technology is by reusing existing terms, a process called semantic extension. Examples are *muftāḥ* ‘key’ > ‘point (the moving parts of a turnout)’, *ʾabaʿīb* ‘wooden pattens’ > ‘railing ramp’ and *ʾaṣʿa* ‘cooking pot’ > ‘pot sleeper’. The third strategy, forming new words through loan translations or calques, is not very common, with only two examples.

The *Vocabulary* dates from before World War II. Although evidence has been found from modern sources that at least some of the technical terminology mentioned in the *Vocabulary* is still in use today, it is beyond the scope of this article to investigate this point in more detail, but it is an interesting subject for further study.

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