

To the reader:

This is an electronic version of “Language and the State in Late Qing Xinjiang,” which first appeared in Birgit N. Schlyter, ed., *Historiography and Nation-Building Among Turkic Populations* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2014). In the volume, which collects diverse work from scholars across Europe and Asia, my piece was Chapter Nine. The pagination here does not match that in the book.

The first draft of this chapter was completed in 2008, when my broader exploration of state and society in late-Qing Xinjiang was in its earliest stages. I had the privilege of joining a panel on language policy at an excellent conference at Tsukuba University in December 2007, and this piece grew out of that paper. The 2014 version integrates some of what I learned in the interval, but the basic questions at hand remain the same.

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Language and the State in Late Qing Xinjiang

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In light of growing interest in ethnic conflict in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, it is valuable to examine the historical processes by which the contemporary sociolinguistic configuration obtaining in Xinjiang and, thus, grievances concerning that configuration have been established. One oft-cited problem facing the people of Xinjiang and the Chinese authorities charged with the development of that region and its population is conflict over language and its fields of use. Uyghurs, belonging to the titular nationality and the non-Chinese majority of Xinjiang, in particular seem to resent the increasing marginalization of their language. The Uyghur language, despite its status as an official language of the region and constitutional protections of its use and independent evolution, as well as its expanded use in broadcast media, is rapidly losing ground in the educational system. The formerly bilingual school system of Xinjiang, which previously offered considerable latitude of choice in terms of the linguistic medium of education, where such freedom was practicable, is rapidly becoming monolingual, which potentially serious social and political consequences.¹

Language attitudes in Xinjiang, however, are by no means homogeneous. Dedication to the maintenance and promotion of a national "mother tongue" is generally tied to identification with that linguistic variety's associated ethnonational group, especially where the connection between language and ethnicity receives special official recognition. Despite the efforts of both Chinese administrations and native activists over the past century, the principles of nationalism, including its Stalinist modality, are not yet dominant discourses among the people of Xinjiang. That is to say that language concerns are not universally near the forefront of Xinjiangese minds. The conflict and

¹ There is now an extensive literature on contemporary language and education policy in Xinjiang in English. See Dwyer (2005), Hann (2013), and Schluessel (2007, 2009), among others.

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synergy of various social and political movements over the course of the past two centuries has produced multiple conceptions of the nation and its institutions. Therefore, it is useful to examine national identity and language attitudes as part of an ongoing process of negotiation between state and other actors promoting competing language regimes and linguistic institutions.

Regard for history is especially important because the modern subjects of this process, particularly those who are personally invested in linguistic institutions, are aware of and draw on historical precedent. The development of Uyghur nationalism in the 20th century demonstrates what Duara has called the bifurcation of history, the political dialogue between historical actors and their own understandings of past and present.² Because of this, it is absolutely vital for scholarship on contemporary Xinjiang to approach the region's history critically. Yet, the historiography of Xinjiang in the late Qing dynasty (1636-1911), precisely when the institutional roots of the modern state began to appear, has relied overmuch on polemical texts from the 1930s and beyond that emphasize the imposition of Chinese language and culture on the Turkic Muslim majority. These artifacts of the self-conscious construction of national identity present an objection to Qing and Chinese power on mainly linguistic and cultural grounds, reflecting the intellectual biases of their authors and the realities of a diaspora nationalist community unable to act with economic force.³ While many Turkic Muslims certainly objected to the Qing, this particular attitude is not attested in the Turkic texts written during the Qing itself. Rather, Qing language policy, although chiefly assimilatory, received various responses, not

² Duara 1995, pp. 51-82.

³ Turkestani diaspora thinkers, including those from East Turkestan, are heavily influenced by various strains of idealism. Like contemporary Uyghur thinkers, they historically adopted these ideas in part out of opposition to Communist materialism or in an effort to carve out a separate intellectual space (Schluessel 2013, pp. 323-335).

all of which were negative. It is therefore necessary, prior to any further exploration of language and the state in twentieth-century Xinjiang, to address the linguistic institutions of the late Qing anew.

In order to address this period, I will explore changes in official language planning and policy (LPP) in Xinjiang in the later period of Qing rule, from 1876 through 1912, with reference to Qing administration in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This period provides an apt opportunity for testing the relationship between linguistic culture and language regimes: distinct sets of values and ideas about language inform and reflect official configurations of relations between linguistic varieties and the people who speak them. I will demonstrate that the late Qing language regime in Xinjiang immediately following its reconquest was different from that under earlier Qing rule. This shift related to a broader change in official and intellectual concepts of language as an institution of power during the 19th century. I will also show that the statewide programs of sociopolitical reform implemented at the very end of the Qing brought another change to official LPP in Xinjiang. I will demonstrate the shifting relationship between LPP and ethnography of language in the early Qing universal empire, the late Qing colonial empire, and the emerging nation-state.

For reasons of space, my perspective in this chapter is overly statist and assumes that popular language attitudes are primarily reactive. This is a historically appropriate stance: it is evident that the Qing administration was overly concerned with the institutions of language, while there is nothing to suggest a similar preexisting Turkic Muslim preoccupation. Nevertheless, where appropriate, I will discuss the reactions to policy expressed in contemporary Turkic works, as these accounts undermine the pervasive emphasis in contemporary and historical work on Xinjiang on the state's power to shape attitudes and identities.

Language and Power in Early Qing Xinjiang

The Qing completed the conquest of Xinjiang with the destruction of the Zunghar Mongol state and the establishment of a dual administration on the model of Inner Mongolia and Manchuria. In the North, a military administration under the Ili General took an active role in defense and taxation, as well as resettlement and construction efforts following the extermination of the Zunghars. In the South, including the oases of Qumul and Turpan, the local settled Turkic Muslim (Turki) aristocracy was integrated into the Manchu administration through the Court of Colonial Affairs (Ch. *Lifan yuan*). The Qing thus ruled the Turki population indirectly, as it ruled other outlying peoples, and established only a partial civilian bureaucracy.⁴

In terms of LPP, little changed. Although language education through compulsory schooling later became the primary means of enacting LPP in Xinjiang, for now, Islamic education through *mäktäps* and madrasas continued unabated. Otherwise, the Grand Minister Superintendent of Qinghai, as the nearest civilian authority, memorialized the court in 1767 to establish schools in Xinjiang for the sons of soldiers in the Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese military garrisons, as well as for the public.⁵ Although the Minister intended for the schools to teach Chinese writing and literary style and to develop students' "moral character" through immersion in the Classics in line with proposals for a national curriculum, the schools focused on the Manchu martial arts, and perhaps all but one graduate received a "military", rather than "literary", education.

The official documentation of language in the early Qing was intended to demonstrate the Empire's legitimate authority over the cultures and peoples of Inner Asia by demonstrating their linguistic equality and the universality and equivalence of the concepts their

⁴ Newby 1996, pp. 69-70.

⁵ He-ying 1968 [1805], pp. 214-19.

vocabularies express.⁶ Multilingualism, as embodied by the *Imperially-Commissioned Glossary of the Western Regions*, was a mark of Qing universal authority, but functional access to certain languages also defined the limits of one's power. In the 26th year of the Qianlong Emperor's reign (1761-62), the private stamps that *hakim begs*, officials in charge of cities, had long used to approve documents were replaced with seals in Manchu, Mongolian, and Turki scripts, though not Chinese or Tibetan.⁷ This served to combat counterfeiting of these seals, in part by introducing languages that Turki generally could not read but that Qing officials would easily recognize as genuine or not. The Qing government also encouraged Chinese officials in Xinjiang, including the many scholars who found themselves in exile there, to learn Turki. For the most part, the encouragement did not take, and Chinese in Xinjiang remained ignorant of native languages and literatures.

Newby discusses the preoccupation of early Qing writers on Xinjiang with the natural and historical landscape and their tendency to reproduce established ideas about human activity.⁸ Where language is concerned, these writers sometimes describe spoken Turki or Chaghatay, a widely-used Turkic literary language, but only in terms of the *hui* "Muslim" writing system and in a religious context. In referring to "Muslim" texts, these Chinese writers conflate Arabic, Persian, and Turkic religious and secular works, reflecting both their unawareness of variation in writing systems and received knowledge of Islam from China Proper.⁹ These descriptions are always accompanied by a lamentation of the limited literacy of *akbunds* and other religious leaders. He-ying, one of the more charitable authors, asserts that "Muslim children can write," but otherwise offers the stock description: "The Muslim writing is like bird tracks, like tadpoles.

⁶ Millward and Newby 2006, pp. 127-28; Fu-heng et al. 1763, pp. i-iv.

⁷ Anonymous 1957 [1772], pp. 174-75.

⁸ Newby 1999, pp. 455, 457, 459-60.

⁹ Cf. He-ying 1966 [c. 1802-1804], pp. 411-12.

It is read horizontally and is joined-up. It is especially difficult to handle. There are 29 basic characters, and those who know them never have an incorrect character [as one might when writing in Chinese].”

The primary object of lexicography was not everyday vocabulary, but toponyms. Such work was undertaken in the hopes of locating the present geography of the region in the Han and Tang past, then “rectifying” the ancient toponyms, either by correcting the names themselves or reapplying old labels to the contemporary.¹⁰ One interesting example was produced by Wang Qisun (1755-1817), whose “Pastoral Songs of the Western Corner” records what appear, at first, to be 60 herders’ songs from Northern Xinjiang translated into poetic literary Chinese.¹¹ Wang presents these short as “snippets of information” appended with copious footnotes in the tradition of evidential scholarship linking the lyrics with both Han and Tang dynasty works on the “Western Regions” and with the events of the recent conquest.¹² In fact, Wang, a calligrapher of some renown, never left home. His poems are intended, as he readily states, as a reflection on the earlier *Imperial Gazetteer of the Western Regions* (*Xiyu Tuzhi*).

Linguistic change among Turkic Muslims was not, therefore, primarily a result of LPP itself, but rather of practice. Brophy has recently argued that, among the Turki aristocracy and bureaucracy, there emerged a special Turkic variety he calls “*yamen* Uyghur” – that is, Turkic as spoken and written in Qing offices.¹³ Yet, this particular variety had less to do with the introduction of Manchu or Chinese to the linguistic environment. Instead, it had emerged under Zunghar rule, incorporating Mongol terminology into a Turkic grammar. As the Qing continued to use Mongol as a medium of communication with Turki aristocrats until late in the Qing, this official patois

¹⁰ Newby 1996, p. 68.

¹¹ Newby 1999, p. 457; Wang Qisun 1968 [1805], pp. 270-81.

¹² Newby 1999, pp. 454-55.

¹³ Brophy 2013.

changed rather little. At the same time, Chinese settlement and mercantile expansion and the presence of Chinese Green Standard garrison soldiers introduced Chinese language to a broader segment of Turki society. Several individuals from this early period are known to have been sufficiently bilingual in Turkic and Chinese to have composed macaronic poetry or understood performances of Chinese drama.¹⁴ Among them were the many translators employed by Qing offices. Nevertheless, none of this was planned in a central or systematic way, and the concern with language arose out of necessity and accident.

Zuo Zongtang's Language Regime for a Colonial Xinjiang

Effectively nothing is known about language and power under the Muslim uprisings and regime of Ya'qūb Beg in the 1860s and 1870s. Between 1876, when Zuo Zongtang's armies had mostly completed the reconquest of Xinjiang, and 1912, when the Xinhai Revolution ran its course in the region and Republican authority was nominally established, several different language regimes informed as many competing language planning projects.

One of the most influential originated with native Turkic Muslim activists. Beginning in 1882, local reformists began to found schools under the influence of the New Method educational program of Islamic modernist Jadids, mostly from Kazan in Tatarstan, and of Pan-Turkists from the Ottoman Empire. The Jadids and others like them advocated for the teaching of Arabic and of Turkic using very effective phonic methods, rather than rote memorization.¹⁵ These local activists adopted more clearly nationalistic language policies in regard to their local communities. Their activism on behalf of the

¹⁴ For an example of Turki-Chinese macaronic verse, see Ross and Wingate 1934, pp. xi-xii. Radloff (1886, pp. 92-94) records one account of a Chinese (or possibly Manchu) drama performed in Ili.

¹⁵ Cf. Gasprinski 1898.

institution of “native language” encouraged positive identification with a Uyghur or broader Turkic ethnonational group. Some of them became increasingly influential under the nominal rule of the Republic of China in the 1930s, during which the Soviet-backed provincial government institutionalized language and ethnicity in an unprecedentedly broad and more comprehensive way.

Here, however, I am concerned with the institutions of rule that encouraged people to position themselves negatively *against* cultural Chineseness and the Chinese language. To present a now oft-cited example: educational programs meant to reshape the linguistic culture of elite Xinjiang society and reorient it to the Chinese center interfered with a preexisting social order of which traditional education was an important part. As Zuo’s armies took territory in Xinjiang, his Reconstruction Agencies established Chinese-style schools for the mandatory education of young aristocratic Turki men in Chinese, not Manchu, language and culture. As a result, many well-placed Turki families fled Xinjiang for Central Asia, hired peasant boys to attend in their sons’ place at risk of imprisonment, and generally developed a resentment of the Qing state and its cultural impositions through the personage of Zuo Zongtang and his successors. I will describe this program in greater detail below.

I contend that we can understand the new relationship between language, power, and administration in Xinjiang in this period in terms of a distinct state-wide language regime: in the early Qing, the official institutions of language were primarily employed in establishing and maintaining the legitimacy of the Manchu-led universal empire. By the time of the reconquest in the 1870s, however, the social changes of the 19th century, brought about both by large-scale social disruptions within the borders of the Qing and by defeats at the hands of foreign powers, had brought with them new attitudes towards language and new ways of dealing with linguistic difference. At this point, many leading intellectuals saw Chinese as the natural language of the empire and of its majority population; similarly, other languages belonged to the populations of other states.

Languages gave access to groups' and states' cultural and political lives, access that the foreign imperial powers demanded of China and that the Qing began to desire, as well. The Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860) alerted the Empire to the strength of Western naval powers, and Treaty of Tianjin (1858) effectively gave the Qing court three years to develop a corps of translators and interpreters.¹⁶ One result was the establishment of 'Translators' Colleges for the teaching of foreign languages in major cities of coastal China.¹⁷ At first, these schools, as the few other language schools before them, were open to enrollment only by young Manchu bannermen already proficient in their mother tongue, which was rapidly falling out of use. Manchu, which had been one of the chief signs of official Manchu identity and symbols of banner cohesion since the reign of Hong Taiji (r. 1626-1643), remained an important marker of loyalty to the Qing and, thus, trustworthiness in the handling of foreign languages and ideas. Over time, however, it was thought that Han Chinese students, particularly at the College in the treaty port of Shanghai where there had been no Manchu garrison, were learning more quickly and effectively, so such requirements were effectively dropped. It is in light of this reconsideration of the role of language in the establishment of state power, particularly in the international system, that we should consider development in LPP at the other end of the Empire.

It is common to analyze matters of cultural contact and appropriation in the late Qing as questions of "essence" *ti* and "function" *yong*, the dichotomous view of technology advanced by Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) in support of employing foreign and modern means for native and traditionalist ends.¹⁸ Reformist statesmen separated artifacts and even the processes of their manufacture and use from their cultural and institutional contexts.

¹⁶ Kuo 1915, p. 64.

¹⁷ Biggerstaff, pp. 15-17, 31; Rhoads, pp. 1018-1026; Mary Clabaugh Wright, pp. 239-42.

¹⁸ Levenson 1958, p. 60.

Zuo's naval shipyard in Fujian may be seen in this light: to be trained in French and English language and seamanship was not to become foreign.¹⁹ Nor, indeed, was it to become "modern." Even in Gansu Province, which Zuo also retook for the Qing, Zuo's schools taught modern industrial and agricultural skills to a Sinophone population. This included the manufacture of armaments, improved methods for cotton farming, and the excavation and management of mines, the last of which was taught by engineers Zuo brought from Germany and Greece.

In Xinjiang, however, material and cultural conditions necessitated a different tactic and one difficult to understand in terms of the *ti-yong* dichotomy. A high proportion of Xinjiang arable land had been abandoned during the decades of war. Thus, Zuo's administration mostly focused on land reclamation and on provisioning the Qing armies. Technological development remained a very low priority under both the old military government in Ili and the new civilian administration in the new provincial capital of Dihua (modern Ürümchi) until the early 20th century, when the Ili General embarked on a program of military modernization and both governments supported the building of factories.²⁰ Furthermore, Zuo found the linguistic situation in the mostly non-Chinese region to be a major impediment to government:

The officials and the people do not understand each other's languages. They do not understand writing. Everything relies on communication through intermediaries and is upside-down and confused and time-consuming. [Because of t]his lack of closeness between the officials and the people, [we must] get rid

¹⁹ Chen 1961, pp. 50-80.

²⁰ Wei Changhong 1981, pp. 6-12, 20-22. The most up-to-date history of state development in late-Qing and modern Xinjiang is Kinzley, who addresses this period extensively (Kinzley 2012, pp. 33-87).

of the obstruction, broadly establish *yishu*, first teaching Chinese [*hanwen*], so that they may begin to learn characters.²¹

Yishu refers, in its classic usage, to charitable schools in the Neo-Confucian sense, institutions of elementary learning meant to bring about or revive an age of universal sagehood. In Xinjiang, however, Zuo's Reconstruction Agencies established *yishu* institutions of compulsory education for the male children of local Turkic Muslim nobles. A later memorial reiterates this position: "If we wish to change their peculiar customs and assimilate them to our *huafeng* [Chinese ways], we must establish *yishu* and make the Muslim children read [Chinese] books, recognize characters, and understand spoken language."²² *Yishu* in Xinjiang were primarily instruments of language planning.

Zuo's program of both cultural and linguistic training reflects his intellectual roots and those of his reformist colleagues in the Qing government in the Song School of Neo-Confucianism. His program for Xinjiang reflects other Song School social experiments, and, more importantly, the fundamental principles of this philosophy.

Song School Neo-Confucians had long dreamed of, and sometimes implemented, broad-reaching programs of social reform intended, at least in their legitimizing discourse, to bring about the revival of a mythical era of universal classical education and sagehood. They believed that, in the idealized past of the Zhou dynasty (1045-256 BCE), various egalitarian sociopolitical conditions had held that produced universal literacy in the Classics and, thus, social harmony and strong government. Education took a key role in this revival from the very beginning, when Hu Yuan (993-1059 CE), the chief philosophical progenitor of the Song School, presided over one of the

²¹ Quoted in Han Da 1998, pp. 228-29.

²² Memorial, "On managing the reconstruction of Xinjiang," GX 6.4.17 [=25 May 1880] in Zuo Zongtang (1986, pp. 2,254-2,257). Translation from Millward and Tursun 2004, p. 66.

private academies that would come to replace official schools as centers of intellectual activity.²³ Under the recommendations of Fan Zhongyan (989-1052), who cited the classical precedent set by Zhou kings, Hu's school became the standard for a national school system. More egalitarian reformers later established charitable *yishu* modeled on these early academies but intended for the classical education of the broader populace.²⁴ While these early Neo-Confucians influenced state policy, they generally failed to implement their radical ideals more completely. Opportunities arose only when one was given authority over a larger administrative area, as in the case of the Qing official Chen Hongmou (1696-1771) during his tenure in Yunnan.²⁵ Chen established hundreds of Neo-Confucian schools all over the primarily non-Chinese province, both to revive this idealized period in a virgin land and to spread Chinese language and customs to a frontier people. Zuo probably held similar sentiments towards Xinjiang as early as 1830, when he first produced a poem on the establishment of Xinjiang as a province under the influence of Gong Zizhen (1792-1841), a statesman who expressed romantic notions of Xinjiang's transformation.²⁶

The essential philosophical principle of this school of Confucian revivalism, however, was the unity of three concepts: Principle, Practice, and Literary Expression.²⁷ This is to say that practical reform could only be carried out in conjunction with the mastery of literature and the improvement of writing, which served to communicate, reinforce, and reflect classical learning and values. It was through learning and reproducing a certain discourse in a certain linguistic variety, in this case literary Chinese, that officials could perfect their

²³ de Bary 1953, p. 89, 93-94.

²⁴ Bol 1989, pp. 151-56; de Bary 1989, pp. 188, 195; Woodside 1983, pp. 18-19.

²⁵ Rowe 2001, pp. 148-50.

²⁶ Chou 1976, p. 125; David C. Wright 1994.

²⁷ de Bary 1953, p. 90.

administration. In order to further integrate Xinjiang into the Chinese whole, then, Zuo would need to reform linguistic practice through an expanded class of colonial bilingual intermediaries. Although these officials were to be culturally “bilingual”, in terms of linguistic practice, the schools put less emphasis on teaching spoken Mandarin, which was also a concern in contemporary China Proper, than on the mastery of writing.²⁸ Zuo’s concept of language and of the necessity and methods of its planning were, thus, part and parcel with the understanding and implementation of classical ideals and precedents.

The explicit use of Chinese, rather than Manchu, as the target language and language of instruction itself demonstrates a growing understanding of the Qing empire not as a universal empire, but as a Chinese state. Zuo Zongtang himself had failed the imperial exams and retreated for some years into local intellectual activities in his home province of Hunan before emerging to work for the safety and territorial integrity of China Proper, raising a modern army against the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1850-1864). Among his Hunan army were also many members of the anti-Manchu Brothers and Elders Society later involved in the Xinhai Revolution (1911-1912).²⁹ This probably affected the planning and implementation of the education program, especially following Zuo’s departure and up to the fall of the Qing, as the Hunan veterans often remained in positions of power for many years. Some old Hunanese ran their Confucian schools for Turki boys as pet projects into the last days of the Qing.³⁰

Although Zuo’s program for education was thoroughly in the Neo-Confucian mode, it also reflected the practical problems of language and power that the Qing began to grapple with following the Opium Wars. Zuo Zongtang, trained in the home of the Song School in Changsha, Hunan, when faced with the concrete problem of linguistic

²⁸ Millward 2007, p. 144.

²⁹ Millward 2007, p. 164.

³⁰ Mannerheim 2008, p. 76.

difference and administration, in a region at last under his control, implemented a by then-classic Neo-Confucian solution. At this point, however, the schools, although “charitable schools” in name, had been divorced from the ideal of classical revival. Rather, they were remade to serve the pragmatism of late-Qing statecraft thinkers.

If one takes a strictly statist perspective, Zuo’s linguistic transformation of the Turki elite seems to have been implemented according to plan. Uyghur nationalist leader Isa Alptekin, who has provided the only frequently-cited Turkic-language source on education in this period, presents an anecdote from his father, Yusuf Alptekin.³¹ The older Alptekin recalled his mother’s humiliation over seeing her son being forced to dress in Chinese clothes. This second-hand account neatly personalizes the colonial experience and projects the concerns of diaspora nationalists into the past.

However, even the earliest records of *yishu* construction and operation indicate that they were complex institutions that served a variety of purposes. Enrolment at the *yishu* in Turpan, for example, included both Chinese and Muslim students, but most of the Muslims were actually identified by officials as Hui, not Turki. Chinese sometimes attended *yishu* for basic or further education.³² Furthermore, *yishu* were nominally funded by the court, but

³¹ This narrative first appears in a Turki- and Chinese-language newspaper Alptekin edited in Nanjing in 1934, *Chīnī Turkistān Awāzī* (Ch. *Biānduo yuekan*) and later again in his memoirs. A “Mr. Ai-sa from Xinjiang” resident in Nanjing, very likely to be Alptekin under his Chinese name, was the source for Zeng Wenwu and Shen Yunlong’s (1936, pp. 408-410) assertion that Chinese education in late-Qing Xinjiang brought about strife and alienation. Zeng’s argument has since been cited by several scholars, along with Alptekin’s memoirs.

³² For example, one Ma Shaoyuan, a Hui from Kucha, went to the *yishu* in Kashgar to study in 1887 (*Gongzhong dang Guangxu chao zhouzhe*, v. 5, pp. 664-665).

administered locally, and even the provincial government made little effort to, or else was unable to, enforce a single curriculum.

This information, gleaned from local documents, suggests that the experience of *yishu* recounted by Yusuf Alptekin was hardly typical. Nevertheless, it is interesting that policy and its framers' explicit intention to transform local elites significantly influenced an emergent nationalism that was itself elite and heavily statist over the following decades. During later policy debates, which I will briefly recount in the following section, the major criticism leveled at this policy was that it induced elite Turki to flee Xinjiang for Russian Central Asia.³³ While there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that this happened, I argue once again that we must be cautious in reading our sources: most such anecdotes seem to come from either the *Xinjiang Gazetteer* (Ch. *Xinjiang tuzhi*), a tertiary source produced during and after the last years of the Qing³⁴, and from Isa Alptekin himself. In both cases, the source is more polemical than empirical.

I have only found this period of language policy reflected in one non-nationalist source, a history and chronicle written by another elite, Ghulām Muḥammad Khān of Yarkand, in the 1920s.³⁵ Ghulām attributes the fall of the Qing in part to the implementation of Chinese-language education in Xinjiang by a pretender to the imperial throne. The pretender, he tells us, intended that “when the mothers and fathers of the children studying in the schools came to see their children, a child should speak to his father in the speech of Beijing; and that fathers and sons should speak together through a translator. The goal was that, when the old people died, all of the youth would have become Chinese.”³⁶ This statement speaks to the linkage of ethnic and linguistic identity in the matrix of Qing policy and the subsequent anxiety it induced in elites subject to it. Importantly,

³³ cf. Yuan Dahua 1923, 106:6a-7a.

³⁴ Yuan Dahua 1923.

³⁵ Lund University Library, Jarring Prov 163.

³⁶ Lund University Library, Jarring Prov 163, 125a: 11-13.

Ghulām is writing at this point in his history on the theme of the legitimacy of imperial rule, which he intends to demonstrate is dependent on the emperor's maintenance of the integrity of the Islamic community. His explanation of the Chinese-education policy is not institutional or political, but rather cosmological, as it is linked to the disruption of the natural imperial succession ordained by God and enshrined in sacred history. His narrativization of communal identity in relation to the sovereign and the subsequent collapse of imperial sacred authority resembles, from a certain theoretical perspective, an incipient nationalism. Overall, elite identities certainly came to reflect, if not completely, the ramifications of state-imposed identification.

Chinese Nationalist LPP and a New Understanding of Language

The final years of the Qing dynasty saw an abrupt change in the state discourse of language. Language was conceived of not just as a system of varieties marking kinds of people, but as an instrument of reform and an institution of power. Furthermore, the exams that had directed students' language learning, encouraging a focus on the unity of composition, philosophy, and practical action, had been abolished in 1905. Intellectuals turned, then, to the development of spoken Chinese as a national language and to the promotion of literacy among the broader population.

Literacy was part of a program of comprehensive and modern public education. In Xinjiang, educational modernization was carried out by a new generation of civilian and military officials. These officials included both members of revolutionary secret societies and pro-imperial bureaucrats.

An important process of educational modernization took place through the military academies under the Ili General. Beginning in the early 20th century, the Qing undertook a program of modernization

of the armed forces through the standardization of military curricula on a Japanese model, study abroad at a special school in Japan for Qing officers, and the institution of a hierarchy of regional military schools. The military administration in Ili had thus far been slow to reform and continued to send not modern soldiers from a popular army, but the traditionally-educated sons of Mongol, Kazakh, and other hereditary military families to Japan.

This ended in 1904, when the Ili General Chang-geng established the Ili Accelerated Military Academy (Ch. *Yili Sucheng Wubei Xuetang*) in Huiyuan in order to improve the defenses of the sparsely-garrisoned border region and support the formation of a New Ili Model Army.³⁷ The chief instructors were Japanese officers under the supervision of mostly Manchu administrators. Despite the official use of Chinese as the medium of instruction and of composition, one of the Japanese teachers, who had studied Chinese and worked in central China for some time, relied on an interpreter to translate his instructions into “the Qing language”, Manchu. At first, the Ili Academy trained members of the established garrisons, especially Manchus. In 1907, however, several divisions of mostly Han Chinese soldiers from the Northern Army (*Beiyang Lujun*) and Hubei came to form the New Ili Model Army, bringing with them underground leaders of the Brothers and Elders and the young Revolutionary Alliance.

While the Ili military school trained soldiers from the old Qing military, Chinese civilian officials in Xinjiang set about providing education for the general public. From 1905 through 1911, civilian officials founded over six hundred elementary, middle, and other schools and renovated many *yishu* into modern institutions.³⁸ The changes began in earnest in 1907 with the appointment of Du Tong (1864-1929), an education specialist who had briefly toured Japan, as

³⁷ Zhang Wenya 2008, pp. 54-56.

³⁸ Yuan Dahua 1923, pp. 1392-1470.

the provincial education commissioner.³⁹ In theory, these schools were meant to familiarize the general Xinjiang population, both Han and non-Han, with spoken and written Mandarin. Turki were to be taught through the medium of spoken Turki, the immediate ancestor of modern Uyghur. Implementation, however, was difficult, and actually suffered from many of the same problems as does present-day Mandarin-language education in Xinjiang: teachers were poorly-trained, unmotivated, and lacking in the resources necessary for their task. Turki-medium education at the elementary level often became Chinese-medium, depending on the needs of the teacher. Meanwhile, these schools were only lightly attended by Turki even after the Xinhai Revolution, although Manchus, Mongols, and Kazakhs seem to have accepted them much more readily.⁴⁰ Successful Turki students merited special mention in local gazetteers.⁴¹

As the Chinese language became national and education became modern, so, too, did the new officials' understanding of native Xinjiang languages. By this time, the Turkic and Chinese Muslims of Xinjiang are more clearly differentiated in their writing: while Chinese Muslims continue to be *hui* "Muslims", the Turkic Muslims are referred to by the rather pejorative term *chantou* "wrapped-headed" or simply *chan*. Gazetteers written in the last decade of the Qing further differentiate religious writings (*jingwen*) from the spoken language (*yuyan*) and written language (*wenzì*) of the Turkic Muslims, despite their superficial similarity to Islamic religious texts.

A remarkable example of this new understanding is presented in the *Lop Nur County Local Gazetteer* (*Luopu Xian Xiangtu Zhi*) written by Yang Zhenghuo in 1908. In this gazetteer, the author does begin, according to the standard gazetteer format, with a classical reference to the *Han Shu* and locates Lop Nur as part of the ancient kingdom of

³⁹ Millward 2007, pp. 143-46, Yuan Dahua 1923, pp. 1391-92.

⁴⁰ Cf. Mannerheim 2008, pp. 83-91; Xie Xiaozhong 1922, p. 151.

⁴¹ Ma, p. 656.

Yutian. That is the end of his concern with the ancient past, however, and one that he says cannot be supported with any textual evidence. Indeed, Yang presents local place names and social institutions separately from the central narrative of Chinese dynastic succession, couching them instead in present-day realities.

Yang Zhengzhuo's presentation of the Arabo-Persian-based writing system of Chaghatay, the common written language of Central Asia at that time, attempts to analyze the phonetics of the language and its script systematically and in part according to the tools of traditional Chinese linguistics (*yuwenxue*). He explains that the letters are entirely phonetic: "One forms speech from sounds, and one writes according speech." Yang equates the addition of diacritics to basic letters with the *fanqie* system invented to transliterate Sanskrit Buddhist terminology into Chinese. 28 of the 36 basic letters, he explains, represent single, unique sounds, which can be classified, according to *yuwenxue* consonantal categories, as laryngeals, velars, labials, and dentals. Of the four *bu*, or vowel categories, of *yuwenxue*, he divides Chaghatay vowels into open and closed varieties. Yang illustrates every character with its name transliterated from Turkic into Chinese and every syllable with its pronunciation in Chinese, provided that there is an equivalent. Yang marks letters with no Chinese equivalent with an "o".

Apart from this traditional, albeit systematic, treatment of Turkic sounds and letters, Yang also shows innovation in his understanding of the language's phonetics. He remarks on the considerable variation in linguistic varieties, in this case by the pronunciation of the letters, between cities. More importantly, in describing the vowel diacritics, Yang describes their qualities carefully, then classifies them into front and back varieties according to the rules of vowel harmony.

More generally, local gazetteers produced during this period reflect a more nuanced and detailing understanding of cultural difference in Xinjiang. Officials wrote about ethnicity and Islam less according to old received knowledge and more according to new understandings of local conditions and world history. For example, it is around this time

that “Taranchi” (Ch. *talang*) appears commonly as an ethnonym in the Chinese literature to distinguish the Turkic Muslims of the Ili Valley, who identified as such, from others in Xinjiang.⁴²

Most importantly for this discussion, language found a new place in local gazetteers. The gazetteer, as a genre of writing, had long been employed as a way of glorifying local history in China Proper and making it comprehensible and accessible. In Xinjiang at the end of the Qing, where gazetteers were written for places such as Khotan and Tarbaghatai, many of the formal sections of the gazetteer remained empty, with no scholarly achievements or monuments to report.

One section, however, was always full: “Religion”. It is in the last few traditional Xinjiang gazetteers that local language moved from “Religion” and depictions of written language and illiteracy in the religious context to “People”, “Commercial Enterprise”, “Customs”, “Geography”, and other such categories and distinctions between various groups on the basis of their separate languages and literatures.⁴³ Sections of “Geography” also give more attention to the etymologies of native place names.⁴⁴

Of course, language is not the only basis of distinction, as racial type begins to play a role: Uyghurs belong to the “Arab Muslim race”⁴⁵ or the “*musiman zu* (*musulman* or Muslim race/clan)”.⁴⁶ “Religion”, at this point, rarely mentions language, though it, too, shows a global awareness in its inclusion of varieties of Christianity even where there are no missionaries to report. It is worth noting that almost all of the examples of attempts to discuss native languages in these gazetteers come from Southern Xinjiang, which the writers consider to be the native home of the *chanton* or settled Turkic Muslims and populated more completely with them.

⁴² Cf. Ma, pp. 356-57.

⁴³ Cf. Ma, pp. 426, 574-75, 559, 608, 619, 691, 697, 729-32.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ma, p. 567.

⁴⁵ Ma, p. 443.

⁴⁶ Ma, pp. 541, 600.

Whereas the earlier period of LPP made a strong impression on elites, this later period was at least contemporaneous with a growing popular awareness of Chinese language. While the pre-Ya'qūb Beg period saw the persistence of a Turko-Mongol mixed speech as the language of Turki officialdom, the post-reconquest language regime and the varieties that arose from increased contact with Chinese are qualitatively very different. Oral accounts from as early as the 1890s attest to the range of Chinese loanwords in Turki, most of which relate to the popular experience of the judicial system. The names of torture implements to be found in the county office, for example, as well as terms for crimes and punishments predominate. Interestingly, when one looks at popular texts, both those directed at the Chinese-speaking authorities and to Turki audiences, one of the most common terms for self-identification as a Turkic Muslim is the Chinese pejorative *chantou*, rendered as *čanto*!⁴⁷

I propose that this acceptance of a degree of Chinese vocabulary relates directly to the popular Turki experience of the state, which took place at an institutional and epistemic distance from policy and elite experience. It is well-attested that the imperial Chinese state operated indirectly in local society through the person of the magistrate; this was even more the case following the shifts in state-society relations of the late Qing and in an environment in which the imperial representative was essentially unable to communicate with his linguistically and culturally very different subjects.⁴⁸ In these

⁴⁷ cf. Poskami 2004, p. 149 and Menges 1976, pp. 48-50. Poskami's work is a book of observational and sometimes autobiographical poetry dating from the late Qing and early Republic, while Menges has reproduced a number of oral interviews recorded in Turpan and Qumul by the Russian orientalist Katanov in the early 1890s.

⁴⁸ The establishment Xinjiang as a new province in 1884 brought about great confusion among its civilian bureaucrats. Newly-appointed magistrates were at a loss as to how to communicate with or rule Turkic Muslims. Many of the

circumstances, local government needed to operate bilingually and so produced documents in Turki as well as Chinese.⁴⁹ Yet, even where a warrant, petition, or deposition is given in Turki, it appears to have been increasingly understood that Chinese terms were legally necessary in order to specify infractions and legitimize epistolary forms.⁵⁰ None of this is treated in LPP, yet it had a perceptible effect on linguistic practice.

Conclusion

Elite concepts of language and difference formed at the national level in response to internal and external crises guided state policy towards language and education in Xinjiang in the late Qing. This response was informed first by established native political and moral philosophies that took language, in the form of formal composition, as a key part of learning and enacting those philosophies. In this sense, the late Qing language regime was qualitatively different from that of the early Qing, during which the institution of language served to legitimate a universal, rather than colonial, empire. As intellectuals' consciousness turned to an incipient belief in national progress, education in Xinjiang sought to create a new kind of imperial subject with a subjectively more "modern" linguistic repertoire and

begs, having been dismissed from office, were consequently rehired as translators (Zeng and Shen 1936, p. 363).

⁴⁹ Many such warrants, petitions, contracts, and other bilingual or translated texts have recently been reproduced in *Qingdai Xinjiang dang'an xuanji*, a collection of late-Qing local documents from Turpan.

⁵⁰ One simple example is a warrant, issued by the Turpan magistrate in Turki and executed by one Turki and one Chinese petty official. In it, several terms are left in Chinese, although written in Arabo-Persian script, among them *shang* "to wound" <Ch. *shang* and *cän* "warrant" <Ch. *qian*.

understanding similar to that held by the new generation of provincial administrators.

Qing LPP in Xinjiang shaped local attitudes in unpredictable ways. It is clear that many Turki elites resented the early policies, and it is these voices that have dominated international discourse on the region's modern history. At the same time, Qing policy succeeded, both directly through education and indirectly through administrative necessity, in producing and maintaining a bilingual translator class, whose members collaborated with the state. The existence even before the Ya'qūb Beg period of Turki-Chinese bilingualism and cultural interest sufficient even to translate literature all point to a group of intermediaries who took little issue with the use of Chinese in public life.⁵¹ Furthermore, ordinary Turki learned through routine interaction with the Chinese administration to navigate its terminology. However, because their voices mostly appear in refraction through official documents, their opinions about language are more difficult to decipher – just as the attitudes of today's Uyghur majority remain largely beyond the reach of social scientific research.

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⁵¹ Brophy (2013, p. 254) notes a "yamen Uyghur" translation of a Chinese novel produced in Khotan in 1859.

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