

The 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium and its Contributions to the
Turkic Alphabet Reform

by

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Dedicated to
Bedii & Nezahat Altuđ
David 'Punk' & Jonice Hayes

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“Ađacı ayakta tutan kkleridir.”

Writing has changed the world. This is undeniable, yet we must recognize that we not only speak of the beauty of Shakespeare's sonnets, but more importantly the ability to visually¹ record the spoken word beyond the memory of the speaker and in doing so preserve ideas for decades to come. This thesis will only discuss the latter of the two types of writing. The object of this paper is to determine the contributions of the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabet Symposium to the establishment of the Turkic Alphabet Reform. In the introduction to his book, the *Worlds Writing Systems*, Peter T. Daniels says that "Humankind is defined by language; but civilization is defined by writing" (Daniels 1996:1), summing up the contemporary view that the power of writing is the only thing to successfully evolve humans from our uncivilized state. However, this begs the question: are 'other' writing systems any more or less civilized? And what does this mean for oral traditions²?

While these Orientalist thoughts are the extreme, they nevertheless represent how "as the most visible items of a language, scripts and orthographies are 'emotionally loaded', indicating as they do group loyalties and identities. Rather than being mere instruments of a practical nature, they are symbolic systems of great social significance which may, moreover, have profound effect on the social structure of a speech community" (Coulmas 1989:2). As such, it becomes a political, or otherwise tactical decision to choose one way of writing over another. Once one has decided to write, instead of asking ourselves 'what should I write?' the questions becomes 'how should I write?'

This paper examines a symposium on script selection that was realized with the participation of the six independent Turkic nations; Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

¹ This is with the exception of non-visual writing systems such as Braille.

² Sharing a common Turkic heritage, many of the Turkic peoples have preserved elements of the strong foundation in oral tradition.

Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The scripts that were employed to record Turkic Languages vary throughout history. However, some of the most important choices with wide ranging impact have been made during the last century. The earliest and more popular among these is the Turkish Alphabet Reform of 1928 (Lewis 2002: 63). Less known are the alphabet reform debates in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. While this paper had initially intended to reveal the debates surrounding Turkic alphabets, it has organically evolved into a representation of a struggle to consciously create an ‘emotionally loaded’ alphabet to represent a common Turkic identity, unified or not. This is still to this day an ongoing struggle that on some fronts may frankly be considered a complete failure. (Kellner-Heinkele 2012: 209)

This paper will first review the proceedings of a symposium focused on the future of Turkic alphabets, or the contemporary Turkic Alphabet reform, which was held at Marmara University in Istanbul in 1991 shortly after the independence of the post-Soviet Turkic states. Although the 1991 symposium signifies a turn, several other significant gatherings precede and follow this particular symposium contributing to the discussions surrounding the history of Turkic writing systems. After discussing the contributions of each panel that took place during the symposium gathering, we will proceed to survey the contemporary Turkic alphabets and the events leading up to their latest implementation.

Background

Linguists and historians have largely laid claim to the study of writing, via the considerably independent field of philology (Daniels 1996:1). In his 1952 publication *A Study of Writing* Ignace Gelb coined the term *grammatology* as being the study of writing systems and the symbols and characters made up these system. A large portion of this paper will take a

grammatological approach to the Turkic writing systems. For the purposes of this paper it is important to take note of several key terms to be used through the text. First and foremost, a *writing system*: “a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer” (Daniels 1996:3). While *script* is commonly used interchangeably with *writing system* (Daniels 1996, Campbell 1997, Landau 2001, Kellner-Heinkele 2012), a distinction is made in this paper in that a *script* does not have any rules for ‘recovery’, but is rather a collection of the ‘permanent marks’ of a common heritage ‘used to represent an utterance’. An *alphabet* on the other hand is language specific, in that it uses symbols from the *script* pool of characters to be used in its own set of rule as required by the language it represents³.

Beyond the Latin script, this paper will also reference the Cyrillic Script, Arabic Script, and Orkhon Script. While reading this text it is important to make note that while the Arabic *writing system*, with its distinct rules does not use an *alphabet* based off of the Arabic script, but rather a consonantary, or *abjad*⁴ (Daniels 1996:4). The Uygur alphabet is an example of a phonetic *alphabet* based on the Arabic consonantal *abjad*. Peter T. Daniels *The World's Writing Systems* on the other hand is an extensive reference that should answer any question one might have regarding orthography and grammatology⁵.

³ An example of these distinctions can be illustrated by the English letter ‘y’, which is a consonant letter of the English Latin Alphabet, which is a character from the Latin script, which is also used by other language alphabets based on the Latin script as a vowel. As such, it is the ‘rules’ of the English alphabet, not the language, that determines the use of the Latin script symbol ‘y’ as a consonant rather than a vowel.

⁴ Unlike an *alphabet*, characters of an *abjad* traditionally represent only consonants. In recent years, alterations have been made to *abjads* to more accurately represent the written language through the use of diacritics over the consonants. (Daniels 1996:5)

⁵ For a less extensive introduction to the writing systems see *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writing Systems* by Florian Coulmas and as a pocket reference George Campbell’s *Hand book of Scripts*.

Hatice Şirin User's *Başlangıcından Günümüze Türk Yazı Sistemleri* is a comprehensive source on the history of all writing systems used by the Turkic peoples. However, for the more contemporary history on the post-soviet Turkic nations, Barbara Kellner-Heinkele and Jacob M. Landau in *Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States* and *Language Politics in Contemporary Central Asia*, in addition to the history offer statistical data for a greater grasp on the political, economic and ethnological environment throughout the last two centuries. *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* by Geoffrey Lewis has dedicated a chapter to the alphabet reform in Turkey. As evident from the publications of Kellner-Heinkele, Landau and Lewis, alphabet reform and language policies are almost inseparable. As such, Huttenbach's *Soviet Nationality Policy*, Grenoble's *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* and Ricento's *An Introduction to Language Policies* are general references to the foundation language policy making.

By deconstructing the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium and categorizing its individual arguments for each of the Turkic language branches, this papers contribution finds itself between the fields of grammatology, international studies and historical linguistics. As an interdisciplinary work on the Turkic peoples, its strongest contribution will be to the field of Turkology.

The 1991 Symposium

Over the years academicians, government officials and other concerned community members have been vocal at many meetings and other such gatherings concerning Turkic languages and planning policies. However, the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium is the first recorded meeting of Turkic peoples dedicated exclusively to the cause of alphabet reform. During this symposium a plethora of issues were raised regarding

the state of the 1991 Turkic writing systems, the political and economic ramifications of writing systems change, and finally the aesthetic details surrounding the proposed ‘Common Turkic Alphabet’.

We are indebted to Nadir Devlet and his team for recording and publishing the Symposium’s proceedings. In hopes to shed more light on this rare piece of recorded history, we will review the comments and assessments of the Symposium’s participants.

As described by Devlet, the symposium “was organized with the intention of receiving the thoughts and recommendations of the respective representatives from the different Turkic branches on the Turkic Alphabets”⁶ (Devlet 1992:i). While an official concluding statement was published at the completion of the symposium, many ‘thoughts and recommendations’ regarding the political and economic ramifications of the Turkic writing systems reform were left ‘untold’ to the public. In an attempt to reveal those words that were left untold to the public through popular media, we will first discuss the structure in which the symposium took place, followed by a discussion of the arguments proposed by the attendees. However, before proceeding, it is important to note the Turkic languages represented by the participants in the symposium.

While considering the symposiums representation of the Turkic speaking world, it is important to note that among 27 participants 13 different Turkic languages were represented during the symposium. Out of the greater six Turkic language branches classified by Lars Johanson in his *The Turkic Languages*, only four branches were represented at the symposium: the Kipchak (North-Western) branch, Kazak & Kyrgyz, the Oghuz (South-Western) branch

⁶ “...değişik Türk boylarına mensup temsilcilerin [Türk Alfabeleri] hakkındaki görüşlerini ve önerilerini almak amacıyla düzenlenmişti” (Devlet 1992:i).

(Azeri, Turkmen, Gagauz, Anatolian), the Uyghur (South-Eastern) branch (Uzbek, Uygur) and the Oghur (or Bulghar) Turkic branch.

The published manuscript of the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium can be divided into two distinct categories: the first being the symposium's proceedings as transcribed from recordings of the symposium, whereas the second category contains additional content and comments added by Nadir Devlet. The additional content includes a Preface, a list of participants, a collection of telegraphs sent to the Symposium and finally a selection of three press articles about the Symposium. With the exception of the three press articles, included at the end of the text, all the additional content matter was printed in the seven pages (pg.I, pg. 1-6) preceding the symposium proceedings.

The Symposium proceedings themselves were structured in three distinct categories: a) Introduction, b) Discussions/Presentations, c) Conclusion. The first category includes introduction speeches by Prof. Dr. Orhan Oğuz (Marmara University President) Prof. Dr. İnci Enginün (Principle of the hosting Turkic Research Institute of Marmara University) and Doç. Dr. Nadir Devlet (Symposium Secretary), none of these persons mentioned were vocal participants of the symposium's discussions/presentations and conclusion.

Four discussion groups were established during the symposium, dividing the representatives into groups by their respective language branch (as noted above) and geographic distribution. The first group of speakers represented the Northern & Western Kipchak Turkic language branch⁷ and the Oghur⁸ branch, the second group of speakers were of the Oghuz⁹

⁷ Tatar, Bashkir, Crimean Tatar, Karachay-Balkar

⁸ Chuvash

⁹ Azeri, Turkmen, Gagauz, Anatolian Turkish

Turkic language branch, the third group of speakers represented the Uyghur¹⁰ Turkic language branch and the final group were speakers of the Southern Kipchak¹¹ Turkic language branch. Whether or not this grouping was intentional was never addressed throughout the symposium proceedings. The reasoning behind the distinction between the North & West Kipchak versus Southern Kipchak may have been due to the international recognition of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as independent republics following the collapse of the Soviet Union; whereas (North & West Kipchak branch) Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash, Crimean Tatar, Karachay-Balkar speakers did not have their own independent republics.

Returning to the symposium proceedings, each discussion group was led by a Turkish ‘chairperson’ [oturum başkanı] with participants ranging from 4 to 9 representatives. The largest number of participants representing a single Turkic people were Azeri (4) and Kazakh (4), followed by Kyrgyz (3) and Turkmen (3), then Uzbek (2) and Bashkir (2). All remaining Turkic peoples were represented by a single participant including the host country, Turkey. This count however does not include the 4 Turkish ‘chairpersons’ heading each group discussion. With the exception of the first discussion group, which later opened up to a symposium-wide debate, all discussions were isolated to the assigned group members. Following the “Discussions” were the “Presentations” of the proposed Latin alphabet projects. While transcriptions of the presentations are not available in the publication, eight pages are dedicated to the proposed alphabet tables. A summary of the symposium discussions and presentations are available in the following section.

Following the *Presentations* is the *Conclusion* section of the publication, consisting of the ‘Decision Meeting’ summing up the symposium, ‘Closing Speeches’ mainly comprising of

¹⁰ Uzbek and Modern Uyghur

¹¹ Kazak & Kyrgyz

gracious formalities and, finally, the ‘Conclusion Report’. The most significant of these is the ‘Conclusion Report’ containing a summary of all the decisions made during the symposium and the signature of each participant in affirmation. For more detail, a translation of six articles of the ‘Conclusion Report’ is given below;

- 1) The scholars from the various Turkic regions present at the symposium stressed that nearly every Turkic ethnic group has raised the idea of returning to the Latin letters. The participants of our symposium have voted on, approved and accepted these thoughts.
- 2) The symposium [participants] desire that the Latin based Azerbaijan Turkic alphabet discussed in the Azerbaijan parliament be approved immediately.
- 3) The scholars participating in the symposium have agreed on the principle that identical letters in the Latin alphabet must represent the same sound.
- 4) The symposium [participants] through vote have agreed that the acceptance of the Latin based alphabet among the other Turkic peoples is the most important element in enhancing cultural unity and mutual understanding among Turkic peoples.
- 5) The symposium recommends that the Latin based alphabet presented below prevail among the Turkic peoples.

a	b	c	ç	d	e	ä
f	g	ğ	h	x	ı	i
j	k	q	l	m	n	ñ
o	ö	p	r	s	ş	t
u	ü	v	w	y	z	

- 6) It is recommended that the scholarly decisions made at this symposium be relayed to the proper authorities.

While the ‘Conclusion Report’ attempts to summarize the numerous discussions that took place during the Symposium proceedings, there are many important issues that were raised concerning both political and economic issues, while even more numerous are the aesthetic concerns regarding proper orthographic representation of all of the Turkic languages.

Topics of Discussion

Numerous arguments are presented throughout the symposium proceedings, however each of these arguments can be categorized under four separate titles, with arguments for and against each: Common Alphabet arguments, Scripts argument, Aesthetic/Phonetic arguments and finally Political/Economic arguments.

The Common Alphabet argument shows itself in all of the other three categories, with historical roots in religious, political and economic debates over distinguishing written and linguistic features. The Pan-Turkism threat to the Soviet unity was visually represented by a common Turkic alphabet, demonstrating solidarity in an identity other than the ‘Soviet Man’ (Huttenbach 1990:74)¹². While the symposium was organized to consider all options, it became very clear that the desire for a unifying alphabet becomes the precedence of the symposium (Devlet 1992:23, 32, 39).

However, the unification of alphabets is also projected by some to be a threat to the distinguishing features between the Turkic peoples (Devlet 1992:33). Furthermore, the idea of a common Turkic Alphabet idea is found to be accompanied by a more comprehensive desire of unification under a Unified Turkic Language (Devlet 1992:27). Though it is very clear that this idea is not shared by the majority of participants and the erosion of differences in order to achieve unity is vocally opposed (Devlet 1992:33). A comparison to this proposal is the collective decision to replace one common identity, Soviet, with Turkic. For some this is a simple decision of shedding off a manufactured identity for a more organic one (Devlet

¹² *Homo sovieticus*

1992:30), while to others this ‘unity’ would strip them of their independent identities (Devlet 1992:33).

Proposed Scripts

While a majority of the arguments presented throughout the symposium lean towards the establishment of a ‘Unified Turkic Alphabet’ based on the Latin script (Devlet 1992:22, 35, 43, 49), several scholars present alternative scripts considered in communities across the Turkic world. First and foremost among these alternative script proposals is the continued use of a Cyrillic based alphabet (Devlet 1992:25), followed by the argument to return to a writing system based on the Arabic script (Devlet 1992:31) and finally, the revival of the Old Turkic Orkhun script (Devlet 1992:34).

The debate on the use of Latin characters for the new Turkic scripts, as mentioned in the symposium ‘Conclusion Report’ (Devlet 1992: 67), dominated a majority of the symposium’s discussions. One reason to support the use of the Latin script was its dominance in the field of technology (Devlet 1992:23). Furthermore, as proposed by Prof. Talmas M. Garipov of Ufa, “the Latin Letters being used by 1/3rd of humanity is the widest spread alphabet”¹³ (Devlet 1992:24). As such, it is proposed by symposium representatives Garipov, Konkobaev and Husainov that all the Turkic peoples switch to the Latin Script to welcome the modernization of the Turkic peoples with the exchange of information through the medium of the Latin Script. Similar reasoning was expressed among scholars and the educated elite, more notably by those who spoke a language and were literate in a Latin alphabet. This legitimate argument in favor of Latinization was however quickly countered with a reminder that the majority of the Turkic population is not part

¹³ “*Latin Harfleri insanîyetin üçte birinden fazlası tarafından kullanılan en yaygın alfabesidir*” Devlet 1992:24)

of the 'educated elite' (Devlet 1992:29). Another strong argument in favor of Latinization is the process of 'de-russification' (Devlet 1992:23). This proposal suggests that by granting public access to resources outside of the Russian sphere of influence, namely Western or Turkish books, journals and newspapers, the 'de-russification' process would be accelerated.

Further arguments in support of the use of Latin script were that a Latin alphabet had previously been introduced to a majority of Turkic peoples in waves between 1920 and 1935, and that as such a literate majority who were educated in those years were already familiar with the script (Devlet 1992:39). Arguments against the use of these former Soviet Latin scripts were embedded in the belief that these alphabets inaccurately represented the Turkic languages (Devlet 1992:27, 39). As such, further research and development would have to be funded in order to 'adapt' the alphabets (Devlet 1992:28).

The arguments supporting the continued use of Cyrillic alphabets were similar with regards to those of Latin in that a majority of literate Turkic speakers were already literate in Cyrillic (Devlet 1992:43). An additional argument running parallel to the concerns of the Latin script supporters is that the various Cyrillic alphabets used throughout the Soviet Union among the individual Turkic languages did not accurately portray the spoken language. Furthermore, the long term use of these 'inaccurate alphabets' are believed to have resulted in further differentiation among the Turkic languages (Devlet 1992:39). Additionally, symposium participant Husainov reminds the symposium participant that a large number of Kazakh literature is preserved only in the Cyrillic script (Devlet 1992:34), and as such transliteration of these works is an extremely costly yet essential part of reform if Cyrillic is not retained. However, the symposium participants recognized that retaining a Cyrillic based script would keep its users in

the Russian sphere of influence (Devlet 1992:43) while on the other hand isolating the readership from the Latin writing world (Devlet 1992:23).

Advocates for an Arabic script based writing system approach the matter from a historic, literary and political approach. The historic proponents point out that prior to the official switch to Latin based writing systems, many of the Muslim Turkic peoples had an established Arabic based writing system (Devlet 1992:44). The literary proponents of these proceed further by stating that returning to these older Arabic based writing systems will open up collections of literary works (Devlet 1992:45)¹⁴. The political arguments for switching to the Arabic script demonstrate a lenience towards the Islamic sphere of influence, including Persian, Arab and Pakistani political ties (Devlet 1992:46). At the time of the symposium, the threat of Islamic extremism placed the Islamic world in opposition to the ‘modern Western world’ (Devlet 1992:47). A proposed counter to the Arabization argument is that the Arabic script are the oldest characters still used among the Turkic people and therefore are most difficult to revive interest (Devlet 1992:46). Furthermore, parallel to the Cyrillic counter-argument is the concern of Turkic isolation as a result of switching to a less global script (Devlet 1992:47).

The proposal of the Orkhon script¹⁵ stands out among the other three scripts as it is a representation of a pre-Islamic and uniquely Turkic writing system with no political ties or symbolic gestures of allegiance to any sphere of influence other than that of the Turkic peoples themselves. During the symposium Husainov, Aliev and Kacibekov remind the symposium participants that support for an Orkhon script does exist among the Turkic speaking population

¹⁴ A majority of these work are written in Chagatai language and its modern dialects, Uzbek and Uyghur

¹⁵ While alterations are considered to adapt the Orkhun script to the rules of an alphabet writing system, traditional Orkhun is not an alphabet and as such is referred to in this text as a script or writing system, due to its more complex rule structure.

(Devlet 1992:34, 37). Kacibekov further argues that while the Latin alphabet is a short term solution to alphabet reform and unification, ultimately all Turkic peoples must switch to the Orkhon script (Devlet 1992:49). One counter to this is that the research and development required to implement such a script does pose a challenge to adopting Orkhon. Furthermore, while the Orkhon script could potentially create a uniquely Turkic signifier by uniting the Turkic peoples under an otherwise dead writing system, it would start a process of Turkic isolation from the rest of the world (Devlet 1992:47).

Arguments for and against the use of one letter and/or diacritic marker to distinguish phonetic features are referred to as ‘Aesthetic’ arguments. This is because while many of the presented arguments are strongly supported by examples of the failures and successes’ of letters and/or diacritic markers (Devlet 1992: 51), it is the opinion of this author that impartial decisions on diacritic markers are rare and that every suggestion exhibits elements of the symposium attendee’s personal aesthetic taste.

A majority of the proposed aesthetic changes revolve around the rich vowel inventory found in Turkic languages. As noted by symposium participants Celilov, Garipov and Musaev, the number of vowel sounds found in a single Turkic language varies (Devlet 1992: 25, 39, 51). As such, in the case of a Universal Turkic Alphabet, every individual vowel sound present in a Turkic language vowel inventory would require its own symbol. Furthermore, as noted by Musaev (Devlet 1992:49) the phenomena known as ‘Vowel Harmony’ adds a unique spin to the debate. The Orkhon script distinguished its consonants by the [\pm back] and [\pm front] phonological features (Daniels 1996: 537). As a result of ‘Vowel Harmony’, the number of characters required to represent vowel phonemes are potentially reduced. The consequence of this however would be

a two fold increase in the number of consonants characters. Regardless, the symposium came to no consensus on what diacritic would be used to denote the ‘umlaut’ counterpart of vowels.

The second greatest concern regarding the vowel characters was that every character should represent a single vowel sound (Devlet 1992: 25, 40, 51). This is mainly spurred by the fact that the Soviet implemented alphabets did not follow this rule (Devlet 1992: 51). However, this issue is not unique to Soviet Latin and Cyrillic alphabet reforms. The Turkish Latin Alphabet also possesses this flaw in the distinction between /ɛ/ and /æ/ both represented by the letter ‘e’¹⁶. Furthermore, the case of distinguishing long vowel sounds from short vowel sounds was raised by Garipov (Devlet 1992: 26). However, as this phenomena is sporadically found throughout the Turkic languages, no lengthy discussion took place. A popular solution to this issue is the doubling of vowels (i.e. aa, ee, uu) (Daniels 1996:345).

Issues regarding consonants were also raised by the Kazakh language representative Musaev, where he notes the lack of orthographic distinction between [front] vs [back] ‘k’ and ‘q’ sounds (Devlet 1992:51). This issue, while occasionally represented in the Soviet Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, is not represented in the Turkish Latin Alphabet regardless of its phonetic distinction in certain dialects. As such, the solution is once again proposed to ensure that every phoneme correlates to a single letter. Another question raised was whether or not the Russian consonant clusters; ‘ts’ and ‘shch’ and Russian syllables; ‘yo’, ‘yo’ and ‘ya’ should remain part of the alphabets.

Comparable to the aesthetic arguments presented above, the evidence presented by symposium participants in favor of political arguments also exhibit signs of the symposium

¹⁶ Ex. Turkish *ben* ‘me / I’ vs *benim* ‘mine’ transcribed in IPA as /ben/ and /bænɪm/

participants 'taste', or political leanings. As such, 'Russophones' created as a result of strategic implementation of Cyrillic based alphabets (Devlet 1992:52) will lean towards Cyrillic, while Islamists are more likely to be proponents for the Arabic based script (Devlet 1992: 46). It is also important to reiterate the previous statement regarding 'de-russification', where concerned parties openly state that they would rather switch to Arabic or Latin (Devlet 1992: 50). While economic reasoning on the other hand seem to be clouded by political agendas, concerns for the cost of printing presses, keyboards (Devlet 1992: 51), textbooks (Devlet 1992: 47), traffic signs are quite real (Landau 2001:7). We must remind ourselves here that the participants of the symposium were not approved government representatives, and as such are not expected to have access to definitive data on financial limitations on policies.

Beyond these primary concerns, the symposium gathering is in itself another sign of Turkic solidarity and is further expressed through the participants shared concern for the other Turkic groups not represented in the symposium proceedings. The most frequent noted of these underrepresented Turkic groups are the Ahiska Turks, Uyghurs of China and the Karaim (Devlet 1992:50)¹⁷. Additionally many of the representatives point out the unofficial capacity in which they gathered and the lack of political power possessed by the participants to implement the Symposium decisions upon the return to their constituents (Devlet 1992: 67). The 'Conclusion Summary' article 6 addresses this concern. Furthermore, shortly after the symposium formal government meetings would be hosted in Turkey to discuss the alphabet reform prospects in an official capacity.

¹⁷ A Turkic people of Jewish belief using a Hebrew based script.

Other Meetings and Movements

As previously mentioned, the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium is the first of its kind to exclusively discuss the matter of alphabet reform collectively among the Turkic peoples. The issue of alphabet reform is much older however and had already been a stirring concern among Ottoman elites in the second half of the 19th century (User 2006: 101). On the other hand, early activism to unify the Turkic people under a common writing system and language is attributed to the Crimean-Tatar Ismail Gaspirali (1851-1914)¹⁸ and his newspaper *Tercüman* (Saray 2008: 28, Landau 1995: 9)¹⁹. Equally, the 1926 Baku Turkology Conference and the 16th Communist Party Congress in 1930 are key turning points in the history of Turkic alphabets as the prior is crucial to the first Latinization of the Soviet Turkic alphabets, while the latter was essentially the start of Cyrillicization.

Gaspirali İsmail Bey himself was not the founder of the Pan-Turkism ideology (Hostler 1957:120), however Gaspirali's journalism spread the creed among the intellectual Turkic elite and their constituents through his publication of *Tercüman* (Kirimer 1934: 61, Saray 2008: 28). More important than his Pan-Turkist ideas is Gaspirali's advocacy for a common Turkic language²⁰, as part of his *usul-i cedid* curriculum reform and the subsequent common alphabet (Landau 1991:10). While Gaspirali's common Turkic language and alphabet did not take hold among the Turkic speaking population, his journalism nevertheless fueled the Russian Empire's

¹⁸ He was also known as Gaspiralı İsmail Bey or by his Russified surname Gasprinskii.

¹⁹ *Tercüman* promoted Turkic unity under the slogan *Dilde, Fikirde, İşte Birlik* "Unity in language, thought, and work"

²⁰ Landau refers to Gaspirali's common Turkic language as being a 'High Turkish[sic]' (in the vain of 'High German'), essentially a hybrid of Ottoman Turkish and Crimean-Tatar with the exception of Arabic, Persian and Russian loanwords.

and subsequently the Soviet fear of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism for many decades to come (Saray 2008:34).

By the early 1920's Latinization of those Turkic peoples using Arabic script was considered viable amidst the Turkic elite and the newly established Soviet central government (User 2006: 116). Consequently in 1924 a Latin alphabet had already been recognized as the official alphabet among the Azeri Turks by the time the official decision to Latinize the Turkic people's writing systems had been made at the 1926 Baku Turkology Conference²¹ (Fierman 1991:97). During the Baku Conference Bekir Çobanzade had been the strong proponent of Latinization while criticizing the preservation of the 'insufficient' Arabic script solely for the religious value among the Islamic world (Castagné 1926: 45). Similar to 'Concluding Report' of the 1991 Symposium presented above, the following 'Concluding report' was published shortly after the 1926 Baku Conference:

Upon comparing the Latin and Arabic letters the following are remarks in favor of the Latin alphabet;

1. As the letters are written separately they are easier to teach with the phonetic method; however pedagogues now reject this method.
2. The printing press techniques established in the Latin alphabet are superior.
3. Sentences begin with capital letters. However as those who use the Arabic writing system will know, the absence of capital letters are barely sensed.
4. The orientation of sentence lines will be synchronized with that of musical notation and mathematics.
5. To establish a common letter system with America, Europe and Esperanto.

Those remarks in favor of the Arabic script are as follows:

1. The Arabic letters are more conveniently read and written.
2. Due to their stenographic feature they are written faster than Latin letters.

²¹ This time period also coincides with the years of Turkish Soviet friendship, where Soviet financial support jumpstarted the newly founded Republic of Turkey.

3. While the printing press techniques for the older form of Arabic letters is excessively difficult, the presses and print houses for the improved form of the letters have proved to be more accessible and convenient than the Latin system.
4. From the perspective of literacy education the Arabic letters are the easiest.
5. The Arabic alphabet is common among ninety percent of the Turkic tribes.

(User 2006: 117)

This ‘Conclusion report’, while focusing only on the Arabic and Latin scripts, demonstrates that similar concerns were occurring in dialogues sixty five years prior to the Central Asian Turkic independence and the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium; Specifically, the desire to have a common Turkic alphabet, the concerns regarding modernization, the cost/benefit value of scripts reform, concerns regarding political spheres of influence, and finally the identity rendered by the use of a common script.

It is relevant to note that the Turkic Latin alphabets employed after the 1926 Baku Conference were not identical and it was not until 1930 that a Unified Turkic Latin Alphabet was established (Devlet 2005: 402)²². 1937 marks a significant year for the established literary Uzbek written language, which had traditionally been based on the Fergana Uzbek dialect, was replaced by the Tashkent written standard (Wurm 1954: 13)²³. This is noteworthy in that the change in the Uzbek written dialect exemplifies some of the early Soviet attempts at the deconstruction of the Turkic identity through writing²⁴, creating the theoretical identity and cultural vacuum which would make way for Russifying Cyrillicization policies (Grenoble 2003:56).

²² Similar to that used in Turkey. This alphabet is claimed to be much more representative of the Turkic Language sounds and does not demonstrate orthographic variance in the alphabets distribution among the various Turkic speaking groups.

²³ The decision to do so has been discussed in detail in Prof. Ilse Cirtautas’ 2013 paper on Nicholas Poppe’s recollections of the 1929 Samarkand Conference where the new written Uzbek dialect decision had been made.

²⁴ As noted early, this follows the timeline of the waning Russian – Turkish friendship prior to the cold war.

Another significant gathering in the history of Turkic writing systems is the 16th Communist Party Congress in 1930, where the Soviet central government declared that “the national cultures will merge to a common language and culture” and consequently Russian culture and language became synonymous with the Soviet ‘common language and culture’ (User 2006: 151). The official Cyrillicization among the Soviet Turkic peoples however did not come to pass until 1939-1940 (User 2006:153, Landau 2001).²⁵ Once again we find that the introduction of a new writing system among the Turkic peoples is used to unify the Turkic peoples under a ‘common’ script, yet simultaneously establishing a common ‘written’ link to the Russian cultural and language sphere with the ‘common rule’ of spelling (Grenoble 2003:57). However Cyrillicization at this time also recreates the isolation of the Turkic people from the Latin based ‘Western world’ while additionally dividing the Soviet Turkic Republics, not only from independent Turkey, but also from one another.²⁶

Whereas the alphabet reform assemblies listed above precede the November 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium, the assemblies listed below follow the 1991 symposium. As previously discussed, the most obvious weakness of the 1991 symposium is that its participants lacked political power to implement the symposium decisions upon the return to their respective constituents. On June 19th 1992 government officials from the six independent Turkic nations gathered in Istanbul for the first time to discuss a common alphabet. Additionally a second gathering of government officials, including representatives from the autonomous Turkic states, took place in Ankara in March of 1993 where a resolution

²⁵ Cyrillicization was implemented in 1939 among the Azeri, Tatar, Yakut, Hakas; in 1940 among the Kazak, Kyrgyz, Bashkor, Karakalpak, Uzbek; in 1943 among the Tuvan; and in 1957 among the Gagauz.(User 2006:153)

²⁶ This Cyrillic division between the Soviet Turkic States was established by introducing Cyrillic alphabets with vowel and/or consonant inconsistencies between the different Turkic languages, making it much more difficult to understand the ‘nearly’ mutually intelligible Turkic ‘dialect’. (Landau 2001: 63; Grenoble 2003:56; Daniels 1996: 707-715)

was drafted urging Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to officially adopt a revised version of the alphabet published in the 1991 Symposium Report (Landau 2001:128). The following points summarize the drafted resolution from the 22-26 September 1993 Ankara gathering;

- “- The most appropriate writing system for the languages and dialects of the Turkic group is one based on the Latin alphabet. Within the framework of a common alphabet, the Turkish[sic]²⁷-language republics and autonomous republics can apply an appropriate Latin-based alphabet to their languages.
- The National Assemblies of the Republics of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan have decided to change over to the Latin alphabet. Moreover, Azerbaijan has already started to implement a Latin-based alphabet.
- Conference members from Bashkortostan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tatarstan reported that – for political and economic reasons – they may delay the change to the Latin-based writing system. However, they expressed the strong hope that these countries would follow the same path in the near future.
- The increase in number of words and technical terms, same or similar in the written or spoken languages of the Turkic languages of the Turkic-language countries, will strengthen communication and mutual understanding.”

(Landau 2001:129)

This was the final gathering of government officials dedicated to the matter of alphabet reform. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of a unified Turkic alphabet among the summary listed above, and furthermore no detailed orthographic guidelines. Whether or not this implies a loss of interest in a unifying Turkic script per se is unclear. Intrinsically, we find that the most direct evidence for any such interest lies in the actions of the Turkic peoples themselves.

²⁷ The proper name of the language family being Turkic, not Turkish. This is a common mistake, possibly a result of the non-existing distinction in colloquial Turkish *Türkçe*, the language of the people in Turkey and *Türkçe* the language family of all Turkic languages.

Developments since 1991

Formative years of economic and cultural development in the newly independent Turkic states followed the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium. In these years the former Soviet Independent Nations set to the task to rebuild their nations and cultural identities. Aware of the important unifying and divisive properties of an alphabet (Landau 2001:124) there have been delays in the implementation of the decisions made during the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium.

As mentioned above, Azerbaijan was one of the most vocal proponents of Latinization and the creation of a Latin based Common Turkic Alphabet. Subsequently Azerbaijan was the first of the five ex-Soviet Turkic republics to introduce a Latin based alphabet as affirmed by parliament on December 25th 1991 (Landau 2001:131). The introduction of the new Latin characters began shortly after 1992 with minor alterations to the Azerbaijani alphabet taking place in 1993 (User 2006:238).

Regardless of Azerbaijan's leadership in the process of Latinization, the presidential decree enforcing the switch to the Azerbaijan Latin Alphabet came on June 18th 2001, stating that as of August 1st "no official or commercial document should contain a single character in the Cyrillic alphabet" (Kellner-Heinkele 2012:31; Devlet 2005:403).

While similar to the Latin alphabet previously introduced in the 1920's, minor alterations were introduced to the latest version of the Azerbaijan Latin Alphabet, represented below in the Table of Contemporary Turkic Alphabets. The more obvious of these alterations being the complete removal of all Cyrillic characters that had been incorporated into the earlier Azerbaijan Latin Alphabets. The one exception to this is the letter 'ə' used to distinguish between itself and

the open ‘closed’ letter ‘e’ (User 2006: 229). During the first Latinization proposed the letter ‘ä’ replaced ‘ə’, most probably for its more Latin ‘umlaut’ diacritic.²⁸

While representatives agreed to the Latinization of the Kazakh writing system in the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium, and during the subsequent official government gatherings of Turkic speaking nation in 1992 and 1993, little progress has been visible to the public. One of the primary reasons for this is the lack of public support for the Latin script, and the preference to retain the Cyrillic alphabet for its status as a *lingua franca* in the region (Grenoble 2003:59). President Nazarbayev has requested several investigations into the Latinization of the Kazakh alphabet, most notably in 2006 after visiting Turkey (Kellner-Heinkele 2012:102). Furthermore, Kellner-Heinkele lists the arguments of one of the strongest critics of Latinization at the time, Aleksandr Shustov;

- “1. It would not suit Kazakhstan, the most Russified republic in Central Asia.
2. The Russian Language was, and still is, the basis of study in Kazakhstan schools.
3. The Kazakh elites, mostly Russophones, opposed the project.
4. Kazakh works of science and literature published during the past 50 years would be lost to schoolchildren.
5. Cyrillic was still the common alphabet of all ethnic groups in the republic.
6. Latinization appeared to be a plot against the status of the Russian language.”

(Kellner-Heinkele 2012:103)

We see from Shustov’s argument that there is no concern against the orthography change, but rather the consequential effects that the script change would have on the Soviet created common russified identity and culture.

²⁸ Referring the to the dotting of ‘o’, ‘u’, and ‘a’ in German; ‘ö’, ‘ü’ and ‘ä’

With regards to alphabet reform, Kyrgyzstan is notably the least dynamic of the five ex-Soviet Turkic states. While Kyrgyz representatives were present at the 1991 Symposium and at the official government gatherings of Turkic speaking nations in 1992 and 1993, agreeing to Latinization and the potential of the Unified Turkic alphabet, no notable progress has been made. While a parliamentary debate in March of 2008 on the matter is cited by Landau and Kellner-Heinkele to be the only steps towards Latinization, Kyrgyzstan's slow economic growth and dependency on Russia are considered to be the greatest hindrances to the Latinization process (Kellner-Heinkele 2012:130).

On the other hand the Republic of Turkey's Latin alphabet remained unchanged after 1991. The weaknesses in both vowel and consonant representation in the Turkish Latin alphabet were clearly outlined during the presentation of proposed alphabets. Of the proposed changes, the most essential to the Turkish Latin alphabet is the distinction between the open and closed 'e' sound. Secondly is the proper distinction between [front] 'k' and [back] 'q' (Lewis 2002). Both of these are audible in almost every Turkish dialect. Furthermore, the Turkish representative's exclusively pro-Latin and stance on a common alphabet during the symposium proceedings and Turkey's irresponsiveness to the symposium proceedings and following governmental gathering reiterate the continued superiority complex suggested by Almas Sayhulov in regards to Ahmet Temir's insinuation of the idea of otherness among the Turkic People (Devlet 1992: 29)²⁹. This once again returns to the essential debate of identity and how the Turkish place themselves relative to the rest of the Turkic speaking world.

²⁹ Almas Şayhulov addresses this concern directly when he states "Türkiye Türkçesinin alfabesinde de bazı değişiklikler olacaktır. Çünkü sırf Türkiye Türkçesi alfabesi sizin anladığınız mânâdaki "Dış Türkler" fikrini vermeyecektir" in response to Ahmet Temir's comment about *Dış Türkler* 'Outside Turks' .

Like Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, shortly after the 1991 Turkic Alphabets Symposium, Turkmenistan promptly initiated government planning toward Latinization with a presidential decree announced April 1993 stating that Latinization would be completed by January of 1996 (Landau 2001:143). However Turkmenistan's frequent revisions in 1995, 1996, 2000 resulted in changes that were "for the sake of simplification, but the new letters complicated it even more" (Kellner-Heinkele 2012:156). Examples of such characters are the upper and lowercase '£, f'³⁰ for the commonly transcribed 'zh' sound and upper and lowercase 'Ÿ, ý' for the commonly transcribed 'zh' sound.

Uzbekistan's hunger to change from the Soviet Cyrillic alphabet is marked by the pre-independence publications of articles in the literary journal *Sharq Yulduzi* on how to read the Arabic-based alphabet (Landau 2001:135). However the 'Islamic boom' in the early 1990's lead to a weariness on the government end to support the Arabization of the Uzbek writing system (Landau 2001:135).

Uzbekistan has also been a proactive supporter of the Latinization movement across the Turkic world. Similar to the publications in support of Arabic script education, the *Sharq Yulduzi* journal began debates on the aesthetics surrounding the use of the Latin script as early as 1989 (Landau 2001:136). On September 2nd 1993 a law was passed³¹ scheduling the complete switch to a Latin based alphabet on September 1st 2000 (Kellner-Heinkele 2012:53). However, a revised version of this law in 1995 postponed the Latinization to 2005 (Landau 2001:139). Finally, it is worthy to note that unlike the minor alterations made in the Azerbaijan Latin Alphabet introduced shortly after the November 1991 symposium, the Uzbek Latin Alphabet proposed in

³⁰ First being the capitalized character.

³¹ Titled the 'Law on the Introduction of the Uzbek Alphabet based on Latin Graphics'

1993 underwent several drastic revisions in 1995 (Landau 2001:137). However, comparatively, these changes demonstrated an aggressive stance on intentions of globalization. As illustrated below in the Comparative Table of Contemporary Turkic Alphabets, the final draft of the Uzbek Latin Alphabet, in comparison with the other Turkic alphabets is much simpler in its lack of diacritic markers. Unlike the ‘umlauting’³² and ‘spiranting’³³ dots in the Azerbaijan, Turkish and Turkmenistan Latin Alphabets. Instead of multiple diacritic markers, the Uzbek Latin Alphabet employs a single diacritic marker, the apostrophe (’). As such, the Uzbek Latin Alphabet can be typed with the Standard English QWERTY keyboard and does not require a special keyboard or computer font as commonly required by other Latin alphabets.

Regardless though, with any change comes resistance, as below we will find a list of criticisms listed Kellner-Heinkele from a 2004 Uzbek publication opposing the Latinization of the Uzbek alphabet;

1. Latinization has cut cultural relations with many people who speak Turkic languages; the nationalists are to blame for this.
2. Too many vowel signs were included and subsequent changes carried out.
3. Mistakes had been made in the Latinization process.
4. Adults who could not master the new alphabet would live and die illiterate; Uzbeks have again become an illiterate nation.
5. Even the wish to withdraw from Russia and to Westernize is no justification for spending millions of dollars, encumbering studies at school, distancing oneself from the numerous Uzbeks living in the ‘Near Abroad’ (that is, in the post-Soviet space), hinder integration processes in the region, lower the cultural level and draw not only from Russia but from Turkey as well.

(Kellner-Heinkele 2012:53)

³² Illustrated by the distinguishing mark between the letter ‘u’ vs. ‘ü’ and ‘o’ vs. ‘ö’.

³³ Illustrated by the distinguishing mark between the letter ‘s’ vs ‘ş’ and ‘c’ vs. ‘ç’.

While these critiques were published in disapproval of the Latinization of the Uzbekistan alphabet, the discontent behind each comment is not unique to the Uzbek case nor to Latinization. This listed critiques simply appose change, while concurrently leaning toward the ‘Russophone’ end of the identity spectrum.

The Table of Contemporary Turkic Alphabets below include the current alphabets by the six independent Turkic Republics.

1991 Common	Azerbaijan Alphabet	Kazakhstan Alphabet	Kyrgyzstan Alphabet	Turkey Alphabet	Turkmenistan Alphabet	Uzbekistan Alphabet
A a	A a	А а	А а	A a	A a	A a
B b	B b	Б б	Б б	B b	B b	B b
C c	C c	Ж ж	Ж ж	C c	J j	J j
Ç ç	Ç ç	Ч ч	Ч ч	Ç ç	Ç ç	Ch ch
D d	D d	Д д	Д д	D d	D d	D d
E e	Ə ə	Е е	Е е	E e	E e	E e
Ä ä	E e	Ə ə	Э э	-	-	-
F f	F f	Ф ф	Ф ф	F f	F f	F f
G g	G g	Г г	Г г	G g	G g	G g
Ğ ğ	Ğ ğ	Ғ ғ	-	Ğ ğ	-	G' g'
H h	H h	Һ һ	Һ һ	H h	H h	H h
X x	X x	X x	X x	-	-	X x
I ı	I ı	Ы ы	Ы ы	I ı	Y y	-
İ i	İ i	И и	И и	İ i		I i
J j	J j	-	-	J j	Ž ž	-
K k	K k	К к	К к	K k	K k	K k
Q q	Q q	Қ қ	-	-	-	Q q
L l	L l	Л л	Л л	L l	L l	L l
M m	M m	М м	М м	M m	M m	M m
N n	N n	Н н	Н н	N n	N n	N n
Ñ ñ	-	Ң ң	Ң ң	-	Ň ň	Ng ng
O o	O o	О о	О о	O o	O o	O o
Ö ö	Ö ö	Ө ө	Ө ө	Ö ö	Ö ö	O' o'
P p	P p	П п	П п	P p	P p	P p
R r	R r	Р р	Р р	R r	R r	R r
S s	S s	С с	С с	S s	S s	S s
Ş ş	Ş ş	Ш ш	Ш ш	Ş ş	Ş ş	Sh sh
T t	T t	Т т	Т т	T t	T t	T t
U u	U u	У у	У у	U u	U u	U u
Ü ü	Ü ü	Ү ү	Ү ү	Ü ü	Ü ü	-

V v	V v	У у	В в	V v	V v	V v
W w	-	-	-	-	W w	W w
Y y	Y y	Й й	Й й	Y y	Ý ý	Y y
Z z	Z z	З з	З з	Z z	Z z	Z z
Sounds	Additional letters Representing Russian Sounds					
ts		Ц ц	Ц ц			
shch		Щ щ	Щ щ			
yu		Ю ю	Ю ю			
ya		Я я	Я я			
yo		Ё ё	Ё ё			
Hard sign		ь	ь			
Soft sign		Ь	Ь			

Data: User 2006: 296, 304, 376

Table 1. Contemporary Turkic Alphabets

Conclusion

The purpose behind the written word is to preserve and transmit the writer's message to the reader. As such, the purpose behind the written word has been to create a bridge between people through the transmitted message, but also with the medium in common. Using Ferdinand de Saussure's terms,³⁴ the alphabet is the *signifier* that *signifies* the language. Intrinsically, alterations and reform are also a part of the history of writing systems as part of a design to maintain a dynamic correlation between the diachronic changes, spoken language, and the synchronic nature of the written word. On the other hand, codification(s) have also been used to create and/or maintain a breach between the writer and the unwanted reader; the *other*. Soviet language policies have done just that.

Expanding off of Saussure we find that alphabet reforms' political value is most accurately portrayed using Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic market* and *linguistic capital*. When explaining the value of *linguistic capital* in *Language and Symbolic Power* he states that

³⁴ Sign - The sign is the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified; Signifier - The form which the sign takes; Signified - The concept it represents (Saussure 1986:67)

“all speech is produced for and through the market to which it owes its existence and its most specific properties.” (Bourdieu 1991: 76) Identical to the function of *linguistic capital*, writing systems are also a symbolic social commodity, produced and used in the social marketplace for which it exists. As such, fitting writings systems as *capital* into this model of symbolic marketplaces illustrates the fluid exchange of writing systems *capital* in competing spheres of influence.

The Turkic peoples have never really been able to commit to a script. The mobility of the nomadic history combined with the strategic geographic situation has granted the Turkic peoples a plethora of opportunities to interact with countless religions and cultures, sharing wealth and ideas throughout the ages. Just as a good horseman balances on his horse across a treacherous terrain, the Turkic peoples have adapted to the host’s and guest’s that they have encountered. This has been done by using various writing systems, enriching themselves with the linguistic/writing system *capital* to match the demands of the *symbolic market*. However, in this contemporary day and age, we find that the way in which we write raises the ‘Modern Ethnic Problem’; “Ethnicity is linked, indeed, to many focal issues of our time, such as globalization, increasing migration, multiculturalism, economic development, social relationships, contemporary nationalism (in support or in opposition), inter-communal and inter-state conflicts, terrorist activities, and the creation and promotion of diasporas” (Landau 2001:1). Prioritization of *symbolic capital* is the game of international politics.

No matter how many times a common Turkic writing system has been attempted, whether with a Runic script, a Semitic script, a Cyrillic script, or a Latin script, the Table of Contemporary Turkic Alphabets clearly demonstrates that there is no common script that unites the Turkic peoples. With respect to writings systems, the Turkic world is more divided than ever

as the complexities of the contemporary world drives politics, economics and self-preservative desires to further distinguish and categorize social groups into smaller and smaller sets. As such, the Turkic people now speak what is believed to be a greater variety of unintelligible languages than ever before and write these languages in nearly as many different methods.

This paper began as an attempt to reveal the complexities behind the Turkic peoples search through various scripts, letters and diacritics for the ideal alphabet to accurately represent the phonological and morphological features of the Turkic languages. In this respect, the 1991 International Contemporary Turkic Alphabets Symposium is a valuable resource to the enduring debates regarding script reform and common script development. However in every source cited in this thesis, the conclusion is the same; The Turkic people have failed to find this common script.

However, this paper has demonstrated that there is a constant reemergence in the attempt to unify under one alphabet and common identity. More important, however, is the repetitive collaboration that took place because of the conscious claim to a common culture, history, geography, and language. The constant and consistent attempts can be rephrased as the return to reestablish the *sign* of unity, through the *signifier* alphabet and the *signified* Turkic identity. Moreover, the 1991 Symposium is the *signifier* of Turkic identity. The Turkic peoples not present or mentioned during the symposium debates are in threat of losing their Turkic identity; by not attending, they have not grossed Turkic *symbolic capital* and thus have nothing to trade in the *symbolic marketplace* that is the Turkic world.

The Turkic peoples are only one of many examples of the power that language has over people. Even greater are the symbols that represent the language and the representation of the language itself. Of these Turkic languages, this paper focused on the Turkic nations that stand

independent from the current Russian state. While the Soviet identity has faded, it still lingers in the spoken and written word of the non-independent Turkic peoples. Those who do not return to future meetings signifying the vision of common Turkic identity will fade further and further into the Russian sphere of influence. Regardless of what Ahmet Temir meant when he said ‘Outside Turks’(Devlet 1992: 29), he still referred to them all by a common name: Turks.

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