British pattern of colonization: Egypt

• The British did not adopt an assimilationist language policy.
• Rather, they tried to weaken Fusha by introducing foreign languages in the educational system and promoting the Egyptian dialect.
• Fusha was typically criticized as not suitable to the needs of modern civilization.

British pattern of colonization: Egypt

• Egypt was re-presented to the Egyptians as being separated from its Arab and Muslim heritage, by emphasizing its non-Arab and non-Islamic past, e.g., reviving a so-called ‘pharaonic’ identity.
• Attempts to promote the vernacular dialect were made by نقولا يوسف وسلامة موسي.
• Some even proposed changing the script to the Roman alphabet.
• Of course, none of this worked, and for obvious reasons.

British pattern of colonization: Egypt

• When adopting the vernacular failed, some people started talking about ‘simplifying’ Fusha in the areas of grammar and script.
• Of course, again none of this worked.
• That said, education in Egypt was still conducted primarily via foreign languages, and Fusha was only marginally taught (primary in Al-Azhar).
• In the early 1940, foreign schools were instructed to teach Arabic, even though the primary language of instruction remained a foreign language.
Egypt after independence

- As in other cases we discussed last week, after independence, Fusḥa came to be a symbol in the post-colonial era, at least ‘on official paper.’
- Fusḥa also fit well with Nasser’s pan-Arabism project.
- Fusḥa became not only the official language and national language, but also a prestige language in certain domains.

Egypt after independence

- The 1977 visit by Sadat to Israel hurt Egypt’s status in the Arab world.
- Some tried to take advantage of the situation and revive ideas from the colonialist era and promote a ‘national identity’ for the Egyptians away from the rest of the Arabs.
- Language was a target of discussion again, sometimes in rather silly ways, e.g., saying the glottal stop is well suited to the Egyptian vocal tract.
- The Egyptian Revolution in 2011 was another turning point in Egypt’s modern history.

British pattern of colonization: Sudan

- The British were not trying hard to promote English but to weaken SA. The British policy in the south didn’t succeed in eradicating Arabic, but did succeed in creating an English-speaking Christian elite.
- Sudan gained its independence from Britain in 1956 and Arabic was declared the sole official language of Sudan.
- Despite the linguistic diversity in the south, Arabic is still used there mainly for practicality.