Two Turkic-based hybrid languages in northwestern China

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Centuries ago, several hybrid languages developed in northwestern China, largely as a result of the trading activities and the intensive contacts of various nationalities and their intermixing on the Silk Road. One such language has a Turkic-Uyghur grammar and phonology, and a very large Persian vocabulary. The vocabulary of another is very largely a debased Chinese, and its structure Turkic, with Turkic grammatical elements and Chinese-looking ones which function according to Turkic principles. The relevant characteristics of these two languages, Eynu and Hezhou, are briefly described here and illustrated with analyzed examples. With Hezhou, the similar typological features of Hezhou and Uyghur are contrasted with the very different ones of Chinese.

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In the course of the work resulting in the compilation of the large three-volume *Atlas of languages of intercultural communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas* (Wurm, Mühlhäusler & Tryon 1996), attention was drawn to the existence of several creolized hybrid languages in the Xinjiang, Gansu and Qinghai provinces of China. Little information on them has so far been published in China where, with one exception, they are regarded as debased and corrupted forms of Chinese. While there is a strong, usually formally and semantically extensively changed and distorted, Chinese-derived lexical element in most of them, their structures are largely non-Chinese. Even less has been published on them outside China, and some of this has also been written in Chinese (for instance Chen 1986).

Four such languages have been identified in the area mentioned above and recognized for what they are in the course of this work. At the same time, it seems that there are more such hybrid languages in Gansu not far from where two of these identified hybrid languages are located, and which are probably closely related to, or variants of, one of these two, i.e. the language called Tangwang. It appears that three of the four hybrid languages identified may owe their origin at least in part to the trading activities on the continental Silk Road which ceased to function during the seventeenth century. In two of these, which are called Eynu and Hezhou, a Turkic element plays a major role. The third, called Tangwang, is structurally largely based on the Mongolic Santa (or Dongxiang) language, but its speakers may have originally been Chinese who kept much of their phonologically, tonally and semantically dialectal Mandarin vocabulary largely intact. At the same time they adopted much Santa, Arabic and Persian vocabulary (which were given tones), and a largely Santa structure in which the grammatical elements are toneless and some Chinese elements appear which have lost their tones and meanings and fulfil Santa Mongolian grammatical functions, not Chinese ones. A few Turkic grammatical elements are found, for instance the plural suffix of nouns, obviously loaned from the neighbouring Turkic Salar (Lee-Smith 1996a). There are no Turkic elements in the fourth language which is called Wutun and is a highly complex toneless creolized hybrid language based structurally on Bao'an Mongolian, Tibetan, with some Chinese functional elements, and a vocabulary based on Bao'an, Tibetan and distorted toneless Chinese. Its origin cannot be directly attributed to the Silk Road trading activities (Lee-Smith & Wurm 1996).

Eynu, one of the two hybridized creole languages with a strong Turkic element as mentioned above, is spoken in the western part of Xinjiang province by several thousand widely scattered speakers in the area extending from Kashgar to Yarkand and Khotan, and eastwards to beyond Aksu. The existence of the language and its speakers has been superficially known for a century. Grenard (1898) suggested that they were descendants of Persian Shiites who came to Turkestan in the eighth century. He also mentioned that their language was originally Persian giving way grammatically to Turkic Uyghur. Tietze & Ladstätter (1994) mention additonal theories about the origin of the Eynu speakers and their language, without offering firm conclusions. Zhao & Haxim (1982) give a short description of the language, but regard it

as an Uyghur dialect. Grenard's view on the origin of the Eynu speaking people (called Abdal by their neighbours) is correct, but is only part of the picture. Of the many Persian traders who had dominated the continental Silk Road trade for centuries, many left at the cessation of that trade, but some remained, married Uyghur women and joined the Abdal people. While the Chinese administration regards them as being of Uyghur nationality, they themselves strongly disagree with this and insist that they are of Persian origin and ethnicity. Their Eynu language is grammatically and phonologically Uyghur, including the typical Uyghur vowel changes *a > e, a > i* etc., but its vocabulary is very largely derived from Persian, though with an Uyghur phonology, except for the presence of voiced final *b, d, g* in some Eynu words, e.g. Eynu *ab* (from Persian *a:b*) 'water' (Lee-Smith 1996b). Many of the Persian-derived Eynu words differ somewhat in their form from their original Persian equivalents, e.g. Eynu *kes* 'person', *uʃtur* 'stomach', *hep* 'seven', *kox* 'mountain' correspond to Persian *kas, ʃutur, haft,* and *kuh.* (The transcription used in the Eynu section of this article is IPA, but with *ö* and *ü* used instead of *ø* and *y* for the front rounded vowels, and *e* to represent the *ɛ*-sound.) In words of Persian origin which have a Persian formative suffix, that suffix has been replaced by an Uyghur suffix, but the Persian stem has been maintained, e.g. Persian *a:b-keʃ* 'seller of water', Eynu *ab-tʃi,* Persian *haft-um* 'seventh', Eynu *hep-inʤi.* The Eynu personal, indefinite, reflexive and interrogative pronouns are all Uyghur, e.g. *men* 'I', *biz* 'we', *siler* 'you (pl.)', *her* 'each one', *özimiz* 'ourselves', *kim* 'who', *qajsi* 'which', etc. Eynu verbs are usually a Persian stem + *-la* or *-le,* e.g. Persian *xor-* 'eat', Eynu *xor-la;* Persian *nigar* 'look', Eynu *niga-la,* etc. In Persian, verbs have two stems, essentially for present and past tense, but this feature has been lost in Eynu, except for some very few petrified forms. It has to be remembered that Uyghur has a large number of Persian (and Arabic) loanwords, many of which also occur in Eynu. In addition to its Persian-derived vocabulary, Eynu has a very small number of Turkic Uyghur loanwords, e.g. *tüt-le* from Uyghur *tüt-* 'to take'; also loanwords from Mongolian and Sibe-Manchu, words of unknown origin, as well as some metaphorical expressions resulting from a change in the meaning of Persian, Arabic and other words.

To illustrate what has been outlined above, a number of inflected forms and short sentences are given in Eynu and Uyghur, with explanations and translations. The Eynu Persian-derived words and ele-

ments, and other words and elements in Eynu which are not Uyghur-derived, are underlined:

Eynu		Uyghur
eŋgür-ler	'a lot of grapes'	*üzüm-ler*
mike-m	'my goat'	*öʃke-m*
miki-si	'his goat'	*öʃki-si*
hatta-da	'at the market'	*bazar-da*
(*hatta* is from Sibe-Manchu where it means 'goods')		
hatta-din	'from the market'	*bazar-din*
xurd-raq	'smaller'	*kitʃik-rek*
niga-la-ʃ-t-i	'they saw each other'	*körü-ʃ-t-i*
niga-li-d-im	'I have seen'	*kör-d-üm*
Pedir-im doŋɣuj xor-la-ŋ.	'My father, eat water-	*Baba-m tawuz je-ŋ.*
my father watermelon eat	melon!'	my father watermelon
(*doŋɣuj* is Chinese-derived)		eat
Batʃi-lir-i gijaŋ-li-d-i.	'Their children, they cried'	*Bali-lir-i jiɣli-d-i.*

Eynu   *Pedir-im hatta-din jek saŋ ateʃ we jek mike ün-d- i.*
        my father, from the market, one stonefire and one goat he came
        'My father brought one flintstone and one goat from the market.'
        (*ün-* is an Eynu verb of uncertain origin which indicates leaving
        something and heading in any direction)

Uyghur *Ata-m* (or *data-m*) *bazar-din bir tʃaqmaq teʃ-i we bir öʃke
        epkep-t-u.*
        (*tʃaqmaq teʃ-i* 'flintstone'; *epkep* is from *elip kelip*
        'taking-coming')
        'My father brought one flintstone and one goat from the market.'

Eynu   *ʃeb-de bad qis-li-d- i.*
        night-in wind it did
        'During the night, a wind blew up.'
        (*qis-* is an Eynu verb derived from Mongolian *xi-* or *qi-* 'to do')

Uyghur   *Ketʃ-te ʃamal tʃiq-t-i.*
         night-in wind it-came-out
         'During the night, a wind blew up.'

Eynu   *Xani-da mike hes-mu, nist-mu.*
         in the house, goat exist-question, not exist question
         'Is there any goat in the house or not?'

Uyghur   *Öj-de öʃke bar-mu joq-mu?*
         in the house goat exist-question, not exist-question
         'Is there any goat in the house or not?'

From these examples it should be evident that Eynu and Uyghur are not mutually intelligible.

It seems that the explanation for the origin and continued existence of the Eynu language is as follows: The offspring of the originally Persian-speaking Abdal people (probably of the first immigrants and the Persian traders who stayed in the area after the cessation of the Silk Road trade) from their intermarriage with Uyghur women learned Uyghur from their mothers. At the same time, the Persian fathers who had preserved a very strong feeling of Persian ethnic identity which the Abdal people have traditionally maintained to the present day, taught the children Persian words to use as a symbol of their ethnic identity. The children learned these words with the phonological base of their Uyghur mother tongue, with the language handed down in this hybrid form to subsequent generations as a creole. It may be mentioned that all Eynu speakers, including the children of Eynu-Eynu marriages, are entirely bilingual in Uyghur as their 'outside' language, and in Eynu as their 'inside' language used within the Eynu community, and as a secret language, and there is no sign of Eynu being in danger of being replaced by Uyghur with Eynu speakers.

Hezhou is the other of the two above-mentioned hybridized creole languages with a strong underlying Turkic element in it. Its name is the old name of Linxia city (which is located south of the Yellow River at the mouth of the Daxia River in Gansu province). The language has been regarded by Chinese scholars, e.g. Ma Shujun (1984) as basically Chinese heavily influenced by local Turkic and Mongolian languages. Dwyer (1992) essentially adheres to that view, but leaves open the possibility that the syntactic pressure from Altaic languages on Chi-

nese syntax may have resulted from imperfect learning of Chinese on the part of non-native Chinese speakers (Dwyer 1992: 173). Lee-Smith (1996c) takes the view that a form of Hezhou is the result of this. It appears that there is a form of it in Linxia city which has three stable tones, and one outside it, spoken as a trade lingua franca in an area south and west of the Linxia Autonomous Region in Sansu province, and in adjacent parts of Qinghai province. There Hezhou speakers constitute a relatively small population while the majority of the population are speakers of the Mongolian languages Santa (or Dongxiang) and Bao'an, the Turkic language Salar, and Tibetan. In that form of Hezhou, the three tones appear to be unstable, and there are tone sandhi which show changes that are not typically those of a Sino-Tibetan language. Rather than the tones becoming unstable and non-semantic, which would be looking at them from the Chinese angle, it seems more likely that the language started off as a non-tonal Turkic language, and is in the process of acquiring tones, which in Linxia city, with its large Chinese population, has progressed much further. The basic structural characteristics of Hezhou are Turkic (Salar and / or Uyghur), but its vocabulary is very largely Chinese-derived. The word order and the rudimentary mirroring in the language of Turkic verbal and suffixal grammar show the thought patterns underlying the syntactic and structural features of Hezhou to be Turkic. Five of the six cases with nouns and pronouns are marked by suffixes derived from Turkic, Tibetan and Chinese forms. A particularly interesting feature of the language is the making up for the absence of verbal suffixation in Chinese by the appearance of Chinese-looking elements used as suffixes added to verbs, but totally divorced from their Chinese meanings and functions. They indicate typical Turkic grammatical functions, e.g. converbs, verbal nouns, intention, tense, necessity, etc.

What has been said above will now be illustrated by some examples. The transcription used for Hezhou is fairly broad. IPA symbols are used, except that, as elsewhere in this article, *ü* is used for IPA *y*. In the Hezhou examples, *s*, *ts* and *z* are almost always retroflexed, *ç* is an alveopalatal or palatal voiceless fricative. No tones are marked. The transcription used for the Uyghur versions is the same as in the section on Eynu. In the examples, Hezhou is given first with explanations, followed by an Uyghur version to demonstrate the Turkic features of Hezhou structure by comparison, and finally by the Mandarin Chinese version in the usual pinyin transcription, without tone marks, to show

the essentially Chinese nature of the Hezhou vocabulary by comparison.

'I bought this thing for you.'

Hezhou   *Tsi tüŋçi ʃi ŋo ni-xa me-lio.*
this thing is I you-for buy-past

Uyghur   *Bu nersi-ni men saŋa al-d-im.*
this thing I you-for buy-past-I

Mandarin   *Zhe dongxi shi wo gei ni mai de.*
This thing is I give you buy of (= the bought one)

In this, the *ʃi* in Hezhou corresponds to Mandarin structure (there is no equivalent word in Uyghur), but *ni-xa* corresponds to the Uyghur *saŋa* 'for you'. The suffix *-xa* (< Turkic *-ɣa, -qa*...) denotes the direct and indirect object.

'(He) returned from Beijing.'

Hezhou   *Betçīŋ-ta xui (-tsə) le-lio.*
Beijing-from return (-converb) come-past

Uyghur   *Bejdʒiŋ-din qajt-ip kel-d-i.*
Beijing-from return-converb came-he

Mandarin   *Cong, Beijing huilai.*
from Beijing return-come

In this case, Hezhou corresponds to Uyghur in having the suffix *-ta* 'from' after Beijing, and the past tense marker *-lio* added to the final verb. The Hezhou sentence would commonly be *betçīŋ-ta xui-tsə le-lio*, with the Hezhou converb marker *-tsə* (see below) added to *xui* to correspond to the Uyghur *qajt-ip*.

'He slept until noon.'

Hezhou   *Tha säü-thala sui-lio.*
            he noon-until sleep-past

Uyghur   *U tʃütʃ-kitʃe uxli-d-i.*
            he noon-until sleep-past-he

Mandarin   *Ta shui dao zhongwu.*
            he sleep until noon

The structural agreement between Hezhou and Uyghur is quite obvious. Hezhou contrasts strongly with Mandarin. The 'to, until' marker *-thala* may be Turkic *-da(n)* ' from' + Tibetan *-la* 'to'.

'My father'

Hezhou   *ŋo-ti ata*
            I-of father

Uyghur   *Meniŋ ata-m*
            I-of father-my

Mandarin   *Wo baba*
            I father

The Hezhou possessive (genitive) marker *-ti* is a Chinese particle.

'What do you intend to serve them with?'

Hezhou   *Ni tham-xa ʃimˉa-la khuet-e-li.*
            you they-to (or them) what-with wait upon intention

Uyghur   *Sen ular-ni nime-bilen küt-mektʃi-sen.*
            you them what-with wait upon-intention-you

Mandarin   *Ni yong sheme zhaodai tamen.*
            you use what serve they

The structural agreement between Hezhou and Uyghur is again striking. The instrumental marker -*la* is the Salar instrumental marker.

'Say it in Mandarin!'

Hezhou   *Ni phuthũŋxua-la suo.*
           you Mandarin-with say

Uyghur   *Sen putuŋxua-bilen sözle.*
           you Mandarin-with say

Mandarin   *Ni yong putonghua shuo.*
           you use Mandarin say

Again, there is agreement between the Hezhou and Uyghur structure in contrast with Mandarin.

The Hezhou marker -*tsə* is a surrogate converb marker added to verbs to mirror the Turkic converbs. It is probably derived from the Chinese particle *zhe* which is tense-oriented and marks action in progress. The Hezhou -*tsə* does not indicate those functions. Examples:

'(When) the movie finished, I returned.'

Hezhou   *Tiefĩŋ vẽ-lio-tsə ŋo xui-tsə le-lio.*
           movie finish-past-converb I return-converb come-past
           (i.e. return-converb = returning came)

Uyghur   *kino tüge-p men qaj-t-ip kel-d-im*
           movie finish-converb I return-converb come-past-I

Mandarin   *dianying wan le wo jiu huilai le*
           movie finished, I then return-come past

The Hezhou -*tsə* can be added to the past tense marker -*lio*.

'(I) went to the market, purchased things and returned
(i.e. returning came).'

Hezhou   *Kesā-xa tçhi-lio-tsə tũŋçi mesā-lio-tsə xui-tsə le-lio.*
          market-to go-to-past-converb thing purchase-past-converb return-
          converb come-past

Uyghur   *Bazar-γa tʃīq-ip nerse-ler-ni elip qajt-ip kel-d-im.*
          market to go-out-converb things (Obj) buy-converb return-con-
          verb come-past-I

Mandarin *Shangjie qu mai le dongxi jiu huilai le.*
          market go out buy past thing then return-come past

The equivalent use of converbs in Hezhou and Uyghur contrasts with
the Mandarin structure. Uyghur: *setiwelip* = *setip elip* 'sell-converb-
take-converb'.

The Hezhou verb *si* 'to say' in the Hezhou converb form *si-tsə* mir-
rors the Uyghur *dep* (= intention, 'in order to'). Examples with *si*:

'He says (or said) he has (or had) no time today.'

Hezhou   *Tha jiŋkətsi mə kũŋfu si(-lio).*
          he today not time say

Uyghur   *U bügün waxt-im joq dej-d-u.*
          he today time-my there-is-not say-past-he

Mandarin *Ta shuo ta jintian meiyou gongfu.*
          he say he today there-is-not time

The identical Hezhou and Uyghur sentence structures and word orders
contrast with the Mandarin.

'He went out (intending) to buy a book.'

Hezhou   *Su me-li si-tsə tshu-tçhi-lio.*
          book buy-intention say-converb go-out-go-to-past

Uyghur   *Kitap al-i-men dep tʃiq-t-i.*
          book buy-intention-say-converb go-out-past-he

Mandarin *Ta chuqu mai shu le.*
          he go-out-go-to buy book past

The structure and word order are equivalent in Hezhou and Uyghur and contrast with Mandarin. Uyghur *al-i-men* indicates a close future sense and intention. Hezhou go-out-go-to mirrors the Chinese lexical usage.

Uyghur verbal nouns in *-iʃ* are mirrored in Hezhou by the verbal noun marker *-ti* which is probably derived from Mandarin *de*. The Uyghur necessity marker *kerek* in its various functions (positive, negative, interrogative) has mirroring Hezhou equivalents, i.e. Uyghur positive: verbal noun *-iʃ* + *kerek* = Hezhou verbal noun *-ti* + *joli*. The Uyghur negative: verbal noun *-iʃ* + *kerek emes* = Hezhou verbal noun *-ti* + *pujo*, and the Uyghur interrogative: verbal noun *-iʃ* + *kerek-mu* = Hezhou verbal noun *-ti* + *jola*. Examples:

'Is it necessary to go to hospital?'

Hezhou   *Jiüë-li tçhi-ti jola?*
          hospital-inside go-to-verbal noun necessity-interrogative

Uyghur   *Doxturxani-ɤa ber-iʃ kerek-mu?*
          hospital-to go-verbal noun necessity-interrogative

Mandarin *Yaobuyao shang yiyuan?*
          need-not-need go hospital

The structure and word order are equivalent in Hezhou and Uyghur and contrast with Mandarin.

'It is necessary to go to hospital.'

Hezhou   *Jiüë tçhi-ti joli.*
          hospital-inside go-to-verbal noun necessity-positive

Uyghur   *Doxturxani-xa ber-iʃ kerek.*
            hospital-to go-verbal noun necessity-positive

Mandarin   *Yao shang yiyuan.*
            necessary go hospital

Structural and word order contrast as above.

            'It is not necessary to go to hospital.'

Hezhou   *Jiüē-li tçhi-ti pujo.*
            hospital-inside go-to-verbal noun necessity-negative

Uyghur   *Doxturxane-xa ber-iʃ kerek emes.*
            hospital-to go-verbal noun necessity-negative

Mandarin   *Bu yong shang yiyuan.*
            not need go hospital

The structural and word order contrast is again as above.

The examples given above show clearly that the Hezhou language, which superficially appears to be Chinese, has distinctly Altaic, especially Turkic, general grammatical and structural characteristics, though there is little formal agreement. Had Hezhou been originally Chinese, it would probably have Turkic loanwords, tonally and otherwise correct Chinese words and more formal Turkic grammatical forms as loans. A situation like this happened with the Tangwang creole in which the originally Chinese speakers kept much of their tonally and semantically correct Chinese vocabulary but adopted much of the Mongolian Santa (or Dongxiang) grammar, though much of it incorrectly. In Hezhou the situation is different: Tonally and, in cases, semantically and otherwise incorrect Chinese vocabulary has been superimposed upon a correct Altaic Turkic structure and word order, with formally Chinese elements divested of their tones and functions and re-employed to mirror elements of Turkic structure in a rudimentary way. It seems therefore plausible to assume that ancestral Hezhou developed as a simplified trade and intercommunication language between speakers of an originally Turkic language (Salar and / or Uyghur) and Chinese speakers at the western end of the involvement of

the latter in the Silk Road trade. The Turkic speakers appear to have attempted to acquire as much Chinese vocabulary as possible, while preserving much of the Turkic grammatical features, expressing them through Turkic syntactic principles, and in part through Turkic elements, and partly through Chinese-looking syllables used as suffixes and elements with Turkic functions.

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