

The Impact of Global English in Xinjiang, China: Linguistic Capital and Identity Negotiation
among the Ethnic Minority and Han Chinese Students

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A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
University of Washington

2016

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Anthropology

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Abstract

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My dissertation is an ethnographic study of the language politics and practices of college-age English language learners in Xinjiang at the historical juncture of China's capitalist development. In Xinjiang the international *lingua franca* English, the national official language Mandarin Chinese, and major Turkic languages such as Uyghur and Kazakh interact and compete for linguistic prestige in different social scenarios. The power relations between the Turkic languages, including the Uyghur language, and Mandarin Chinese is one in which minority languages are surrounded by a dominant state language supported through various institutions such as school and mass media. The much greater symbolic capital that the "legitimate language" Mandarin Chinese carries enables its native speakers to have easier access than the native Turkic speakers to jobs in the labor market. Therefore, many Uyghur parents face the dilemma of choosing between maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity and making their children more socioeconomically mobile.

The entry of the global language English and the recent capitalist development in China has led to English education becoming market-oriented and commodified, which has further complicated the linguistic picture in Xinjiang. Despite the fact that the majority of the Turkic

speaking students did not start their English education until college due to the language policy that requires them to learn Mandarin Chinese first, they do better in spoken English than their Han Chinese counterparts who probably have learned English for a much longer time. Uyghur students frequently stood out as the champions in various English-speaking contests at the provincial and national levels and became the enviable idols to emulate and symbols of ethnic pride for fellow Uyghur students. Their success has in turn boosted the business of the Uyghur-run private English training centers in Xinjiang. English seems to have become a “counter-hegemonic” language to the dominant national language Mandarin Chinese. Proficiency in the English language has not only granted Uyghurs access to jobs in the private sector, but also symbolic prestige through outdoing the Han Chinese students. However, Turkic-speaking students’ pursuit of the symbolic power of the English language is often interrupted by political events and changing state policies in Xinjiang. Furthermore, although the private English education market provides a safe learning space for Turkic students, it is a raced, classed and gendered site to which not everyone has equal access.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my reading committee: Professor Laada Bilaniuk, Professor Ann Anagnost and Professor Stevan Harrell, for being my mentors and friends for so many years. I feel very lucky to have such a committee that each member is interested in my research project in a different way and together they have provided me with unique perspectives that help me explore such a complex question. I have always told my parents that I made the right choice by coming to the University of Washington because of my committee members. I thank you for your trust and patience in me through the long evolution of this work. Laada's cheerful and positive attitude towards life, Ann's quiet wisdom, and Steve's witty remarks have made intellectual discussions enjoyable, and never intimidating. I am especially grateful for your wonderful support in the last stage of my dissertation writing. I appreciate your insightful comments and painstaking editing. I thank you for your advice and emotional support when I learned of my hearing loss and felt stressed. Without your guidance I could not have finished this project.

I am grateful to Professor Yomi Braester from Comparative Literature who agreed to be my GSR the last minute and the thought provoking questions that he asked at my defense. I thank Yomi for bringing me to the study of Sinophone films and literature in my first year at UW, which added a humanist perspective to my research. It was a pity that my previous GSR Professor Stephen Sumida from American Ethnic Studies could not see through this project due to his retirement. I am grateful to your support to my graduate study. It was so much fun being your teaching assistant and we all loved your cooking! I thank you, Professor Rick Bonus, and Dr. Connie So from AES for introducing me to ethnic studies in the U.S. Professor Dong Yue from history is a strict teacher as well as a kind-hearted friend to me. I thank her for pushing me to write and check my hearing and for providing straightforward suggestions about research and life. I admire her braveness and hope I can be as brave as her in the future.

I am grateful to the staff in anthropology, who have worked so hard to maintain the smooth functioning of the department. I thank John Cady, Michael Caputi, Rick Aguilar and David Nicoles for helping me in different aspects. My hearty thanks go to Catherine Zeigler, who has helped me in so many ways and caring about me over these years. Catherine made the final stage of my graduation much less stressful. Bureaucratic rules were much easier to understand with her help. Thank you Catherine for cheering me on. I thank Professor Miriam Kahn, Professor Celia Lowe, Professor Daniel Hoffman, and Professor Devon Peña for introducing me to the department and providing me with a broad horizon in anthropology. I enjoyed intellectual discussions with Professor Michael Perez, Professor Sareeta Amrute, and Professor Sasha Welland and thank them for their belief that I would finish.

I made so many friends both within the anthropology department and in other departments over the years. The most recent group I got to know is the China Anthropology Collective. I thank Zeng Xiaoshun, Luo Juan, Tian Xiameng, He Qian, Zhou Shuxuan, Li Jie, Dai Hui, Xu Jing, Chu Yiting, He Xiang, Li Bin, Aga, Chen Muyang, Tian Yiyu, Xiao Jiade, Haiyi, Sarala, and Lillian for their warm friendship and lively discussion about life, theory, politics and everything in between. I miss my cohort and thank them for the laughter and tears, and the opportunities to grow together as young anthropologists. I especially thank Bonnie Tilland for her kind support all these years. I thank Evi Sutrisno, Tapoja Chaudhuri, Roxanne Brame, Mariana Markova, Huang Yu, Cheryl Alipio, Trang Ta, Tseng Hsun-Hui, Cheng Hsiao-wen, Cade Cannon, Nicole Torres, Sam Yum, Matt Hale, Jason Chan, Baishakhi Basu and Zuo Wei for their friendship.

I am grateful to three friends who have supported me selflessly in my final stage of writing. Duan Xiaolin had been a good listener when I was down and a problem solver when I was in trouble even in the last minute before my dissertation submission. Wang Zhuoyi has supported me as my best friend all these years. I treasure his friendship and his great intellect. Dick Birnbaum, my friend from the P-Patch, showed great interest in my research. His questions helped me delineate my research questions and his life experience humbles me. In the most difficult time during the writing process, a conversation with Dick was the most enjoyable in a day.

My friends who either grew up in Xinjiang or were “adopted” by Xinjiang formed another unique circle in my life. I am grateful to have known Darren Byler and Jennifer Byler, aka. the Bylers, and Mutallip Anwar, Medina Abdulsalam, and their little Jesur, aka the MMJ, Guldana Salimjan and Aynur Kadir. I enjoyed the time I spent with you all in Xinjiang, the U.S. and Canada. I thank you for your friendship and support and your belief in me. I thank Darren Byler for his help all these years and admire him as an inspiring anthropologist. There are many other friends in Xinjiang that I would like to thank but can’t mention their names. I thank them for their trust in me and for teaching me a new way to associate with my hometown.

I thank Professor David Samuels, Professor Elizabeth Krause, and Professor Bob Paynter at University of Massachusetts, who had introduced me to the world of anthropology.

I am grateful to the Wenner-Gren Anthropological Foundation and the China Studies Program in the Jackson School of International Studies at University of Washington for their generous financial support to my dissertation fieldwork.

I owe the largest debt to my parents, Wen Yuxin and Wang Xinghan, for their understanding and patience through the many years they endured while I was in school. To them this work is dedicated with affection and respect.

DEDICATION

To My Parents

INTRODUCTION

My dissertation is an ethnographic study of the language politics and practices of the college-age English language learners in Xinjiang, a place where the international *lingua franca* English, national official language Mandarin Chinese, and major Turkic languages such as Uyghur and Kazakh interact and compete for linguistic prestige in different social scenarios at the historical juncture of China's capitalist development. The power relation between the Turkic languages, for instance the Uyghur language, and Mandarin Chinese is one in which minority languages are surrounded by a dominant state language supported through various institutions such as school and mass media (Bourdieu 1977; 1991). Although the Chinese state has made commendable efforts in offering preferential treatment to the underrepresented ethnic minorities in schools and preserving their native languages, the much greater symbolic capital that the "legitimate language" Mandarin Chinese carries enables its native speakers to have easier access than the native Turkic speakers to jobs in the labor market controlled by a legal order, mostly state administration and civil service and also big corporations, where Han Chinese dominate. Therefore, many Uyghur parents face the dilemma of choosing between maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity and making their children more socioeconomically mobile.

The entry of the global language English since the capitalist development, especially most recent years when English education became market-oriented and commodified in China, has further complicated the linguistic picture in Xinjiang. Despite the fact that the majority of the Turkic speaking students did not start their English education until college due to the language policy that requires them to learn Mandarin Chinese first; they do better in spoken English than

their Han Chinese counterparts who probably have learned English for more than ten years since junior high school.

Uyghur students frequently stood out as the champions in various English-speaking contests at the provincial and national levels and became the enviable idols to emulate and bolstered the ethnic pride of their Uyghur fellow students. Their success has in turn boosted the business of the Uyghur-run private English training centers in Xinjiang. English seems to have become a ‘counter-hegemonic’ language (Gal 1987: 360) to the dominant national language Mandarin Chinese.

Different from the ambivalent love-hate attitude of the Han Chinese learners towards the English language that I observed in my fieldwork and during my years in China studying English, the Uyghur students seem to completely embrace the English language. Proficiency in the English language has not only granted them access to jobs in the private sectors such as in border trade and private English schools, but more importantly, symbolic prestige through outdoing the Han Chinese students. However, Turkic-speaking students’ pursuit of the symbolic power of the English language is often interrupted by political events and changing state policies in Xinjiang. For instance, the school administrators of the Uyghur-run language training schools, fearful of being accused of “illegal congregation” by the government, closed their schools by themselves and sent the students back home after the July 5th incident in 2009, when ethnic violence exploded between Uyghur and Han in Urumqi.

This research ethnographically documents, analyzes and tentatively explains the above outlined contradictions and paradoxes on how a globalizing commodified symbol, i.e. the English language impacts the daily life choices of the Chinese youth at the local level and reveals the fact that English education is nothing neutral as often presented in the field of applied

linguistics and EFL/ESL programs, but a socio-economically and historico-politically contested area that needs the attention of scholars from both social science and humanities who are interested in language and power and the cultural politics of globalization.

My fieldwork consisted of two parts with a total of eighteen months: the pilot research was conducted in July and August 2008 in Beijing and the main part was carried out from August 2010 to May 2011, and September 2011 to February 2012 in three cities in Xinjiang, i.e. Urumqi, Aksu, and Kashgar. My pilot research in Beijing was during the high time of 2008 Summer Olympics, when the use of the English language was intensified through the state campaign and individual efforts. I sat in two classrooms in New Oriental, the biggest English training school and private educational corporation in China and a model that many private English schools in China, including those operated by Turkic speakers in Xinjiang emulate. This pilot research had provided me with an overall background of the private English education business in China and led me to my more focused site in Xinjiang in the next stage.

The data from the fieldwork in Xinjiang consist primarily of records from participant observation and interviews using the recruitment strategy of “snowball sampling” which means that initial informants refer the researcher to other potential informants. I conducted participant observation in the classrooms of colleges and private English training centers and other venues where English is learned or spoken. Usually I participated in the class activities as “one of the students,” sometimes as an invited lecturer, and sometimes as one of the judges at the English speaking contests or a tutor to participating team in a speaking contest. Participant observation enables me to identify what ideologies and beliefs in the topics covered in English learning contradict or appeal to students’ existing value systems and see how they negotiate with the differences. I also observed differences in students’ language attitudes, speech patterns and

grammatical errors influenced by their native tongues among the Han and ethnic minority students. I interviewed college students, their parents, English language instructors, and school administrators mainly to explore the roles of state language policy, class, gender, ethnic and regional differences in the linguistic capital acquisition and cultural identity negotiation of my student informants. These two methods are supplemented by media observation such as TV programs, online news and online discussion forums, and collection of print advertisement materials from the English training programs.

Self-positioning

I remember during my first year as a graduate student in the anthropology department, the discussions of identity, authorship, collaboration, and knowledge production in our cohort were sometimes reduced to “people of color” vs. the whites that not only confused international students in the cohort that experienced different racial or ethnic politics in their home countries, but more likely labeled us as simplistic identity groups that are based on U.S. ideologies and politics. I was considered a “native anthropologist” automatically just because I do research in my home country, therefore not an anthropologist that perpetuates the colonial tradition of anthropology and was exempt from the politics. But I was protesting this label of “native anthropologist” in my mind: “Following your simple logic, in China I’m a speaker of a dominant language in a place historically colonized by the Han Chinese, the ethnic group to which I belong. Am I still a ‘native anthropologist’ in your eyes?” But these discussions also stick with me for the rest of my graduate career at University of Washington for a decade. I struggled with the question on my relationship to my research participants. To put it bluntly, I feared I was taking advantage of them on the presumption that researchers have more power over their subjects. This

question was even more acute in the study of Xinjiang, a place overly politicized and racialized in the past fifteen years not only in China, but also in the U.S. academia.

Later through on-the-ground fieldwork I realized I am simultaneously an “insider” and “outsider.” And my shifting identities as an international student from China studying in the U.S., an anthropologist associated with a U.S. institution doing field research in Beijing then Xinjiang, a third-generation Han Chinese in Xinjiang who was born and brought up in Urumqi, a single female in her thirties, and a native Chinese speaker who speaks English fluently and is studying the Uyghur language, all have played important roles in my research in China. Sometimes I had a choice on which identity or identities I wanted to emphasize, but most of the time, I had no choice at all. People see me the way they want to see me. And the field site decides my identities as well. I find it interesting that while doing research in the GRE classroom of the New Oriental Corporation in Beijing and being surrounded by more than 200 college students from all over the country, my ethnic identity as a Han Chinese did not matter at all, because everyone in the classroom was Han (except a Manchu student and a Uyghur student). The Han ethnicity is the default and the unmarked. Rather, the students saw me as mostly a doctoral student studying in the U.S. that they wanted to emulate and ask questions. While doing research in Xinjiang (also growing up in Xinjiang), one is constantly aware of one’s ethnicity and it is an inescapable part of daily discourse. My field research in Beijing and Xinjiang, though both dealing with private English education, differs so much in my positioning with respect to the field sites and the subjects, as if I had two emotional worlds.

With the big ambition of studying abroad and the determination of taking the risk, I too had once been an aspiring New Oriental student in one of its GRE prep crash courses in the winter of 1998. Ten years later I returned as a researcher studying a group of college students

with the same ambition and determination, but with a different educational experience in relation to an ever more neoliberalized state. This younger generation of college students sees market competition as a “natural” part of their life and has no idea that students fifteen years earlier were assigned jobs by the state after they graduated from college. Sometimes I watched the students and instructors repeating the same activities in the classroom that my cohort did in 1998, as if nothing had changed for ten years. However, the privilege of being a researcher allowed me to observe things and ask questions that would not have concerned me when I was a New Oriental student. And I often found myself surprised by the answers from the students to my interview questions as they were far different from the assumptions I would have made based on my previous experience at the New Oriental. My status as a PhD student in a prestigious university in the United States is exactly the end goal of the students in the GRE prep class where I worked as a researcher.¹ I was therefore seen as a role model by the students and the “fifth instructor” in the class (there were four instructors) -- a consultant for tips on applying for U.S. graduate schools.

While doing research in Xinjiang, my identities are more multi-faceted and my feelings more complex. I feel like I lived in different worlds everyday and these worlds did not intersect. At the Uyghur-run private English training centers or small-scaled programs, everyone speaks either Uyghur or English. Friendship developed beyond the classrooms to work lunches, dinners, parties and weddings. People trust me because they see me as different from other Han Chinese in Xinjiang. My position as a doctoral student associated with a U.S. institution and the fact that I speak English gives me prestige and credit. Also my efforts of speaking Uyghur whenever I could were also appreciated. It is quite common that the Uyghur teachers and students thought

¹However, I have to point out that although University of Washington is well-known among the college students in the GRE class, it is not “good enough” for them. The symbolic prestige that *mingxiao* (“brand-name universities”, mostly refer to Ivy League universities) carry will be discussed in Chapter 1.

that I am an Asian American and insisted I must be so even though I told them many times that I was local, born and brought up in Urumqi, because “I’m too nice to be a *Hanzu* (Han Chinese).”

At the same time, I spent time with friends I grew up with, mostly Han Chinese. Dinners, parties, karaokes, and short trips with them were a frequent part of life. They seldom asked me about my research with the Uyghur community. Even if they asked, they were not familiar with the private schools I researched or never heard of them. Their puzzled looks show that theirs is another world. Local politics was a taboo topic in both Uyghur and Han communities I hang out with, especially the violent July 5th incident which just happened a year before I went back to Urumqi in 2010. But the heaviness of the topic could be felt on the rare occasions when it was mentioned. At a dinner party with my Han friends, they said Jian Ge you should look at the pictures of the violence committed by the Uyghur people. It’s horrible. Another friend stopped her right away and said: “Why did you tell her about this? Don’t put her in such a position.” And conversation went cold and silent for an awkward ten seconds. Another occasion was when a Uyghur student of mine and I were walking back from a trip to the CD stores to the university where he studied and where I lived, he suddenly said: “One night (after the July 5th Incident in 2009) I was going back to the dorm and it was close to midnight. I started to run because the gate closed at 12am. The police started chasing me and held me down with guns to my head. They asked for my student ID, but I forgot to bring it with me. They told me not to run again during nighttime, because it makes me look suspicious.” Although he said this with a calm face without a single trace of hatred, I was shaken and didn’t know how I should respond.

There are also the university administrators, professors and instructors I interacted with on a more official level. Most of the time I was seen or employed as an (young) expert on English education. I served as a coach on a university speaking contest team and as a judge at

university speaking contests. I was asked to give lectures to summer and winter teacher training programs and sometimes work as an interpreter when foreign academics visited. The only two groups of people that I could openly discuss local politics with were my parents and my American friends who were studying in Xinjiang. Although discussions with them, especially my parents, could be very heated and intense sometimes, because we have different political views, they also provided perspectives.

My awareness of this special positionality reminded me to think seriously about the situatedness of the knowledge I produce about the institutions and subjects I am researching. Donna Haraway (1988: 593) argues for an understanding of knowledge in which research objects are also considered actors: “Actors come in many and wonderful forms. Accounts of a ‘real’ world do not, then, depend on a logic of ‘discovery,’ but on a power-charged social relation of ‘conversation.’ The world neither speaks itself nor disappears in favor of a master decoder. The codes of the world are not still, waiting only to be read.” Instead of a one-way power relation between researcher and subject, my research participants and I went through a mutual process of self-discovery. On one hand I explored the role of global English in the neoliberal subject formation, acquisition of symbolic prestige, and cosmopolitan imagination among my younger research subjects in different locations in China, and, in this process, I ‘re-discovered’ my own path in these pursuits in the past ten years and came to understand my ethnicity as a Han Chinese and my birthplace Xinjiang much better. On the other hand, the students in the Beijing pilot research and minority students in Xinjiang who want to go abroad explored the possibilities, calculated the risks, and imagined the futures in an American higher learning institution through intensive inquiries about my past and current experience—everything from tips on applying to graduate school to details on my daily life in the United States (and even my prior life in China).

On the practical side, I was often asked to edit their writing exercises, speaking contest speech scripts, or graduate school applications, or serve as lecturer, coach or judge. Most of the time, I found myself an interviewee rather than an interviewer. This power-relation shift made me see my subjects as actors with agency that know how to utilize my presence and this realization transformed my project. I learned from my subjects through asking but mostly being asked questions.

Although called by my colleagues as a “native anthropologist” before I started my pilot research, by the end of the dissertation research I learned to appreciate the suggestion by Kirin Narayan (1993) that we should view each anthropologist in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations. Even though I am a Chinese citizen and was once a college student in China, current students’ strategies in coping with the future as a global citizen differ from mine as we occupied different historical moments. Therefore, my account of the English education in China and its players that follows is a “situated knowledge” that is produced from a particular and personal location.

Theoretical Considerations

This dissertation research draws from scholarship in anthropology of neoliberalism and studies of language and power. Since the 1990s, scholarship on neoliberalism has largely concentrated on “advanced liberal democracies and is often discussed as an economic doctrine with a negative relation to state power, a market ideology that seeks to limit the scope and activity of governing. More recent ethnographic research (Abelmann and Park 2004; Anagnost, et al 2013; Hoffman 2006; Ong 2006; Sigley 2006) has pointed to the phenomenon that neoliberal interventions as technologies of governing exist in liberal democracies as well as in

postcolonial, authoritarian, and postsocialist situations in East and Southeast Asia and China has become one of the most productive sites of governmentality (Sigley 2006). Ong (2006: 4) calls this “neoliberalism as exception.” For instance, Asian governments including China have selectively adopted neoliberal forms in creating economic zones and imposing market criteria on citizenship. Khorghas and two other ports in Xinjiang on the border with Russia and central Asian countries are among the Special Economic Zones that have flourished under state incentives to promote international trade (Dewyer 2005), where both English and Russian are valuable languages in the border trade. Although ethnic minorities are often excluded from the “imagined community” (Anderson 2003) of being Chinese and feel that they identify with central Asian and south Asian cultures² more than the Chinese speaking areas, flexible Chinese state practices, such as zoning technologies and cross-border trade, tries to stabilize the contested border areas through bringing them into the Greater China economic axis. On the other hand, although neoliberal logic requires populations to be free, self-managing and self-enterprising individuals in different spheres of everyday life, including acquiring international language such as English to be granted full citizenship, not everyone is included in the regimes of citizenship and fully reaps the benefits of capitalist development. The politically marginalized Turkic speaking students who have to choose between English and Mandarin Chinese probably at the expense of their native tongue and the native Chinese speakers in Xinjiang who are set back by the regional and socioeconomic backgrounds can be said to be the “exceptions to neoliberalism” (Ong 2006: 3). My dissertation contributes to the anthropology of neoliberalism on China in that it questions

² For instance, music and films produced in Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan and South Asia (Pakistan and India) are very popular among Uyghur young people in Xinjiang. I still remember my first day of fieldwork in August, 2010, when a male Uyghur college student asked me if I had watched the 2010 Indian film *My Name is Khan*, a film about discrimination against Muslims after 9/11. Later I found out that many Uyghur students had watched the film with enthusiasm and they identified with the main character in the film, who wanted to show Americans that not all Muslims are terrorists, because the Uyghur students felt they are also discriminated due to their Muslim and Uyghur identities.

how peoples in the border areas such as Xinjiang, which is administratively and territorially situated within China and in turn awkwardly contextualized in East Asia studies but culturally excluded from the grand narrative of Chinese culture, fit into the capitalist development in China. How do Turkic-speaking students and Mandarin-speaking students develop linguistic strategies in their subject formation in an unfavorable position compared to their counterparts in the more prosperous coastal areas?

Scholarly works in linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, critical applied linguistics, communication studies as well as sociology have informed us on the complex relationship between language and power in relation to the phenomenon of globalizing English and balanced the neoliberalism scholarship in its focus on market calculation. Bourdieu's conceptualizations of linguistic capital (1977; 1991) and cultural capital (1986) are helpful for us to understand the institutionalization of the legitimate language through the unification of the educational system and the labor market as well as the use of mass media. However, the impenetrability of this power structure cannot explain complex multilingual realities and is challenged by linguistic anthropologists such as Susan Gal (1987) and Kathryn Woolard (1989). Their ethnographic research in Europe argues that there is room to discover alternative or oppositional forms to the legitimate language. In China, although the state language Mandarin Chinese is legitimized and standardized through the law, educational system and mass media, it does not possess the all-encompassing power over other languages and dialects. For instance, Cantonese is the more prestigious language especially in business in the south due to the economic power associated with this area, an example parallel to Woolard's research in Catalonia. Furthermore, since Bourdieu's theory aims to account for the problematic of legitimate language and devalued dialects within the context of a single nation-state, it falls short when encountered with the

questions on globalization and English. In the case of the fetishization of English in China, English is not the legitimate state language but still acquires higher prestige. And it offers the minority language speakers such as Uyghurs an opportunity to surpass the dominant state language. This problematic is discussed by postcolonial scholars too. Although scholars in critical applied linguistics such as Pennycook (1994; 1998) and Phillipson (1992) point to the colonial history of English and the linguistic imperialism associated with it in present days, Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa of Ogoni origin (in North 2001), contrary to other postcolonial African writers' anti-English view (or against other colonial languages), states that for him as a member of the minority group, English provides the alternative to the linguistic oppression from the national language which is more immediate and threatening.

Ethnic studies in China, particularly works on Xinjiang help contextualize my research on language in time and space from multiple perspectives. Historians (Benson and Svanberg 1998; Brophy 2016; Jacobs 2016; Lipman 1997; Millward 2007; Thum 2014) and political scientists (Bovingdon 2004, 2010) provide us a detailed history of Xinjiang as well as the diverse cultures of the Turkic-speaking populations both before and after the founding of People's Republic of China. They write a history that is an alternative to the linear and essentializing grand narrative (Duara 1995) often found in history textbooks in China sanctioned by the state. Sociological analyses of census data on Xinjiang (Hannum and Xie 1998) and China in general (Hannum 2002) point to educational disadvantages faced by ethnic minorities as the most plausible explanation for rising occupational stratification. Ethnographies by anthropologists (Gladney 1991; Dautcher 2009) and cultural geographers (Cerny 2008) have offered us thick description of the life and identity negotiation of Uyghurs and Kazakhs. However, although language is often regarded the most important identifier for Turkic cultures, few works except

linguistic anthropologist Dwyer (2005) and sociolinguists (Sunuodula and Feng 2011) have been devoted to the studies of language politics in this multiethnic multilingual area, not to mention the impact of English as Xinjiang has seen increasing international trade and tourism in recent years. My research will be one that starts to link the scholarship of ethnic studies with that of language and power and anthropology of neoliberalism in linguistically contested Xinjiang.

My dissertation project looks at the increasing prestigious status of English as a global language in contemporary China and its role in the socioeconomic mobility, acquisition of symbolic prestige and cosmopolitan imagination among the Chinese youth. Furthermore, I explore the role of English as an ideological vehicle, by which I mean what ideologies English conveys as it circulates as a commodity in China and what existing ideologies, discourses, and values the English language disrupts. Finally, I ask the question, if young people in China have equal access to the commodified English language given their differences in class, gender, region, and ethnicity and if acquisition of this global language will provide them equal opportunities in the national and global labor markets. To answer these questions, I chose the Uyghur students, an ethnic minority group in northwestern China who speak a Turkic language, among other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, and Han students who speak the dominant and official language Mandarin Chinese as their mother tongue. My research involves the complex power relations among the international *lingua franca* English, the official national language Chinese and the minority language Uyghur and their speakers. I would like to review arguments and debates on the global spread of the English language, including its colonial histories and postcolonial influences, relations to national and individual identities, and politico-economic implications and their relevance to my research.

Among the scholarly works on the global spread of English, David Crystal's *English as a Global Language* (2003) is representative of the school of "popularizers" as Kingsley Bolton (2003: 28) calls them, who see English's triumph and conquering of the whole world as inevitable because it emerged "in the right place at the right time" (Crystal 2003: 120). They acknowledge that the global spread of English was due to the colonialism of Britain and the economic power of the U.S., but advocate that we should look at the pros and cons of colonialism. That is to say, although the history of English is a colonial one, it will benefit the colonized peoples eventually. Alastair Pennycook (1998: 25) points out that this kind of liberal apoliticism that seeks "both sides of things" and a "balanced view" is problematic because first, there is still a pressing need to write against the massive history that has extolled the benefits of colonialism for so long; and second, this history cannot be reduced to some even-handed balance sheet in which some things were lost and others gained.

The colonial histories of the English language (and other European languages) and its postcolonial influences, especially its relations to national and individual identities are best illustrated by the debates by a group of postcolonial writers. Frantz Fanon (1952), Chinua Achebe (1975), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), and Ken Saro-Wiwa (in North 2001) have demonstrated the psychological violence and emotional damage that the colonial languages have imposed upon the colonized subjects. Also they presented us a dilemmatic situation in many postcolonial countries, and a paradox for other countries as well.

Although writing on French, Fanon's writing is applicable to the former English-speaking colonies too. Fanon is concerned with the psychic and emotional violence enacted upon the colonized subject as a consequence of the dominance and prestige attached to the language of the colonizer. He argues that for the colonized, the better the acquisition of the colonial language, the

nearer she will be to whiteness, and therefore full human status, in the eyes of the masters. But taking on a new language also means taking on a culture, a new way of life. And Fanon stresses the damage that occurs to those who do cross this linguistic and cultural border. Once crossed it appears impossible to go back again, yet those who do cross do not belong in the “mother country either”: they are stranded in-between cultures.

The problem of what Fanon calls coming “face to face with the language of the civilizing nation” is one which is particularly pressing for these writers. The problem is that of deciding which would be capable of expressing the experience of both colonialism and post-colonialism. The novelist Chinua Achebe makes a distinction between the national language and ethnic language; in a number of African countries, he argues, the national language is English whereas, and he specifies his country Nigeria as an example, the ethnic languages are Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba and so on. Therefore he argues, for writers in such countries, the language to be adopted as the national language should be English. Achebe’s position is quite clear: he declares that he has been given this language and that he intends to use it. He argues that by using it to write of African experience, and cultures, it will be altered. A new English will be formed.

Achebe’s view is flatly contradicted by the Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o in his essay “The Language of African Literature.” His position is essentially that of a cultural nationalist – it is one of the ironies of imperial rule in Africa that not only were nations created where they had not previously existed, but the political formations which had accompanied nationalism in Europe were also transplanted there. Ngũgĩ argues for the complete repudiation of the colonial tongue as a medium of expression for two reasons. First, because it inscribes the colonized as irredeemably “other” by virtue of the conceptual categories with which it is structured. Second, because there is a symbiotic relationship between a people and their

indigenous language; it follows from this, for Ngũgĩ, that is only through this language that the colonial subject and cultural experience can be expressed both fully and authentically.

However, writers like Saro-Wiwa (in North 2001) takes exception to Ngũgĩ's position because for him as a member of a minority group English provides an alternative to the linguistic oppression from the national language which is more immediate and threatening. Kachru's account of the complex historical legacy in postcolonial India further complicates the debates (1986). While acknowledging English as the language of colonial power, he also looks at how this elite language, with its promise of prestige, learning, and advancement, was eventually used against the Empire: English was the language of resurgent Indian nationalism in the early 20th century. He also explores the ways that in the postcolonial India the functions of English have shifted: paradoxically, English has become a "neutral" language in contexts in which native Indian languages carry religious, ethnic and therefore political connotations.

What we see here is a range of responses to the imposition of a language upon a colonized people. Among this group of postcolonial writers, there is no fixed or agreed position to which contributors to the postcolonial debates subscribe. Writing in different contexts, against similar but specifically distinct histories, the writers take up their own stance in relation both to the colonial language and to their own native language. The only way for us the readers to benefit from this debate is to look carefully at the specific historical and national context in which the writers write.

Rather than accepting the current popular view that English has become a neutral language of global communication, Pennycook argues that it remains a language to which colonial discourses still adhere, a language still laden with colonial meanings. Applied Linguistics and its related EFL and ESL businesses are not objective and neutral as we have

thought, but rather are very much influenced by popular culture and popular beliefs about cultures. For instance, Pennycook critiques Kaplan's (1966) diagrams of different "cultural thought patterns", which states that English, Semitic, Oriental, Romance, and Russian speakers think in different thought patterns. Since the "Oriental" students think in a circular way, that's why they can't write English essays in a straightforward way. This outdated diagram that was proposed in the 1960s is unfortunately still used in current ESL and EFL teaching. More detailed ethnographic description of this problem will be provided in my Chapter 1 on English education in China.

This kind of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991) or psychological violence (Fanon 1952) that the Chinese learners of English have experienced is also exercised towards the ethnic minority language speakers like Uyghur speakers in China by the state and Chinese speakers. For many Uyghur speakers who have to acquire Chinese, either under force or "by choice" for the socioeconomic advantage the dominant national language Chinese can bring, they are stranded, as Fanon said, as colonial subjects, between two cultures. What further implicates the power relations is that English comes in as a language that can grant the Uyghur speakers more prestige than Chinese, so some of them opt for English if they are restricted with time and energy. Similar to Saro-Wiwa's situation, they choose English because for them as a member of a minority group, English provides an alternative to the linguistic oppression from the national language, which is more immediate and threatening.

Anthropologists have particularly contributed to the scholarship on globalization and critique of neoliberalism through its commitment to localized ethnographic research, situating the local negotiation of identity and culture in a global context, without romanticizing local specificity and resistance. Because of the phenomenal economic growth and social changes in

China in the context of globalization, anthropologists of China have asked questions about whether China can “offer an alternative form of social and political formation that powerfully disrupts the meta-narrative of Western liberalism, which tends to assume a clear split between market forces and governmental control, state assets and private capital, and a necessary coupling of capitalism and democracy” (Zhang 2008: 3). Their ethnographic research (Hoffman 2006b and 2010; Ong 2006; Sigley 2006; Zhang and Ong 2008) have started to answer that question, and have argued that a new political and economic configuration through flexible assemblage is merging in post-Tiananmen China. However, though highly insightful in challenging the dichotomies of liberal democracy vs. authoritarianism, state vs. society and market forces vs. government control, the studies often assume an ethnically holistic “Chinese” state without accounting for the diverse ethnic components that consist of the concept “Chinese” and focus more on the Han-dominated east coast urban centers as evidence for their arguments. The ethical implication for such an assumption would be ignoring the ethnic minorities on the border areas of China who are part of the “exceptions to neoliberalism” (Ong 2006: 4). But as Ong (2006: 4) points out, populations governed by neoliberal technologies are dependent on others who are excluded from neoliberal considerations.” Thus ignoring such diverse ethnic populations would miss a big part of the picture of how social inequality can be embattled in China. On the other hand, although ethnic studies in China have largely critiqued the “civilizing projects” (Harrell 1995: 3) of the Han Chinese in the border areas, more works could be done on the impact of capitalism and neoliberalism in the ethnic minority areas. In both fields of scholarship, few works have been done on the relationship between linguistic power, economic power and social prestige, especially in the impact of English in China. My research, though a small step, will start to link these fields. By focusing on Urumqi, a multiethnic multilingual city

located in the border area and comparing my study with those existing scholarship based in mainland China and east coast, I am able to ask questions about the intersections of language, ethnicity, culture, identity and capitalism, which are important concepts that anthropologists ponder about. Also by looking at globalization in Xinjiang at the Eurasian crossroads that is within the territory of China but not the same as the much-researched urban centers on the east will prompt us rethink of China outside the box of East Asia studies.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1 discusses the relationship between the international lingua franca English and the national official language Mandarin Chinese in China. It first provides a historical review of the English language and English education from the eighteenth century to present, through the late Imperial Qing, Republican Era, and the People's Republic of China. In the rest of the chapter I focus my analysis on the commodification of the English language and privatization of education since the 1990s through close examination of China's biggest private English education enterprise New Oriental at the institutional level and the major players in this institution (students, instructors and administrators) at the individual level to understand the practical and ideological aspects of the "global English" phenomenon in China. This chapter also serves as a background to Chapter 3 and 4, where I specifically discuss the English education in Xinjiang.

Chapter 2 maps out the ethnic minority education system and language policies in Xinjiang. It discusses the relation of the national official language Mandarin Chinese and major minority languages in Xinjiang, i.e. Turkic languages, mostly Uyghur. I describe the ethnolinguistic status of the Turkic languages, the historical relationship between them and the

regional *lingua franca* status of the Uyghur language. Through the discussion on the changes in the PRC language policy towards ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, I point out the harmful trending monolingualism (towards Chinese) in the education system and the hegemonic linguistic practices such as naming the ethnic minorities and its impact on minorities in daily life.

Chapter 3 focuses on the English speaking competitions as a performative genre, through which students from Xinjiang of minority and Han ethnic backgrounds perform their *minzu* and/or regional identities in the provincial and national contests as a method to stand out. On the one hand, ethnic minority contestants, not unlike their Han counterparts, communicate a kind of cosmopolitan knowingness through stylized public speech pronunciation, hand gestures and body positioning, after months of specialized training and reappropriate the stereotyped representation of a *minzu* identity that has been constructed and popularized over the years through a “*minzu* paradigm” in both state media and popular discourse, to their own advantage in the English speaking contests. This chapter ends with a brief discussion on how (male) Turkic contestants have turned the symbolic capital of winning in the speaking contests to economic power by opening private English education in Xinjiang, which leads to the next chapter.

Chapter 4 provides an ethnographic description of the private English education scene in Xinjiang. I discuss the representative schools from each of the three categories of schools: foreign-owned, Han Chinese-owned, and the Turkic speakers-owned (mostly owned by Uyghurs). It is the last type of school that is unique to Xinjiang. They have opened up job opportunities to the entrepreneurial English-speaking Uyghur young men, created hope for the culturally and linguistically marginalized minority students, and a safe place to learn and communicate and chances to make curricular innovation in English teaching. However, to thrive, they have to

strategize and cooperate with the government and their fate is up to the political ups and downs in the area, which is not in their control.

CHAPTER 1 ENGLISH EDUCATION IN CHINA

In the summer of 2008, Beijing became the focus of the global gaze as it hosted the Olympics for the first time. It was a time when English-language media paid increasing attention not only to China's painstaking efforts to showcase Beijing as the modern metropolis through building impressive infrastructure,³ but also to its people "scrambl[ing] to learn a new language before the Olympics."⁴ This kind of report captured the partial reality that the Chinese state had organized another campaign, this time focused on the English language, by cleaning up "bad English" on road signs and menus. The young and old were responding enthusiastically to the campaign by participating in after-work English classes to welcome Olympic guests. Today, linguists put the number of Chinese now studying or speaking English at between 200 million and 350 million (Thorniley 2010). However, these reports did not realize that English education in China is nothing new. The emergence of commercial and trade English, compilation of English dictionaries and unofficial English education could be traced back at least to the presence of the East India Company (1600-1867) and other Western colonial powers since the 17th century (Bolton 2002; Pennycook 1998). State-organized official English education was initiated right after the People's Republic of China (PRC) established in 1949 (Lam 2005). What is new is the commodification of the English language and the privatization of English education since the early 1990s.

³ See BBC, China English language aim, Jan 16th, 2008.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/player/nol/newsid_7190000/newsid_7193000?redirect=7193058.stm&news=1&nbram=1&nbwm=1&bbam=1&bbwm=1&asb=1, accessed April 29, 2010
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http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/player/nol/newsid_7090000/newsid_7097300?redirect=7097374.stm&news=1&nbram=1&bbwm=1&nbwm=1&bbam=1, accessed April 29, 2010.

Osnos, Crazy English, *The New Yorker*, April 28, 2008.
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/04/28/080428fa_fact_osnos, accessed April 29, 2010.

⁴ Osnos 2008.

In this chapter I focus my analysis of the commodification of the English language through close examination of China's biggest private English education enterprise the New Oriental Corporation (*Xindongfang*) at the institutional level and the major players in this institution (students, instructors and administrators) at the individual level to understand the practical and ideological aspects of the "global English" phenomenon in China. In July and August 2008, I carried out two months of ethnographic research in the headquarters of the New Oriental Corporation in Beijing, doing participant observation and interviews with students and instructors in two of its many summer training classes, one prepping college students for a domestic test College English Test Band 6 (CET6) and the other for the Graduate Examination Record (GRE) in the United States.⁵

My ethnographic data and analysis of this particular school serve as a background to the following chapters that deal more specifically with private English education in Xinjiang. The New Oriental is not only emblematic of the commodification of the English language education in China, it is also a model that private English schools in the whole country emulate, including the schools run by the Uyghurs and Kazakhs in Xinjiang. Through this chapter, readers can also understand the regional difference in English education between metropolitan cities such as Beijing and Shanghai and relatively underdeveloped areas such as Xinjiang.

⁵ College English Band 4 and Band 6, better known as CET4 and CET 6, are national mandatory English as a Foreign Language test for non-English-major college students in China. CET4 certificates indicate that certificate-holders have reached the English level of non-English major undergraduate seniors; CET6 certificates indicate that the certificate-holders have reached the English level of non-English major graduate students. Both CET4 and CET6 are very important English tests for college students in China. Before 2003 it was a national prerequisite for a bachelor's degree and it remains as a prerequisite at many universities regardless of the Ministry of Education's new policy of "unhooking" the college diploma from CET4. Many employers in China prefer applicants with CET certificates.

The historical significance of the emergence and thriving of the private English education in post-Socialist China should be understood in the historical context of the English language in China before PRC and the public English education in the PRC.

History of English in China (late Eighteenth Century to 1949)

The English language has a long and fascinating history in China, which is recounted in Adamson's detailed history of the English language in China (Adamson 2004). The first English speakers arrived in southern China in the early seventeenth century, and by the late eighteenth century varieties of Pidgin English were being spoken in Guangzhou (Canton) and Macau. From the outset, the reception of the English language was influenced by a range of cultural and political concerns which reflected the anxieties of Qing dynasty China to the "strangers at the gate," whose mercantile and imperialist ambitions were perceived as a major threat to the Qing government and imperial Chinese society. Before two Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860), the access to English within formal educational institutions was severely limited and existed only in a small number of missionary schools. After 1860, access to English in the educational domain increased greatly, not only within Western Christian institutions whose numbers multiplied in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, but also in the first Chinese schools of foreign languages, including the Tongwen Guan (Interpreter's College) in Beijing (1861), Guang Fangyan Guang (School for Dispersing Languages) in Shanghai (1863) and the Jiangnan Arsenal (1867), also in Shanghai. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, knowledge of English was seen as essential to the modernizing efforts of "self-strengtheners" and other reformers. Later, during the 1920s, the Nationalist government sought to regulate the teaching of English within a school system that served the aims of the government, and limited the influence

of missionary institutions. Throughout many of these years, the guiding principle for state education was *zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong* (中学为体, 西学为用, that of “Chinese knowledge for essence, Western knowledge for utility”).

Period		Role and Status	English Language Education
Later Qing Dynasty	1759-1860	English only permitted to be spoken (in pidgin form) by the despised <i>compradores</i> ; perceived as a barbaric tongue; low official status	Private study by <i>compradores</i>
	1861-1911	Technology transfer: English as a vehicle for gaining access to Western science and technology; helpful to the development of China’s international diplomacy; conduit to remunerative jobs in treaty ports; later a fad in Shanghai; medium official status ⁶	On the curriculum of institutions set up to facilitate transfer of scientific knowledge; later (after 1903) on the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions
The Republican Era (1911-1949)	1911-1923	The Intellectual Revolution ⁷ : English as a vehicle for exploring Western philosophy and other ideas; opportunities for study abroad; high official status	On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions
	1924-1949	English as a vehicle for diplomatic, military and intellectual interaction with the West; resistance from nationalistic scholars and politicians fearing unwanted cultural transfer; medium/high official status	On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions

Table 1: The historical role and status of the English language in pre-1949 China (Adamson 2004: 22)

Public English Education in People’s Republic of China (1949-present)

⁶ Besides what is listed by Adamson here in this table, some missionary universities such as Yenching University in Beijing and West China Union University in Chengdu (now renamed West China Center of Medical Sciences, Sichuan University) also taught English. There were also study abroad programs that sent Chinese students to Europe and the U.S. (See LaFargue 1987)

⁷ 新文化运动(*Xinwenhua Yundong*), commonly translated as the “New Culture Movement.” It took place in the mid 1910s and 1920s and sprang from the disillusionment with traditional Chinese culture following the failure of the Chinese Republic, founded in 1912 to address China’s problems. It called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on global and western standards, especially democracy and science.

Adamson and Morris (1997) have argued that the history of the English curriculum in post-1949 China can be seen as a series of oscillations between two perspectives they characterize as the “political” and the “modernizing.” They isolate five phases in this history: the end of Soviet influence, when China began implementing its own curricular priorities (1956 - 1960), the push towards ‘quality’ education (1960-1966), the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Deng Xiaoping’s modernization movement (1977-1993), and the implementation of a nine-year compulsory education (1993-present) and integration of the English language with globalization. In each of these, English acts as what Heidi Ross has described as a “barometer of modernization... registering high when open participation in the global community is perceived to be commensurate with political and economic interests, low when foreign influence is viewed as threatening to political stability and cultural integrity” (Ross 1992: 240). Thus the periods of political and ideological entrenchment (the first and third periods) were historically marked by a noticeable reduction in the number and quality of English teaching staff, the amount of hours students spent learning English in the classroom, and the overtly political, as opposed to pedagogical, design of the curriculum. In contrast, the second, fourth and fifth periods in China’s modern history were characterized by an expansion of English programs and teacher training, the development of new teaching materials, and the reduction of political content in English lessons (Adamson and Morris 1997).

In the first phase (1956-1960), English was largely neglected, due to the political ascendancy of the USSR, which was aiding China’s economic development, and to the associated antipathy towards the U.S. The future status of English in Chinese education was at this time very much in doubt. On one hand, English was a foreign language in a country newly suspicious of competing ideologies – and moreover it was also the language of socialism’s

capitalist opponents, namely the U.S. and Britain. On the other, flows of scientific and technical information as well as diplomatic exchanges typically occurred through the medium of English. After 1955, however, English language was restored to the school curriculum to some extent. The curriculum was heavily influenced by Russian approaches to pedagogy and the textbooks had a significant proportion of political texts, especially at times of movements such as the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Great Leap Forward that took place at the end of the 1950s.

In the second phase, during the early 1960s, when the politicization died down, and attention was turned to international affairs and economic progress, there was engagement with pedagogical approaches emerging from the West, such as Audiolingualism⁸. Foreign teachers were invited to serve as curriculum consultants alongside Chinese specialists, and the textbooks contained fewer political references. This period was short-lived. The political turmoil of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution started in 1966, with schools being closed down so that students could take the lead in revolutionary activities, which were often violent and targeted at those with any affiliation with the West -- so the English language teachers were particularly vulnerable. Numerous accounts (Adamson 2004) mentioned that English teachers were often beaten because of this association, and in some cases even killed. The country lurched into a state of near anarchy before a semblance of normality was restored in 1969. Following the visit of the U.S. President Richard Nixon to China in 1972, English language curricula started to appear in some regions. During the third phase, the locally-produced textbooks were heavily

⁸ Audiolingualism, also called audio-lingual method, is a style of teaching used in teaching foreign languages. It is based on behaviorist theory, which professes that certain traits of living things, and in this case humans, could be trained through a system of reinforcement. The correct use of a trait would receive positive feedback while incorrect use of that trait would receive negative feedback. Applied to language instruction, and often within the context of the language lab, it means that the instructor would present the correct model of a sentence and the students would have to repeat it. The teacher would then continue by presenting new words for the students to sample in the same structure. In audio-lingualism, there is no explicit grammar instruction: everything is simply memorized in form. It was discredited as an effective teaching method in the 1970s and fell out of popularity.

politicized, although the series published in Beijing and Shanghai were more moderate in this respect.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, the fourth phase (1977-1993) was one of recovery. In 1977, the reinstatement of admission to higher education was announced and English was one of the required subjects on the entrance examination. The 1980s witnessed the implementation of Deng Xiaoping's Policy for Four Modernizations (first announced in 1978): to modernize agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense. The Four Modernizations Policy soon evolved into the Reform and Opening Policy. The Reform and Opening Policy made it absolutely necessary for Chinese citizens to learn English and other foreign languages. More and more educational, occupational, and economic advantages were becoming attached to learning English and other foreign languages. During this period, the policy directions from the state met with tremendous support in terms of syllabus design and materials development from English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals in China as well as some eminent ELT experts from overseas. ELT became established as a professional discipline during those years. In the early 1980s English became a required subject in most secondary schools and colleges. The College English syllabus was discussed and finalized in 1983. In 1985, it was announced that CET 4 and CET 6 of the national standardized exams for College English would be implemented in 1987, a policy which still affects college students nowadays.

In the fifth phase of public English education and curriculum development (1993-present), educational reform set goals for nationwide provision of compulsory schooling and decentralization of educational policy-making, including the preparation of curriculum materials, such as textbooks. Textbook designs were no longer monopolized by the People's Education

Press, but distributed to several other publishing houses⁹. The pedagogy underpinning the fifth phase was an amalgam of communicative and structural approaches. The political themes that were pervasive in the previous versions textbooks were taken out.

Studying English in the fourth phase, i.e. right after reform and opening, often arose out of a somewhat amorphous curiosity about things foreign. Social and political reform in the early 1980s made foreign news more common and increased the number of foreigners visiting and working in China. Many people inside China began to become aware of China's positioning as a nation newly integrated into an international system, which required thinking about both the nation, and one's own position in it, in different ways. In Eric Henry's dissertation on English education in Shenyang in northeast China (2008), he found out that people who began to self-study (*zixue*) English in this period tended not to make connections between study and particular goals for it, such as travelling abroad or doing business. They did it because it was "interesting." Although English was being increasingly integrated into public education in this period after the Cultural Revolution, most adults saw learning English as little more than a hobby (*aihao*). This situation began to change however in the mid-1990s when the reform intensified, state enterprises were privatized, education decentralized and privatized.

Private English Language Education in China (early 1990s to present)

Although English education policy went through various reforms in the period from the 1950s to the 1980s due to changing diplomatic relations with the West and domestic political and economic transformations, one thing remained stable: English education had been in the hands of the official education system. It was not until the mid-1990s, when China's higher education

⁹ Other popular publishing houses that designed English textbooks for primary, junior high, and senior high school English include Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Jiangsu Education Press, Beijing Normal University Press.

underwent state-managed deregulation that private English education institutions such as the New Oriental and Crazy English programs emerged and started burgeoning. Students and parents in other East Asian countries witnessed a similar kind of transformation in higher education in accordance with neoliberal values of “efficient self-management, productivity/excellence, diversification, and global competition” (Abelmann, Kim and Park 2013).

Lisa Hoffman’s research (2006b and 2010) in the 1990s notes that since China entered its reform era in the 1980s, “choice and autonomy” have begun to constitute “important new techniques of governing.” Talent, human resources, and human capital have been touted in official and popular discourses as important for national strength in the new century. Government and state enterprises are judged based on their efficiency in utilizing “talented people” (*rencai*). In China, state-managed deregulation in higher education is coupled with the commodification of higher learning institutions. On one hand, from around 1996, the Ministry of Education announced that college students no longer received direct state job assignments upon graduation, going instead to job fairs where they experience a degree of autonomy from state planning organs. Although this means lifelong employment and stability are no longer guaranteed and they face the risk of “graduation is the same as unemployment” (*biye dengyu shiye*), college graduates in the late 1990s overall seemed to welcome the “freedom” that the “mutual choice” market mechanism has brought to them.¹⁰ On the other hand, due to a reform in educational funding starting in 1994 with some universities in Guangdong Province and extended to the whole country by year 2000, college was no longer free and everyone except students in normal colleges and military schools must pay tuition. For low-income families,

¹⁰ See the news story on the experiences of the first batch of college graduates who graduated in 1996 without state-assigned jobs. Most of them think that although they were “unlucky” that they did not enjoy stability after graduation and had suffered a lot in finding jobs, they felt they were lucky that they had more “choices” than their previous cohorts. “The Career Paths of the first batch of college graduates who did have state-assigned jobs.” <http://hr.bjx.com.cn/html/20090210/196434.shtml> (accessed April 29, 2010)

especially those from the rural areas, higher education became a big burden that was discussed as one of the social problems in China and is still a problem.

Although these reforms in higher education have invited heated debate from all walks of life in Chinese society, the status of the English language remains unchallenged even if the effectiveness of English education policy is often debated. College students are not only required to take English as an obligatory subject, they also have to pass the national standardized College English Test Band 4 (CET 4) as one of the requirements for college graduation. Some departments in some prestigious universities even require students to pass College English Test 6 (CET 6). When the Ministry of Education announced the “unhooking” (*tuogou*) of CET 4 and graduation in 2003,¹¹ the enthusiasm for taking and excelling in these exams has not decreased since excellent scores in these exams are still very much expected as an important credential by the hiring units at the job fairs. Since foreign enterprises, joint ventures, and even some large state enterprises are competing in a global market now, English in these places is not only used but also becomes a requirement upon employment. Students are often interviewed in English at the job fairs. To temporarily avoid the job market competition, many college graduates opt for applying for graduate schools in China or abroad, especially in the United States. To get into graduate school in China, students have to score high in the required English test in the entrance exams; to get into graduate school in the United States or Britain, students have to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (or

¹¹ The reason that the Ministry of Education “unhooked” passing CET 4 as the prerequisite to graduation was because the call from the society that we need “well-rounded quality education” (*zonghe suzhi jiaoyu*) instead of education that only focuses on test results (*yingshi jiaoyu*). See Ann (2004 and forthcoming) for an elaborate discussion of the concept of *suzhi* (quality) in China. Also see my discussion of “quality education” later in the paper.

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)), or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).¹² Every path points to the significance of English. There seems to be no escape.

It was at this transformational historical moment in China's higher education that the New Oriental School found its business opportunity. Established in 1993 by an English teacher Yu Minhong from Peking University, it started with GRE and TOEFL crash courses in a few rented shabby classrooms¹³ in Zhongguancui in Beijing and has now turned into a multinational educational corporation with 40 branch schools all over China as well as in Toronto and Montreal in Canada. It offers not only language test prep classes but also other training programs that aim to increase one's human capital. On September 7, 2006, the New Oriental landed on the New York Stock Exchange. On the NYSE Euronext website it described the company as such:¹⁴

New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc. is a provider of private educational services in the People's Republic of China. The Company offers a range of educational programs, services and products consisting of English and other foreign language training; test preparation courses for admissions and assessment tests in the United States, the People's Republic of China and Commonwealth countries; primary and secondary school education; development and distribution of educational content; software and other technology, and online education. The Company provides the educational services under the New Oriental brand. During the fiscal year ended May 31, 2009 (fiscal 2009), the

¹² Recently it has become a new trend among high-income families to send their high school children to college in the U.S., Europe, Hong Kong and Singapore among other places to avoid the competition in the national entrance examination (*gaokao*), which is described in the idiom “thousands of soldiers and their horses compete to pass one single-plank bridge (*qianjun wanma guo dumuqiao*).” This has led to the popularity of taking SAT among high school students. However, the SAT is only offered in Hong Kong. It means the students have to have enough economic and informational resources to take the SAT. Most students are from the metropolitan cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, and Chengdu.

¹³ Based on Yu Minghong's lecture I attended in the winter of 1998.

¹⁴ NYSE Euronext, New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc. <http://www.nyse.com/about/listed/edu.html>, accessed March 29, 2010. Today's NYSE description on New York is simpler: “New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc provides private educational services in China based on the number of program offerings, total student enrollments and geographic presence.” <https://www.nyse.com/quote/XNYS:EDU/company>, accessed November 11, 2015.

Company had approximately 1,519,000 student enrolments, including approximately 937,000 student enrolments in the language training programs and approximately 582,000 student enrolments in the test preparation courses.

By the time I visited Beijing in the summer of 2008, the New Oriental was anything but the only game in town. There were at least eight more nationally known private English training schools that have branches all over China, not to mention schools on a smaller scale. In Xinjiang, during my fieldwork 2010-2012, I observed private English schools of various types. There are schools that are owned by foreign countries, such as English First (Swiss), and English Web (Canadian). The New Oriental established its Urumqi branch in 2011. Several schools owned by the Uyghurs are popular among the Uyghur students in Urumqi. There is also one school owned by a Kazakh businessman, which targets Kazakh students. In relatively smaller cities such as Kashgar, Aksu and Ghuja, private English schools can also be found near universities and colleges. Private classes and one-on-one tutoring are countless.

According to financial analysts tracking the industry, there are now around 30,000 organizations or companies that offer private English lessons in China and the size of the market has doubled in the last five years to around \$3.5bn (£2.1bn).¹⁵ Not all of them are successful. Tessa Thorniley (2010) reports on the less bright side of private English education and asked the question: learning English has never been more popular in China, so why are so many English language schools going out of business? Her news story reports on how in only six months during 2009-2010, four of the longest-running English schools in China have suddenly collapsed, one day signing up new students and outlining expansion plans and the next day bolting their doors. And their foreign bosses have fled China and will never come back. Eric Henry (2008) in

¹⁵ Tessa Thorniley, Bankrupt schools and their fleeing foreign bosses, Danwei. March 16, 2010. http://www.danwei.org/business/bankrupt_schools_and_their_fleeing_foreign_bosses.php, accessed May 5, 2010.

his doctoral dissertation on English education in the northeastern city of Shenyang also provides an ethnographic account of a local English school from its start to its bankruptcy in one year.¹⁶ Although a detailed discussion of the failures of these businesses is not a focus in my dissertation, the reasons of the failures of private English schools in non-metropolitan China seem to point to not just mismanagement on the company's side, but also Chinese English learners' withdrawal of investment in the linguistic capital of English language, i.e. the investment in their own human capital. When they found out that the consumption of this special commodity, i.e. the actual acquisition of this language is a long, slow and study-intensive process; some of them regard this investment less of a priority, especially during a time of financial crisis.

The failure stories of these schools on the other hand somewhat explain why the New Oriental has been successful, or at least, why it was not much affected by the financial crisis. The students in the Washington English School in Henry's dissertation (2008) are mostly non-elites and not globally mobile, but who aspire nonetheless to the cosmopolitan life. The school attracted its customers through selling them the "symbolic associations English already had to modernity and cosmopolitanism—watching foreign movies and media, drinking coffee, speaking with foreigners," but not actual physical global mobility (304). At the New Oriental, however, the link between the English language and cosmopolitanism, imagined as a movement in terms of global mobility, has a stronger potential to be realized than just symbolic prestige. The investors in their own human capital can see the "dividend" more directly and quickly through taking standardized tests and going abroad than drinking café latte and talking to foreigners. Although it has developed into a multinational corporation that runs business in a variety of fields, the New Oriental wins its reputation and produces its brand name mainly through test preparation courses, namely GRE, GMAT, LSAT, TOEFL, IELTS, and the recently added SAT

¹⁶ According to one industry insider in Henry (2008), half of all English schools closed within their first year.

(due to the new trend of sending high school students directly to the United States for college among a new generation of affluent parents). As is described in the NYSE Euronext, approximately 582,000 students enrolled in the test preparation courses in the fiscal year 2009, which is more than one third of its total student enrollment. Initiated as a crash course program for GRE and TOEFL, these two programs still remain the most popular and important in all New Oriental's programs, as proven by the fact that the GRE instructors are paid the highest and the promotional use by the school of the GRE program alumni who eventually succeeded in being admitted to graduate schools in the United States, especially the Ivy League.

When I flipped through a 186-page brochure for the 2008 summer classes, I was dazzled and amazed by the countless classes that one summer could offer. All kinds of language tests, entrance exams, and other credential tests that one can think of, both domestic and international, are exhausted by this brochure. Obviously every class is a commodity and assigned a price. English, a sign system, is now commodified, given a market value, and treated no differently in the brochure than commodities in any marketing catalogue. Meticulously classified under categories and subcategories, each class is coded and put in a neat table providing information on meeting times, locations, and class content. When signing up for classes online or over the phone through the New Oriental's extended customer service, potential students/customers quote the class code, pay with their bank cards and purchase access to an English class, a process no different from any other kind of commodity exchange like an article of clothing or a can of Coke.

The kind of English in each different class in the catalogue says something socially about their users or how these users are socially viewed. Although detailed description and attractive advertisement language are employed in each section under "International English Tests," "Domestic English Tests," "Basic English Training," "Secondary School English," "English for

Children,” and “Other Foreign Languages,” it is apparent that the “International English Tests” are given more attention. The prices of the classes under the international test sections are higher than classes under “Domestic English Tests” (such as for CET 4 and 6 and PETS).¹⁷ The “International English Tests” are not only listed as the first section, but also accompanied by success stories and news reports. What remains the same in these stories in the past ten years is that studying in North America especially the United States, is deemed more prestigious than Commonwealth countries such as Britain and Australia. What has changed, from my observation, is the younger age of the students who are studying abroad. The GRE, GMAT, and LSAT have been the most popular classes at the New Oriental since 1998 and are mostly attended by college students and working professionals who make life decisions for themselves. The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) lead high school graduates directly to colleges or middle school children to high schools in the United States and attract the eyes of ever more ambitious parents, making them the new favorites. This new generation of parents, many of whom were born in the 1960s, went to college in the early 1980s, grasped the opportunities offered by the economic reform and capitalist development in China, and became parents in the 1990s, have accumulated enough capital through *xiaohai* (going into business, literally “plunging into the sea”) and have the economic ability to send their children abroad for college.

The news report from *Beijing Evening News* that is inserted before the “International English Tests” section in the brochure tells the success stories of three high school students who

¹⁷ PETS is the shortened form for Public English Test System, a national testing system administered by the Ministry of Education in China that is open to the general public and issues certificates that based on five levels: PETS1, PETS2, PETS3, PETS4 and PETS5. These tests are usually taken by adults who had no college education and are taking *zixue kaoshi* courses.

were admitted to prestigious “brand-name universities” (*mingxiao*).¹⁸ In the context of education abroad discourse in China, these refer to a select number of prestigious schools in the United States, mainly private universities such as Harvard, Yale, Stanford and Columbia that are able to offer students a full scholarship. This article gives advice to aspiring parents and their children about taking the SAT, essay writing, choosing schools, going for interviews, and finding out the total cost of a college degree. The article also details in particular the emphasis placed by these schools on the “well-rounded quality” (*zonghe suzhi*) of the students.¹⁹ The popular discourse around brand-name universities, “Harvard Girls,” and “Yale Boys” in recent years started when interviews with the mother of a high school girl Liu Yiting were published in a book in 2002 on how she educated her daughter and sent her to Harvard.²⁰ This book sold like hot cakes and similar biographies and interviews on other “Harvard Girls” and “Yale Boys” emerged and created a new trend of sending children to the United States for college. It has also created business opportunities for schools like the New Oriental in SAT training and application consulting. At the same time, these biographies and reports that follow up on the development of these children have stirred a heated debate in popular discourse on what counts as real *suzhi* (quality) and effective *suzhi jiaoyu* (quality education), “a new discourse of educational reform defined in opposition to an education that is primarily focused on test results” (Anagnost forthcoming).

All these auto/biographies, interviews, and follow-up reports have emphasized the contrasts between the “well-rounded quality” of the Harvard Girls and Yale Boys and the lack of

¹⁸ See Anagnost’s discussion of a similar term with the same meaning “mingpai daxue” in her forthcoming book *Embodiments of Value in China’s Reform*.

¹⁹ See Ann Anagnost (2004), Tamara Jacka (2009), Gary Sigley (2009), T. E. Woronov (2009), Luigi Tomba (2009) and Wanning Sun (2009) for discussions of the discourse of *suzhi* in China.

²⁰ Xinwu Zhang and Weihua Liu (2002). Liu Yiting, a Harvard Girl: A Documentary of Suzhi Cultivation. According to the publisher, 1.6 million copies were sold after its first publication in 2002.

such a quality in other “ordinary” students who only know how to study for exams. They also contrast the “quality education” in the U.S. and the rote-learning, test-taking *yingshi jiaoyu* (education that only focuses on exams) in China. Self-discipline, self-confidence, excellence, vitality, versatility, independence, and “study-hard-and-play-hard” attitude of these Harvard Girls and Yale Boys and their American classmates at prestigious universities implies the lack of motivation, lack of confidence, mediocrity, dependence on parents and teachers, lack of creativity and “burying their heads in the books” lifestyle of their counterparts in China. The profuse description of the flowing energy, plenty of opportunities for hands-on experimental learning and internships, and diverse student population on the romanticized beautiful campuses of Harvard and Yale imply the routineness, lack of opportunities for practical learning, and monotonous life on the campuses in China. These Harvard Girls and Yale Boys are similar to their counterparts in Korea such as Heejin in the ethnographic exploration by Nancy Abelmann, Hyunhee Kim and Sojin Park (2013) of the production of affects in Korea’s higher education. For Heejin, a young college woman from an elite university in Seoul, a “vital” life is “not just comfortably enjoyed but more actively lived.” It is an “endless striving for competitive advantage that excludes the possibility of any point of rest or pursuit of contemplative advantage realms of value other than the market-driven ones of the global economy” (Anagnost n.d.: 13). They are the students who enjoy the freedom and embrace the “burden of vitality,” though not all college students hold the same attitude or have the same privilege of embracing such a vital life, which I will discuss later.

These biographies, mostly written by the proud parents of Harvard Girls and Yale Boys, suggest to other parents the advantage of “saving time” and avoiding the *yingshi* college education in China by sending their children earlier to the United States than having them apply

to graduate school later. As Anagnost (forthcoming) has argued about the “the child as a sign of value” in globalizing China, “the loss of time signifies a loss in the full development of the child’s potentiality that threatens to put him or her at a disadvantage. The investment in children’s education requires “the intensification of time as a continuously productive time” and the “accumulation of completed time is measured in the embodied capacities of the child” (Anagnost forthcoming). By skipping the wasteful four years of college in China but instead investing time, money, and energy in a prestigious American university, parents feel that they intensify the “quality” and value that can be instilled in their children’s body within the same given time, therefore saving time for their children.

However, what is hidden in this discourse of Harvard Girls and Yale Boys is the discrepancy of the upper-middle-class socio-economic status of the successful children’s families and the economic status of the target audience for all this promotion. The expenditure that includes the charge for training classes in TOEFL and SAT, fees to take the tests, the airfare to and accommodation in Hong Kong or Singapore (there is no test center for SAT in mainland China), study materials, application fees to American universities, mailing cost of application materials, and TOEFL and SAT delivery fees is just a small portion of the investment. Four years of out-of-state college tuition and living expenses in the United States are not something that even middle-class families in China can afford. Students who aspire to a higher education abroad but do not come from such privileged family backgrounds have to go to college in China first and apply to graduate schools in the United States later in hope of being supported by graduate funding when they are admitted. Without much economic capital to dispense with, this group of students hopes to realize the full potential of their educational capital to exchange for a global future. The college students in my GRE class field site belong to this group of students.

At New Oriental's Beijing branch, classes can be categorized into two kinds in terms of where students stay during the study: *zouduban* (classes without lodging) and *zhusuban* (classes with lodging). Students who attend *zhusuban*, i.e., those who live in the New Oriental dorms, tend to be students from regions other than Beijing. However, *zhusuban* does not just mean a short-term boarding school, because when this term is mentioned in the "New Oriental Culture," it has the connotation of dedication and harder work. GRE *zhusuban*, more than other *zhusuban*, carries the image of monastic environment, strict management, and self-discipline.

On the morning of July 10, 2008, I boarded one of the big buses that the New Oriental uses to chauffeur students of different ages to their *zhusuban* campuses in different locations in Beijing. These *zhusuban* campuses are located in the suburban areas that are far away from the crowded city center where no fun can be found so students can concentrate on their study,²¹ according to the *zhusuban* philosophy. The GRE class for which I signed up was beyond Ring Road 5 in southern Beijing, so remote that I could not find it on the municipal map. The trip took two hours on the bus with a group of college students and teenagers. The college students were going for the GRE class and the teenagers are going to the same campus as the GRE students for New Oriental's summer program "Storm (English) Camp." We arrived in an almost rural area where the dusty roads became narrower and narrower. After the bus entered the gate, it closed behind us and we would be locked in for 21 days from that moment on. No student was supposed to leave the campus for the entire period of the study. Simple meals would be served in the dining hall and other daily necessities could be purchased in the campus stores. Hot water showers were available twice a day and air conditioning in the dorms was switched off during

²¹ The suburban areas of a city have different connotations in China than the image of neat and peaceful middle-class neighborhoods in the U.S. In China *chengxiang jiehebu* (literally the area in between the city and its surrounding rural areas) has the image of remoteness, dustiness, lack of order and filled with automobile parts stores.

class time in the hot and humid Beijing summer, a strategy that forced everyone to go to the classroom.

Every class has a head-teacher/monitor who only took care of the managerial tasks and did not teach. On the first day of class, I entered the 200-seat classroom that was filled from the front to the back. Every seat was numbered and one was assigned to a seat according to one's number. No one was supposed to change her seat with another student. My number was 175, which put me in the back section of the classroom and gave me good view of the whole classroom but I could not see the teacher very well. Students must report to the head-teacher if they have to leave campus. Reasons have to be given and forms filled out. A copy of the class schedule and a copy of the code of conduct were distributed to everyone. Seven and a half hours of instruction were divided into three periods per day for 20 days without a break and sometimes lectures on application techniques were also squeezed into the already impossibly busy schedule. The tight schedule, strict regulations, and spatial arrangement instantly reminded me of the semi-military model in the Egyptian school described in Timothy Mitchell's *Colonizing Egypt* (1991: 72-74) and the rules for the house of young prisoners in Paris in Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment* (1975: 6-7).

However, what might be different from the students in Mitchell's Egyptian school and from the prisoners in Foucault's Parisian prison is the self-disciplining of the students in the GRE *zhushuban*. Every day at least half of the students stayed in the classroom during lunchtime and dinner breaks memorizing GRE vocabulary or doing mock exam exercises, instead of walking back to their dorm rooms to take a nap. Some didn't even go to the dining hall, buying quick snacks in the convenient stores in order to save time from lining up. At 9 PM after the last class had ended, students stayed in the classroom, studying until 11 PM when the custodians

came to lock the building. “Dreamelf,” one of my research participants and one of the most hard-working in the class, often stayed up studying till 4AM in his dorm, complaining to me the next morning that “time is running out” for him.²²

Dreamelf, a senior chemical engineering major from a third-tier municipal university in Tianjin, often told me that he had to study “tooth and nail” (*wan'er ming*, literally risking one’s life) for the GRE and TOEFL that were coming up for him soon.²³ Otherwise he would miss the biggest opportunity in his life, and his life would go a downward path. Blaming himself for playing too many video games in high school and therefore not being able to enter a top university, he said he had now “woken up” and started to understand the hardship that his parents had gone through to support his education. Going to graduate school in the United States is the best solution to make up the time lost and to catch up with those who go to prestigious universities in China because of the “*hanjinliang* (high quality, literally “the percentage of gold”) of American education.” And for Dreamelf, “to study science and technology, the United States and Germany are the top choices. But only the United States offers “*quanjiang*,” financial aid such as fellowships, teaching assistantships and research assistantships, with which one can be completely self-dependent,” he commented. Like Dreamelf, the majority of the students in this class come from second-tier and third-tier regional universities rather than top universities in Beijing that offer many advantages in resources. They see taking the GRE and TOEFL tests as an opportunity that gives them a second chance, not only upgrading their educational capital, but also changing their college majors, which were probably chosen by their parents when they were in high school, since the United States is more flexible in this respect compared with other countries.

²² Pseudonyms used in this chapter were chosen by the research participants themselves.

²³ Dreamelf received admission letters from two universities in the U.S. and has now graduated with a Master degree in chemical engineering and is working in the U.S.

Some students in the class, however, were less intense in their attitude towards the GRE test and their study there. Many from this group were just college freshmen and sophomores. It was still early for them to start on the graduate school application process. I was nevertheless surprised by the young age of these students who were already planning their future, compared to the students from my generation. Some students in this class were merely 18 years old. My interviews with these young students revealed that they were actually not so sure if they would study abroad for graduate degrees. However, with the competition in the job market becoming fiercer, they commented, a college student has to simultaneously prepare for several paths (*duoshou zhunbei*, literally preparing for the future with several hands),²⁴ which includes *chuguo* (studying abroad for graduate education), *kaoyan* (taking the entrance exams to graduate school in China), *kao gongwuyuan* (taking the exams to become a civil servant), and *qu waiqi* (finding a job in a foreign enterprise). All are considered fairly decent options and all require English tests of some sort. One has to start early to prepare for these tests in order to have a competitive edge over others. Since the GRE is considered to have the most difficult vocabulary among the various tests, students have the misconception that if they conquer the GRE vocabulary, other tests become easier. “If I don’t come to this class to experience how difficult the GRE is and get a feel how much effort I have to put into the process of applying, it means I give up on one life choice myself. I have to try it out,” said Liu Fei, a sophomore and an E-Business major. Whatever their goal was for taking the GRE, students in my research calculated cost and benefit in what takes them to succeed in the contemporary economy and created a narrative of their own human capital formation. This narrative of becoming a productive and vital self-manager is similar to that found in the college students in South Korea in Abelmann, Kim, and Park’s work

²⁴ This is a present-time modification of and reference to the pre-Cultural Revolution propaganda “*yikehongxin, liangshouzhunbei*,” literally “one red heart, two-hand preparations.” It called upon young people to be ready to study by themselves if they could not be admitted to a university.

(2013). Higher education in both countries underwent state-managed deregulation in accordance with neoliberal values of efficient self-management, productivity/excellence, diversification, and global competition. In China, this transformation is represented by the fact that students are no longer assigned jobs by the state and universities become more and more tuition driven. What emerges is a transformed student: an autonomous consumer who should manage her own lifelong creative capital development. This is why private schools such as the New Oriental have become popular. By just looking at New Oriental's class catalogue that provides classes to all ages, one understands how education has become life-long learning in China.

However, this narrative is also personalized. Students' class background, gender, and institutional prestige affect their opportunities in their transitions to the labor market. A few students in my research who are from "brand" universities carry the confidence that "campus capital" (Abelmann, Kim and Park, n.d.) brings to them. They understand they have a better chance of getting into graduate school in the United States because their professors were PhDs from universities abroad and have connections with American academia. They can write them more persuasive recommendation letters. The English level of these students is usually higher than those who are from second- or third-tier universities. Students such as Dreamelf and Liu Fei, on the other hand, have to take on the burden of becoming productive and vital by themselves and invest their entire stake on the GRE and TOEFL tests. Female students understand they stand in a disadvantaged position in the job market; they see studying abroad as giving them a better chance. Furthermore, this generation of college students, like those in Korea (Abelmann, Kim and Park 2013), consciously distinguish themselves from their parents' generation and the previous generations such as mine. They see the older generation as submitting themselves to collective values, but they see themselves as more individualistic. "My parents want to bury

themselves among the crowd so they won't be picked out, among my generation, however, each of us wants to stand out and shine," said Liu Fei. She also gave me the example that older graduates from her department never quarreled with their party secretary when they were wronged, but her generation would talk back immediately if they thought the party secretary was being unreasonable.

Although stories in this section seem to point to English as merely a tool that students utilize for a completely instrumentalist approach to education in which language is part of an economic calculation to increase their human capital, the role of English as an ideological vehicle is often easily overlooked in research on English education in China. Constant comparisons between the English language and the Chinese languages, the different ways in which the "Westerners" and Chinese think, the differences between the United States and China, or more generally, the "West" versus the "East" featured in the daily conversations among the students and in the teachers' instruction during my research. If English is, as Eric Henry (2008) argues, "an empty signifier, a bucket into which can be poured any of a host of ideological linked attributes, among them modernization, development, rationality, and cosmopolitanism," then my goal in the next section of this paper is to deconstruct and denaturalize these ideological attributes that are associated with the English language. Furthermore, I argue that English can carry not only classed, but also gendered, sexualized, and raced messages.

English as an Ideological Vehicle in English Language Teaching in China

The theme that repeats in the New Oriental classrooms is the comparison by the instructors between the different ways of thinking of the Chinese speakers and English speakers. This emphasis on the difference of "thought patterns" is even more noticeable in the writing

classes for the GRE and TOEFL training. The major reason that the essay writing is the most difficult part for Chinese students compared to other parts in GRE, Mr. Xiu, the instructor for the GRE writing in my research explained, other than errors in vocabulary and grammar, is that Chinese students write in a circuitous manner. They save the main argument for the last after listing all the evidence. Sometimes they give so many examples that they run out of time and forget their argument. However, English speakers write linearly, stating their main argument first, then supporting it with sub-arguments and evidence. This reflects the “circular thinking” of Chinese speakers and the “straightforward linear thinking” of English speakers. Mr. Xiu went on to provide a structural pattern that every student in his class should follow when taking the test: after reading the question, list one main argument and then three sub-arguments, provide one piece of evidence/example for each sub-argument, finally repeat the main argument in different words. That will be the conclusion.

Though taught by a Chinese instructor, this kind of “cultural thought pattern” has been a familiar philosophy in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. It can be traced back to the “cultural thought pattern” diagram proposed by applied linguist Robert Kaplan (1966). This diagram (see Figure 1) lives on like a specter; even though it has been renounced by later applied linguists as problematic, it still lives to this day in English teaching practice, both in English-speaking and non-English speaking countries. When Australian critical applied linguistics scholar Alastair Pennycook (1998) discusses these constructs with his EFL students, he finds that many of them, particularly from East Asia, nod in recollection “at textbook diagrams, circles drawn on blackboards, scribbles at the ends of essays.” Pennycook (1998: 161) recounts the interesting conversation he had with an Anglo-Australian woman who used the family name of her Chinese husband. An assignment she had

done for an instructor in a distance learning program (the instructor only knew her name and had never met her in person) had been returned with a long explanation, including once again Kaplan's diagram, of how Western writing was linear and clear and that she was still writing in the circular Chinese style. The Chinese name on the title page of the assignment had triggered a whole set of beliefs about culture, thought, and learning.

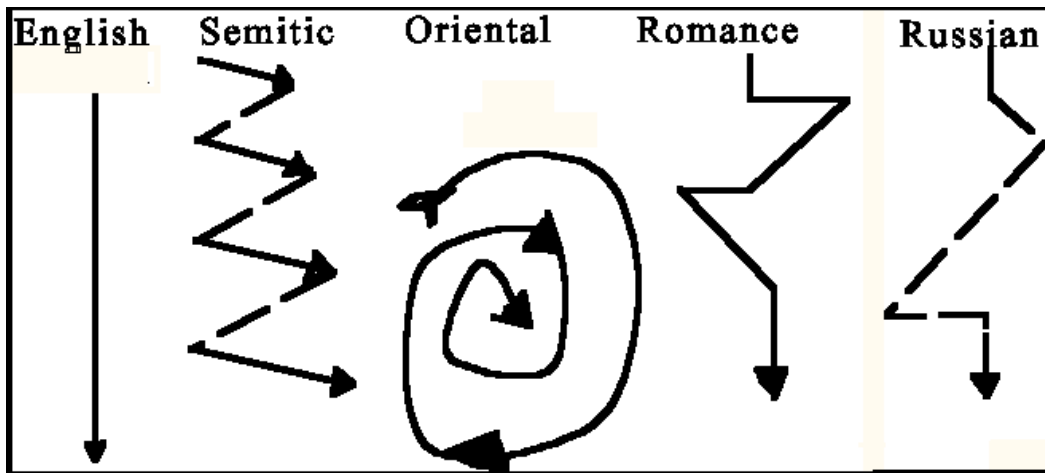


Figure 1: Kaplan (1966) "Cultural Thought Pattern" diagram.

The widespread usage of this diagram cannot be overstated and the negative impact on the perception of their native languages and themselves by the EFL students should not be ignored. Not until I read Pennycook's book did I realize how long I had internalized the "philosophy" in Kaplan's diagram and had constantly reminded myself of the "A to B" argument for fear of not "possessing" the "right way of thinking in English." The same diagram was drawn on the blackboard when I was an English major in college by a young college graduate from the United States who taught spoken English class to us and was titled a "foreign expert" although he had never had a single day of ESL/EFL training himself. A University of Washington doctoral student in the history department, who is from Taiwan, also recalled with anger seeing this diagram when she first came to the University of Washington in 2005 and attended the teaching

assistant training for international students. When I was invited by a friend to give a guest talk about my research to her intercultural communication class at Seattle Central University in 2009, a class consisting entirely of international students from East Asia except one from Morocco, I showed this diagram during my presentation and asked them if they had encountered it before. A student from Japan took out her intercultural communication textbook and turned to the page with exactly the same diagram! When I asked what she thought about the diagram, she replied “it is insulting.”

The problem with the Kaplan diagram here is not a Sapir-Whorfian debate about whether language shapes the way we think or vice versa, but rather a question about language, the relations between knowledge and power, and the construction of the Other. Furthermore, this goes beyond pointing a finger at the whole business of ESL/EFL, applied linguistics, or even English teachers in general, because as I have shown at the beginning of this section, the Chinese instructors have willingly believed and participated in the inculcation of this idea in their students and they have unwittingly collaborated in the othering of their own countrymen. Categorizing “thought patterns” might not be harmful if they were all considered equally valuable and functioning thought patterns. However, the contexts in which the diagram was used in the situations mentioned above was where English was taught as a “stronger language”²⁵ to a group of speakers of “weaker languages” in terms of the power that a language possesses. The linear straightforward thought pattern of the English speakers are considered superior to the circular thought pattern of the Orientals. Furthermore, the Kaplan diagram was considered a “scientific” model derived from the science of “value-free” applied linguistics. The power of the more “powerful” language and the “scientific knowledge” that linguistics produces therefore grants the English language superiority.

²⁵ Talal Asad (1986: 157)

When British social anthropologist Talal Asad discusses the inequality of languages, translation, and cultural translation, he points out:

[The matter] is governed by institutionally defined power relations between the languages/modes of life concerned. To put it crudely: because the languages of Third World societies – including, of course, the societies that social anthropologists have traditionally studied – are “weaker” in relation to Western languages (and today, especially to English), they are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process than the other way around. The reasons for this are, first, that in their political-economic relations with Third World countries, Western nations have the greater ability to manipulate the latter. And, second, Western languages produce and deploy *desired* knowledge more readily than Third World languages do. (The knowledge that Third World deploys more easily is not sought by Western societies in quite the same way, or for the same reason). [1986:157, emphasis is in the original]

In the discourse of ESL/EFL, English language teaching has often been viewed as a form of “development aid” and a modernizing educational tool. The “desired” belief is that education should follow a developmental route from “traditional,” “rote” teaching to “modern,” “student-centered” teaching. Canadian linguist Gloria P. Sampson (1984) points out three major problems in the export of Canadian language teaching methods to China. The first stems from the “fallacy of the unidimensionality of development,” i.e., the fallacy that everything exported from developed to developing countries is advanced. Thus by assuming that technical superiority in some domains bestows superiority in others, applied linguists and teachers feel justified in telling Chinese teachers and teaching experts that “the methodologies they are using are old-fashioned and therefore should be replaced. The second problem stems from “a confusion ... between scientific and educational theories” (21), i.e., an extension of positivism to educational theory. This conflation leads to the dominance of inapplicable “scientific” theories in language teaching

so that much of applied linguistics, especially in contexts outside of Europe and North America, “can only be regarded as irrelevant to educational practice” (26). The third problem is a result of “technocratic imperialism” (21), i.e., the claim that educational goods are value-free and therefore appropriate for all contexts. Since these methods are seen as associated with modern technology and science, both Canadian and Chinese EFL specialists assume they are applicable to all teaching situations.

The widespread belief that English is innately logical and the Western English teaching method is by definition scientific is also based on fixed ideas about China, the Chinese language, Chinese learners, and Chinese education. Pennycook (1998) did a survey of popular travelogues about China by English teachers since the 1980s and found that certain fixed images always emerge: spitting in public, chaos, China-as-prison metaphor, the pettiness of Chinese bureaucracy, etc. Since China is modernizing fast, the criticism of its dirtiness has shifted over time from a criticism of the dirt of backward countries to a criticism of traffic jams, environmental pollution, and ubiquitous construction. The description of Chinese learners, on the other hand, often concentrates on their “characteristics” as passive and docile rote-learners and memorizers, syllabus dependent, lacking creativity and initiative, illogical, and insincere. Kaplan (1972) argues that the circuitous “indirectness” of the Oriental people is a result of the reliance on the classical form of the “eight-legged essay (*ba-gu wen*). The problem with these constructions about China, Chinese learners, and Chinese education is not about whether they are truthful or not but that they are fixed, essentialized, and static images that fail to account for the diverse learning styles among Chinese learners of English and the value of memorization within its own context. These images dichotomize the Chinese Other and the Western Self as radically different.

The other side of the coin is the Othering of the foreign teachers in China. Phiona Stanley's research (2011) in Shanghai revealed that there pervades the notion among Chinese students, perhaps created by images of Westerners in the Chinese media, that "foreigners are fun," and this was found to put pressure on the participant teachers to entertain students in lieu of teaching them. This prevented effective teaching. Consequently, and in the absence of an assessment-driven need for communicative competence in English, the success and continued employment of the foreign English teachers at the university is being judged by students' evaluation of teachers' entertainment value. Thus the "foreigners are fun" myth is perpetuated, the teachers deskill and students' English fluency remains low. One teacher in Stanley's research described her perceived role in China as that of a "foreign monkey" or clowns. Chinese students tend to direct serious questions such as grammar to their Chinese teachers of English and come to foreign teachers' classes (usually spoken English) expecting to have fun. In her research, the students want young, preferably male teachers: "the whole easy, relaxed manner, white, probably blonde, or blue eyes at least, attractive and funny. And if somebody can get in and do that, then there you go."

What is interesting and paradoxical in the GRE classroom at the New Oriental is that although the Chinese instructors have borrowed these stereotyped "cultural thought pattern" diagrams in which Chinese learners are understood to be rote-learners and memorizers, they ask their students to memorize the structural patterns of a "linear" "straightforward" argument that an English speaker would make. And the majority of the work involved in preparing for the GRE is based on memorization of the vocabulary, as the quantitative and analytical sections are "a piece of cake for the Chinese students," and "once they know what the difficult words mean, the verbal part is not that hard too." One instructor commented:

“The GRE, Graduate Record Examination, is a test in the U.S. that examines the basic verbal, quantitative, and analytical abilities of the applicants to graduate school. It is not supposed to be a language test, but a test of the abovementioned abilities so you are qualified to carry out research. Our Chinese students have these abilities, but their great potential in showing these abilities is hindered by language barriers because they are not native speakers of English. So for the Chinese students the GRE test becomes a language test. Our task here is to help them overcome the language barriers in limited prep time, teaching them the best way to memorize GRE words, which you would not use in your daily life anyways, and sorting out patterns of questions that might be asked. This is to help our most brilliant students compete with native speakers of English to study in the best graduate schools in the world. I do not see anything wrong with our teaching methods.”

Memorization, the learning method that is often devalued with “derision and scorn” by “Western teachers” and “Western society” in general (Sampson 1984: 29), is strategically used as a tool to overcome the inflexibility of the testing system by the teachers and students in the GRE classes at the New Oriental. At the same time, ironically, the Chinese teachers unquestioningly deploy the idea of “cultural thought patterns,” which evolved from the same discourse of development and modernization to teach their students to overcome the language barriers in the tests. This discourse exists as the background for the seemingly contradictory phenomenon that strong nationalism and cosmopolitanism are equally promoted at the New Oriental and other big English training schools such as Li Yang’s Crazy English.

Both Li Yang of Crazy English and the founder and CEO of the New Oriental Michael Yu Minhong have on various occasions connected speaking English to personal strength and national power and expressed their philosophy that the reason we learn English and study abroad now is to make the nation stronger so the future generations do not have to learn English and

study abroad. Every issue of the New Oriental's quarterly magazine *The New Oriental Spirit* features success stories of New Oriental teachers and staff, many of whom are *haigui* (Chinese people who study abroad and come back to China to live and work instead of staying abroad).²⁶ These stories emphasize both the enviable cosmopolitan experiences of having studied and lived abroad and the admirable spirit of the New Oriental teachers who came back to serve their country. Abelmann, Kim, and Park (2013) discuss how college students in Korea today actively disassociate themselves from the previous generation's collective values and commitment to student movements, and they also reject that generation's anti-state nationalism but not necessarily nationalism itself. Very similar to their counterparts in Korea, Chinese students in previous research (Fong 2004; Henry 2008) and my research differentiate themselves from the collective identities and absolute loyalty to the state of their parents' generation. However, they are just as nationalistic as the previous generation, but "their thrust is cosmopolitan" (Abelmann, Kim, and Park 2013). Students in China are just as interested in a global China as Korean students are in a global Korea that can compete on a world stage. As many have argued, nationalism and cosmopolitanism often go hand in hand (Park and Abelmann 2004).

²⁶ *haigui* is a popular term in China that refers to people who have studied abroad and came back to China to live and work. The character *hai* means "sea" and *gui* means "return", so the combination means "(those) returning from overseas." However, in popular discourse, the *gui* 归 as "return" is humorously replaced by another homophonic character *gui* 龟 meaning turtle. A related term is *haidai*, in which the *dai* 待 means waiting. It refers to those who studied abroad and came back expecting to find a good job in China because of the high prestige usually associated with a foreign degree, yet cannot find a satisfactory job. What they can do is just wait. The *dai* 待 is also replaced by a homophonic character 带 and the combination of *hai* 海 and *dai* 带 means seaweed in Chinese. The phenomenon of "sea turtles" and "seaweeds" is a new and much discussed topic in popular discourse on human capital and internationalized job market in China.

However, I must point out that this reconciliation between the local, the national, and the global is a “classed” process that is different from individual to individual. Students in the Washington English School in the northwestern industrial city of Shenyang (Henry 2008), restricted by their limited opportunities to go abroad, become cosmopolitan and imagine themselves as part of the global through consuming English lessons and other commodities that have the same symbolic association to modernity, such as café latte, English movies and music, and talking to foreigners. Teenagers in the northwestern port and tourist city of Dalian in Fong’s research (2004) saw their motherland China as inferior, at least economically, to wealthier countries and complained that they were born into the wrong country. These attitudes were different from those of the college students in my research. My explanation is that prior to Fong’s arrival in Dalian, the participants in her research (1999-2002), both teenagers and parents, had lived through the most difficult period of the neoliberalization of the state economy in the late 1990s, which affected the northwest in particular, including Dalian where many state-owned industries were concentrated. As mentioned in Fong’s article (2004), many workers were laid off before she had arrived, and they remained unemployed during her stay so the impact was still keenly felt. Urban poverty was widespread. This is why the young people in Fong’s research had such a low evaluation of China’s economic status on the world stage. The college students in my research, however, were born later. In 2008 China was already being touted by the global media as a rising economy, and the hosting of the Olympics in Beijing boosted the confidence of the Chinese people, as I could witness every day among my participants. The students and the instructors might still criticize China, but they also have a high evaluation of its status in the world and of its global future.

Lastly, in this section on English as an ideological vehicle, I explore the multiple ambiguous meanings that a series of advertisements tried to deliver to the people walking on the streets of Beijing in the summer of 2008. These print advertisements were from the China branch of the English First program of the multinational language training corporation Education First (EF), another influential English training organization in China. This series of print advertisements appeared in prominent positions and usually occupied a large portion of the advertisement area: on the huge billboards above the subway entrances, in the subway, by the bus stop, or on the bus. These advertisements have the same theme: a sharp-looking white man in his late twenties in a black business suit and tie and a young and pretty modern Asian-looking woman in her early twenties stand side by side with their hands bound together with a thick rope. Their tied-up hands are either held up high in the air triumphantly (see Figure 2) or side by side in a lower position, indicating cooperation (see Figure 3). Both are smiling. Both look confident. The background is pink in color.

On one side of the advertisement there are the English and Chinese names of the EF Corporation and the logo in big characters on a blue background together with its phone number, address, and website in smaller sizes. On the left upper hand corner of the advertisement there is a small Olympics logo showing that EF is a “Beijing 2008 Olympics Official Language Training Service Provider.” What stands out is the message above the image of the two people in big characters. It states in Chinese: 24-hour “Private English Trainer.” Below it is a line of smaller characters: individualized tutoring, socializing, Internet, learning English anytime and anywhere in its real sense. For a busy passerby, the advertisement looks like nothing special except the thick rope that foregrounds itself so much that one walks away wondering why their hands have to be so grotesquely tied up together. Advertisements with foreign-looking people are not a

spectacle in Beijing as this is the capital of the nation where one encounters countless foreign faces. The advertisement, with the smile and confidence on the faces of this young couple and their slightly fisted hands, can also be innocently interpreted as international cooperation between the “East” and “West” through learning English, or the determination to conquer English together. Posters showing people of different colors walking side by side or hand in hand either as state propaganda or as commercial advertisements are a common scene in Beijing. But why the rope? With a closer look at the ad copy, combined with the deliberately staged rope binding, one cannot help thinking about other possible interpretations.



Figure 2: English First print advertisement on a billboard above a subway entrance in Beijing



Figure 3 Another advertisement by EF in a subway in Beijing

To understand the other interpretations, one must denaturalize the taken-for-granted raced, gendered, classed, and sexualized meanings that are associated with English learning in China and think about what the target audience of this advertisement would be. When I showed these pictures to my research participants and asked them to describe the image, although they had different interpretations, their first response was always: “Oh, this is a Chinese woman learning English from an American man.” I wondered about the naturalization of the link between skin color and English speaking ability in this answer. China is a predominantly Han Chinese society with 92 percent of the population classified as Han and foreigners seeking Chinese citizenship are still very rare. The foreign face of this white man is generally understood as the non-Chinese in this advertisement and the Asian-looking woman is the Chinese national. Unlike the U.S. context, where people of different colors are often shown together to

demonstrate diversity and social equality, this image shows the interaction between a Chinese and a foreigner. The fact that my respondents automatically linked the white man's face with English-speaking and even an American identity is interesting, because the actor himself might be a Russian who does not speak a single word of English or a South African white man whose accent is devalued in the international English teaching hierarchy. Furthermore, the fact that this advertisement did not choose a black man or a South Asian man, who may also be native English speakers as well, indicates that the advertisers naturalize this link with whiteness, consciously or unconsciously. In China, English teachers are hierarchized in the market based on their race, country of origin, and their accent in terms of their likelihood of being hired, their levels of salary, and the degrees of respect they may receive from students and parents. Both my Asian American colleagues and the audience at my conference paper presentation at American Anthropological Association meetings had reported stories about this hierarchy in China based on their own teaching experiences. American teachers and American accents are more valuable than are teachers and accents from other countries. Among the American teachers, teachers who are also white are more desirable.

Moreover, I cannot help noticing that the man remains the same but the women change in the series, but there is never a white woman with a Chinese man. Many respondents, especially male students, explained to me that this advertisement is targeted at young women, especially “young white-collar office ladies” (*bangonshi bailing nvxing*) who want to socialize with “foreigners” (*laowai*) and maybe date them too. Many commented on the catchy advertisement language in big characters above the image: 24-hour “private English trainer”. The quotation marks are in the original Chinese to emphasize the one-on-oneness and intimacy that this English trainer can provide. The rope binding implies a bondage that is hard to escape. And the “24-

hour” and “private” language reinforce this message. As one female respondent points out: “This is like saying: you can become fluent in English through 24-hour one-on-one training as if you were dating or married to a English-speaking foreigner. Even better, there is actually that potential to date a white man or secure a relationship with him in our school that is like binding them with a rope.” Respondents also commented on how the young woman looked like an office-lady also goes along with the higher tuition at EF and the reputation of EF as only providing native speakers as English teachers: “This advertisement does not target us college students. We cannot afford it. It is targeted at white-collar women.”

What these advertisements intend to sell, besides English, is a package of commodified signifieds that are associated with the English language and with a particular group of consumers in mind. These signifieds, including foreignness/whiteness/Americanness, heteronormative romance (with a white man), middle-classness, and cosmopolitanism, which are signified by the English language and the images in the advertisements, index different yet overlapping social positions that the target customers occupy in relation to their desired objects or objectified symbols. For instance, the white man is not only an object of a possible interracial romance, but also an image that symbolizes prestige, modernity, masculinity, aesthetic superiority, wealth, and power for those “white-collar” office ladies that the advertisements target. Similar to the proliferation of the image of the white woman’s body in the early 1990s in China in Louisa Schein’s study (1994), the white man is both “the object of consumption and its agent” in this series of advertisements. The fetishization of the English language as a commodity is transformed into the fetishization of the white man (and his image). Actually the message of the implied romance with a white man is foregrounded through the rope-tying image and the

enlarged characters “24-hour ‘private English trainer,’” while the aspects of actual learning are de-emphasized through appearing in much smaller characters.

Another interpretation of this bondage image can connect the human capital aspect of English learning and the ideological aspect based on the concept of “real subsumption” (Ngai 2003). The extension of neoliberal logic in all spheres of human life can be conceptualized into “real subsumption” of society by capital. This subsumption involves not only the formation of what Marx referred to as a specifically capitalist mode of production, but also the incorporation of all subjective potential, the capacity to communicate, to feel, to create, to think into productive powers for capital. Capital no longer simply exploits labor, understood as the physical capacity to transform objects, but puts to work the capacities to create and communicate that traverse all social relations. Under neoliberalism, any activity that increases the capacity to “earn income, to achieve satisfaction, even migration, the crossing of borders from one country to another, is an investment in human capital” (Read 2009:28). Workers become individuals for whom every action, from taking courses on a new computer software application to having their teeth whitened, can be considered an investment in human capital (Read 2009: 30). The bondage here suggests that the white man can be had for a price and offers English instruction “on tap” whenever the office lady consumer desires because he is available “anytime and anywhere.” He is bound through the commodity form in a form of servitude, as a service worker. But it also means that the office lady consumer is bound to the development of her human capital 24/7. It is not just a matter of effort in the workplace, but expands to fill every waking moment.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the two aspects of the international *lingua franca* English as a commodity and an ideological vehicle and the possible intersection between these two aspects through examining the role English plays in young people's human capital formation, acquisition of symbolic prestige, and cosmopolitan imagination in contemporary China. Although English has always been upheld as the most valuable foreign language in the P.R.C. since its inception in terms of government policy, the commodification of the English language is a relatively recent phenomenon that started in the late 1990s, when both China's economy and higher education underwent state-managed deregulation and neoliberal restructuring allowing private English education to emerge and prosper. Since then young college students are no longer guaranteed jobs by the state; they have more "freedom" and can make their own "choices," but they also face more risk and are vulnerable to the uncertainty of the global economy.

At such a transformative historical moment, the acquisition of the linguistic capital of the "dominant" language in the international "linguistic market," i.e., English, becomes essential for the global youth, including Chinese youth, to become a vital, productive, and entrepreneurial subject. This chapter traced out "the connections between people's lived experience with larger processes working at the scale of the global" (Anagnost 2013) through ethnographic portraits of how individual agents, such as the college students at the New Oriental School in Beijing, engaged with a global future through purchasing and consuming English as an international language, investing in their human capital, and imaging themselves as part of the global present through the same process.

Yet far from a unified linguistic market that Bourdieu (1977: 654) suggested as the precondition for high linguistic profit, we see different processes of commodification of the English language at different sites of exchange in English education in China. Competing

businesses produced competing, sometimes contradictory, discourses and images that appeal to different desires of potential consumers. At the Washington English School in Eric Henry's research (2008), commodities that have the same symbolic association as English to modernity and cosmopolitanism, such as café latte, English movies, and opportunities to talk with foreigners, are sold to a group of students who occupy a lower socioeconomic status and are restricted by their limited opportunities for study abroad. In the case of the New Oriental and Crazy English programs, English learning, which is oriented towards the global, is coupled with nationalism in a seemingly contradictory way. Yet when we take a closer look at what the instructors and students were saying, we understand that their framing of nationalism is a cosmopolitan one and that cosmopolitanism and nationalism do not necessarily contradict each other. At the EF English First program, the English language is commodified through the image of the middle-class white man and the promise of a romance with him. We can even say that the white man is commodified as the service provider to the office lady consumer. The advertisers capitalized on the raced, classed, and sexualized meanings that associated the English language in a hierarchized English education market. Finally, this English education market is packaged with ideologies that privilege linear thinking and rationality that the English language supposedly carries and essentialize the Chinese language as static, Chinese thought patterns circular and their learning styles illogical. In the next chapter, I explore the other aspect of the English-Chinese-Minority Languages power triangle: the power relations between the national language Mandarin Chinese and ethnic minority languages in Xinjiang.

CHAPTER 2 MAPPING OUT *MINZU* EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE POLICIES IN XINJIANG

In this chapter I map out Chinese policies on *minzu* education (ethnic minority education), the linguistic landscape of Xinjiang and language policies in China that are particularly relevant to Xinjiang. To explain the complex power relations between English, Chinese and Turkic languages, in Chapter 1 I explored the two aspects of the international *lingua franca* English as a commodity and an ideological vehicle and the possible intersection between these two aspects through examining the role English plays in young people's human capital formation, acquisition of symbolic prestige, and cosmopolitan imagination in contemporary China. This chapter discusses the power relations between the national language Mandarin Chinese and ethnic minority languages and their speakers. Before I delve into this, I must explain the *minzu* paradigm and introduce Xinjiang and the so-called "Xinjiang problem" that emerged in recent years to readers unfamiliar with these terms.

The *Minzu* Paradigm

Although this dissertation is not a theoretical paper on the concept of *minzu* and the *minzu* paradigm in China, it is necessary to give a short explanation of what *minzu* means in the Chinese context to readers unfamiliar with China as the term is frequently used in state politics, policy making, and popular discourse which are relevant to this dissertation research. More importantly, informants in my research, i.e. ordinary ethnic minority and Han peoples all use this term in daily conversations in Xinjiang to refer to themselves or others. For a detailed discussion of the historical development of the term and the *minzu* paradigm, readers should refer to Brown

(1996), Gladney (2003; 2004), Harrell (1995; 2001), Mullaney (2004; 2011), and McCarthy (2009).

Minzu is very difficult to translate into English. Like many other key social science terms used in Chinese, *minzu* began as a Japanese neologism, *minzoku*, invented to translate the German word *Volk*. Although *minzu* generates a wide range of translations and interpretations, they can be broken down to three main sets of meaning: “nation,” “ethnic groups/ethnos” and “minority group” (Elliot 2015: 202). The difficulty of translating this term leads to a broad consensus in Chinese academia in recent years that *minzu* is no longer suited to describe what in English is called “ethnicity.” According to Mark Elliot (2015), the majority of Chinese scholars now seem to agree that *minzu* should be reserved for ideas such as “nation”²⁷ or “people” and that for the more anthropologically inflected notion of ethnicity, it is better to use the word *zuqun*. In practical terms, the effects of the emergence of the term *zuqun* and the decline of *minzu* as “nationality” are most obvious in the English translation of the names of institutes and journals. For example, *Zhongyang minzu daxue* (中央民族大学), which used to be the Central Nationalities Institute, and later the Central University for Nationalities, is now the “*Minzu* University of China,” though the word *minzu* does not mean anything to the general public of English speakers.

The current officially recognized 56 ethnic groups (including the majority Han) in the PRC were classified based on the Soviet model and four characteristics of a nationality as outlined by Stalin (common territory, language, economy, and psychological nature), and also placed along a scale of “the particular stage in the universal progression of history (the primitive, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist modes of production) that people had reached at the time of

²⁷ In the sense of “nation” and “nationality,” *minzu* is more suitable to name the three big ethnic groups in Inner Asian China, i.e. Uyghurs, Tibetans and Mongols, who historically occupied territories in Inner Asia and were once nations.

classification (Harrell 1995: 23). Mullaney's research (2004; 2011) on the 1957-8 *Minzu Shibie* (Ethnic Classification Project) also points out the project's close connection to the linguistic models used in the Republican era (1911-1949) which in turn traced back to a British colonial officer Henry R. Davies' amateur linguistic classification work among the ethnic groups in Yunnan and surrounding areas. For five of the *minzu* that have high populations, i.e. Uyghur, Hui, Tibetans, Mongols and Zhuang, autonomous regions were established from the late 1940s to the 1960s. An autonomous region is a first-level administrative subdivision in China. Like a province, an autonomous region has its own local government, but an autonomous region has more legislative rights accorded to the eponymous ethnic group, at least on paper.

In state and popular discourse, *Minzu* is often used as a substitute for the meaning of "ethnic minorities" though *Hanzu* (Han ethnicity) the dominant is also classified as a *minzu*. Therefore, *minzu* becomes a marked linguistic term that indicates the ethnic minorities as different, exotic, culturally backward, not economically developed or technologically advanced, among other meanings in people's minds. The stereotypical representations of the 55 ethnic minorities as exotic groups who wear ethnic costumes and sing and dance all the time are reinforced in school textbooks (see Chu 2015), magazines, stamps, artworks displayed in public space, and even the 2008 Olympics opening ceremony that was broadcast to the whole world, and most noticeable of all to any visitors to China, the annual Central Chinese Television Chinese New Year Gala program in which 55 dancers donning ethnic costumes flood the main stage and sing and dance to open the gala.

The violence, riots and protests that took place China's frontier regions, i.e. Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia, since 2008 have shaken the country and forced the state policy makers and related academics to reflect on the effectiveness of the current *minzu* policy, which

has been in use, with some minor variations, for sixty years. Peking University sociologist Ma Rong's proposal of eliminating the minority nationality status and depoliticizing ethnic identity in China sparked a series of debates that was later generalized as the Second Generation Ethnic Policy, which retrospectively designated the current policy as the "first generation." Mark Elliot (2015) summarizes the debates of the "Second Generation" Ethnic Policy and points out that what is missing in the debate is the concept of "indigene." That is to say, the ethnic minority groups in China are seen as part of the indivisible "Chinese people" (*zhonghua minzu*/中华民族), part of a "unified polyethnic national configuration" (*tongyi de duominzu guojia geju*), proposed by London-trained Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong (1910-2005), but not as indigenous or aboriginal peoples.

The reasons are primarily political. First, to use aboriginal discourse would be to risk potentially complicated associations with international norms on the rights of first-nation peoples. If the government were to abandon the present *shaoshu minzu* (ethnic minorities) paradigm and instead acknowledge that some non-Han peoples (such as those in Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia) were in fact *yuanzhumin* (aboriginals; a term invented and used in Taiwan), from the center's point of view it would open up a Pandora's Box of new problems. For instance, the PRC might feel pressure to comply with the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as China is a signatory of the declaration and the most sensitive issue in the Declaration has to do with land rights.

Secondly, the very notion of "indigeneity" would appear to be at odds with the concept of China as a "unified polyethnic state." China's spokesperson Qin Xiaomei once made the government's position clear in 2014 that the concept of "indigenous" is used relative to external colonizers, China's 56 ethnic groups are all resident nationalities of China and indigenous

peoples of the sort found in other parts of the world do not exist in China. This is to say that China can have no “indigenous peoples” because it was never a colonizer, and “aborigines” can exist only where colonial power has brought them into being.

The impact of the missing “indigene” in the current discussion on ethnic policy and the trend to treat nationality groups, namely Uyghurs, Tibetans, and Mongols, as ethnic groups, is what Uradyn Bulag (2003) points out that they face the “prospect of becoming a ‘deinstitutionalized, depoliticized, and deterritorialized’ ‘ethnic group’ in a racialized ‘Chinese Nation’.” I agree with Elliot’s argument that “indigeneity” should be brought into the discussion, but my other question is: how is giving national minorities indigenous status different from autonomous regions which we already have if we give the autonomous region real autonomy? Basically the question is: is the problem a theoretical one or about implementation? As is shown in the next section, the problems seem to lie in actual implementation of the policy rather than in theorizing the *minzu* concept and overturning the old paradigm.

An overview of Xinjiang and the so-called “Xinjiang Problem”

Xinjiang is actually two areas, separated from each other by the Tianshan Mountains, which extend from east to west. To the north lies a barren and sandy plain known as Dzungaria (Junggar). This plain in turn is bounded in the north by the Altai Mountains, which form part of the Chinese border with the State of Mongolia. To the east and west, however, it is open, allowing a slight airflow to reach it and bring a little moisture to the area. To the south of the Tianshan Range lies the Tarim Basin, a deep depression encircled by mountains that block drainage to the outside. The center of the Tarim Basin is filled with nothing but sand dunes. It is even drier than Dzungaria. But in the summer, snows melt from the slopes of the mountains and

form streams that bring water to the edge of the basin floor. From west to east around the north of the basin, the Tarim River and its tributaries flow in a great arc that terminates in the saline Lop Nur Lake, not far from where China now conducts its nuclear weapons tests. In such a place farming would be impossible without irrigation, but with it, the fertile soils grow a rich variety of crops.

For thousands of years people have farmed in this narrow band around the Tarim Basin, using methods much like those that served other early civilizations, such as those in the Mesopotamian and Egyptian river valleys. And from Roman times on, these settlements served as the link for trade between China and the West, the famous “Silk Road.” It was a good place for a civilization to develop.

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the People’s Republic of China constitutes about one-sixth of China’s landmass, borders on eight Central Asian and South Asian countries²⁸, provides a number of critical natural resources sustaining China’s economic growth, and is a major population safety valve for resettling Han Chinese from China Proper. This area is also home to a number of non-Han groups, primarily Turkic peoples. Besides a Uyghur population of officially 10 million (as of the 2010 census), Xinjiang is also home to smaller populations of Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Oyrat Mongols, Sibes (related to Manchus), Uzbeks, Chinese Muslims (Huis) and other groups²⁹.

Xinjiang has been a multiethnic and multilingual region both in history and at present. Ethnic integration as well as conflict has been quite common in this area. Although after September 11, 2001, the Bush administration and the Chinese security services collaborated on the so-called “war on terrorism” and this area started to draw international attention, what gained

²⁸ Xinjiang borders Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

²⁹ Uyghur – 45%, Han – 41%, Kazakh – 7%, Hui – 5%, Kyrgyz – 0.9%, Mongol – 0.8%, Dongxiang – 0.3%, Tajiks – 0.2%, Sibe – 0.2% (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2010).

most international media coverage was what came to be known as the “July 5th Incident,” which made the headlines of major western news media such as the New York Times, Al Jazeera, and BBC for at least three days continuously. On July 5th, 2009, ethnic violence exploded in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, between Uyghur and Han people, leaving nearly 200 people dead, hundreds injured, and over a thousand in police custody. After the riot, Internet service and international phone calls in the autonomous region were shut down for 200 days. This was by no means the first incident of violence in the PRC history of Xinjiang, not to mention uncountable wars and riots in the pre-1949 time in this area. Comparing Xinjiang with the relatively “peaceful” southwestern provinces such as Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guizhou, where many ethnic minority groups reside, or Inner Mongolia or the northeastern borders, Xinjiang had seen much more violence in history. In the domestic and international media, some people asked if there is something essential about the Turkic peoples in Xinjiang that it is impossible for any Chinese regime to rule this area. Others asked if the *minzu* policy in China has failed in this area. There emerged a term “Xinjiang Problem” in public discussion.

I argue that it is not that there is a fundamental nature or essence about Xinjiang or the Turkic peoples that make it impossible for any Chinese regime to rule this area. I suggest we look at the historical processes of the invention and implementation of the ethnic policies. I argue that the problem lies exactly in the incompatibility between how the state perceives the ethnic policy and how the local peoples perceive the policy. In the following sections, I analyze this incompatibility of the two perceptions in the realms of history(ies), political autonomy, socioeconomic life, culture, and religion, to give a general overview of the issues that concerns Xinjiang, before I go into detail on the linguistic landscape, language policy, and bilingual education.

History or histories?

History is a foundation of nation building and group identity. The struggle over the history of Xinjiang between the official historians in China and the Uyghur nationalists has been going on for a long time and will continue into the future. The party-state has relied on official history to justify its political and military control over Xinjiang, vindicate Han immigration, and inspire confidence in its economic policies. On the other hand, Uyghur nationalist history has provided a charter for Uyghur identity, underscored the centrality of Islam in Uyghur life, and offered Uyghurs both precedent and warrant for their resistance to Chinese rule.

All written history is partial, especially national histories. National histories from around the world share certain basic features or organizing principles. Nationalists invariably contend that their nations are ancient, tracing their origins into deep antiquity. They often backdate the incorporation of peripheral territories into the core, thus reducing the heterogeneous and conflictual past of modern states to a unilinear narrative of national becoming. As Prasenjit Duara (1995) points out, single-stranded narratives intentionally suppress evidence of historical alternatives. They write competing narratives out of history.

The Chinese official historians and the Uyghur nationalist historians share this common feature. Uyghur intellectuals have aimed to show that Uyghurs arrived in today's Xinjiang a very long time ago and are therefore indigenous. Being such and having founded a series of independent states there, they can legitimately claim the land today. Official Han historians have also sought to link people to land. They claim that Xinjiang "has always been part of China," and they assert that Uyghurs migrated to the region only in the 9th century (Bovingdon 2004a).

In terms of historiographical strategies, official histories are China-centered. The focus of the narrative is the central plains of East Asia, and particularly the regions of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers. Thus, the histories of Xinjiang or the Uyghurs are necessarily histories of the periphery in this paradigm. To respond to the official history, Uyghur historians have “recentered” their historiography of the Uyghurs in Central Asia. In their narrative, the Uyghur homeland is the center, while China is the periphery. The official Chinese historians believe that each successive dynasty was “China,” or rather a more or less faithful approximation of a Platonic ideal of “China,” which just happened to be based on the Qing at its greatest territorial extent. As Bovingdon points out, it is “but a short step from this to positing a timeless Xinjiang that remained an ‘inseparable part of China’ from the Han dynasty onwards, in other words, for the past 2000 years” (2004: 357). While official Chinese historiography retroactively designates all polities on the territory of the PRC as parts of “China’s history,” Uyghur historians retroactively designate most Central Asian polities as Uyghur.

My presentation of both sides is not to argue that both sides are to blame. Rather, I must point out that the power relations between the party-state and the Uyghur nationalists are extremely unbalanced, at least the resources they each have to disseminate their versions of the history. The party-state has devoted much money and time to the research and writing of history. It has inculcated in not only generations of Han scholars but also the general population the grand narrative version of the national history. By contrast, Uyghur intellectuals have far less resources and are under severe political surveillance, but have produced a major body of work as their way of challenging the official history, though similarly totalizing.

Political autonomy or heteronomy?

In the 1940s, CCP theorists proposed a system of regional autonomy to give Uyghurs (and other non-Han peoples) control over their own affairs, while not compromising China's sovereignty. However, political scientist Gardner Bovingdon (2004b) argues that though the Party claimed that the establishment of Xinjiang as a "Uyghur Autonomous Region" gave Uyghurs unprecedented political sway in the territory they had historically occupied, in fact it minimized their political influence in a number of ways. It has diminished, rather than augmented, the Uyghurs' say over their individual and collective lives.

According to Bovingdon (2004b), to counter Uyghur claims that Xinjiang belonged to them, Chinese officials in the Republican period (1911-1949) announced that thirteen different groups, including the Han, had long occupied the territory. After the Communist victory over the Nationalists in 1949, CCP administrators adopted this stance instrumentally. Bovingdon argues that in assigning to each of the originally recognized thirteen groups representation in the government and control over some part of the territory, the Party intended to create divisions among the peoples of Xinjiang, thereby setting them up for co-optation by the Chinese state. In this aim it succeeded through dividing Xinjiang into a number of smaller "subautonomies."

When the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) was established in October 1955, in principle, the Uyghurs thereby received title to the entire territory. In reality, they were confronted with a "condominium of nested autonomies" (Bovingdon 2004b: 118). The Uyghurs occupied a patchwork of lands in the east and south, and they were divided and surrounded by lands assigned to the Mongols, Kazakhs, Hui, Kyrgyz and others. In parceling out various subautonomies, the CCP simultaneously satisfied two goals: to reinforce the idea that Xinjiang belonged to thirteen different *minzu* and to counterbalance the overwhelming political and demographic weight of the Uyghurs. The political and material interests of each of the other

recognized groups were therefore, to a certain extent, aligned with the central government and against the Uyghurs.

Bovingdon (2004b) argues that rather than autonomy – that is, self-government – to the Uyghurs and others in Xinjiang, the system in fact enacts heteronomy, or rule by others. The party leadership has selected and promoted Uyghurs to exercise power only in a fashion consonant with CCP goals, and it has reserved the decisive authority at virtually all levels for trusted Han, who have been imported from posts in China proper. In administrative terms, this is a frankly colonial apparatus. Political disenfranchisement in the administration is further exacerbated by the flows of migration of Han population, especially after the economic reforms since the 1980s, a phenomenon that has become a concern of many Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities.

Economic development, population and socio-economic mobility

Although Xinjiang is remote from the more economic developed coastal areas and the metropolises like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, vast oil and gas reserves have provided a platform for the economic development of Xinjiang under the rule of the PRC (Wiemer 2004). The border trade with Central Asian republics has also flourished since the ports were opened on the northern border with Kazakhstan and Russia since the 1990s. Both strategies have fueled broader-based economic growth and in-migration of labor from inner China. However, ethnic minorities claim that they benefit little from this economic development and they fear increasing migration of Han population will threaten their existence. This is not an exaggeration. Government-sponsored immigration of Han into the region has been a central component of CCP policy in Xinjiang. Between 1950 and 1978, the Party “cajoled, induced or ordered” several

million Han to move to Xinjiang, many to Production and Construction Corps³⁰ farms (Bovingdon 2004b: 126). Many of them returned to their places of origin. The 1990s saw a new wave of immigrants on their own initiatives. In 2000 Xinjiang's 7.49 million Han represented 40.6 percent of Xinjiang's total population of 18.5 million, or 43 percent if we count the "floating population" of non-registered migrants (Millward 2007: 307). With this increase in the Han population, what we observed seems not integration among ethnic groups, but more segregation (ibid) and sometimes verbal or even physical conflicts (Dautcher 2009).

In terms of cadre recruitment, according to Bovingdon (2004b) there are substantial numbers of Uyghurs in both low-level and high-level offices, but they are very seriously underrepresented at the middle levels. We can make two inferences from this: First, if the premise of proportional representation is that people belonging to a particular group will be particularly attuned to the needs and aspirations of that group and can therefore work to represent those interests, the configuration in Xinjiang structurally attenuates any representation of Uyghur interests at the middle level, making it harder for messages to reach the top level. Second, if we assume (probably not entirely correctly) a model in which officials at each level are recruited from the pool of leaders at the lower level, then the talent pool of mid-level leaders is far too small to enable selection of especially talented leaders for the top level; we can infer that the top leaders are not promoted through the system on the basis of talent but take accelerated trips to the top because of their tractability.

³⁰ The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, known as XPCC or *Bingtuan* for short, is a unique economic and paramilitary government organization in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the China. The XPCC has administrative authority over several medium-sized cities as well as settlements and farms in Xinjiang. It has its own administrative structure, fulfilling governmental functions such as healthcare and education for areas under its jurisdiction. The Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region does not usually interfere in the administration of these areas. See Becquelin 2000 and McMillen 1981 for more detail.

On a brighter side, at least for the middle-class Uyghurs, they find their ethnic pride through participating in the global economy, though not looking eastward to China, but westward to Central Asia and the Middle East. Uyghur-American Arfiya Eri (2008) observes that despite the growing influence of Han Chinese culture, the economic and social forces of globalization have empowered the Uyghurs of Urumqi with new ways to express and preserve their Turkic identity. Additionally, the evolving economic and cultural interdependencies between the Uyghurs of Xinjiang and Turkic peoples to the West have shifted efforts to preserve Uyghur identity away from political and violent means toward cultural and economic means. Modern Uyghur culture of consumption in foodstuffs, entertainment and real estate shows the rise of distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic popular Uyghur culture that thrives and expands with the aid of globalization and development.

Freedom in Religious Expression and Practice

Most Uyghurs espouse a tempered, syncretic Sufism. While virtually all Uyghurs identify themselves as Muslims, what being Muslim entails varies considerably depending on locale and education. Islam appears to permeate most aspects of daily life in rural areas, while many urban Uyghurs only abstain from pork and observe a few major holidays. However, this urban-rural distinction is superficial; while urban Uyghurs may not pray five times a day at the mosque like their rural counterparts, Islam is nonetheless embedded in many of their daily activities, such as greetings and exclamations, modes of dress, scrupulous personal cleanliness (including the consumption of halal food), and a sense of solidarity with other Muslims in the world. For both urban and rural Uyghurs, ethnic identity is linked with religious and linguistic identity.

From 1978 till the late 1980s, state policies towards academic and religious expressions were relatively open and tolerant as part of its overture to the Uyghurs and other minority groups after the antireligious excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Themes that had previously been forbidden and perspectives that would have been harshly punished cautiously appeared in print during this period. In Xinjiang, historical and literary works have emerged to claim that the Uyghurs had a long history as a “nation” and had established many independent states. Officials initially tolerated these “heterodox” writings. A great number of mosques were rebuilt and new ones constructed as well. Many villages had increased resources as a consequence of the agricultural reforms of the early Deng era, and many of those communities decided to build mosques with the new wealth.

But after the 1990 “Baren Incident”³¹, and in response to the shocking collapse of the Soviet Union (which brought about the independence of the Central Asian states), the government reversed its previous policy of tolerance. Publications of both academic work and popular culture face censorship. Officials persecuted “illegal religious activities,” defrocking suspect clerics, breaking up unauthorized scripture schools (madrasa), and halting the construction of mosques. Into the mid-1990s, the local governments such as Kashgar were warned about Koran study schools and study classes that had taken on *talip* (religious pupils). The source of the writers’ alarm was clearly the role such groups were playing in the politics of neighboring Central Asian states and Afghanistan and Pakistan. Especially after 9/11, Chinese media reports on the relationship between the Uyghurs and Islamic militants became a discourse of “war on terrorism.” Religious activities came under close state surveillance.

³¹ Also called the Baren Township Riot, this was a riot and armed confrontation that took place in April 1990. On April 5, 1990, in Kizilsu's Akto County and in the town of Baren, Zeydun Yusup, a member of the East Turkistan Islamic Party led 200 men to protest. They marched to the local government office and demanded an end to the mass immigration of Han Chinese into Xinjiang. It ended in a violent conflict between the civilians and the army soldiers that led to many deaths.

One state policy on religion that is worth analysis is the exceptions that the party-state makes to the constitution. The constitution maintains, and textbooks on religious policy repeat, that every citizen has two freedoms with respect to religious belief: the freedom to believe or not to believe. However, its chosen strategy has been to protect the freedom of people not to believe and “dilute religious consciousness” in the population. To that end, the Party has placed special emphasis on eliminating the pull of religion on two groups: Party members and students. Though the constitution guarantees the two freedoms described above, Party cadres and students are openly denied the right to believe. For students (youths and children), official explanations stress both the crucial importance of education to the prosperity of the nation and the importance of allowing youths to make a free, “scientific” choice to believe or not to believe, once old enough to choose. Therefore, children younger than 18 years old are not allowed to attend the mosques. However, to prevent youths from practicing religion and others from teaching them about it is to allow another agent to impose unbelief. Furthermore, post-Baren Party strategists decided to make classes in atheism mandatory for all students, regardless of their religion and ethnicity.

James Millward (2004: 64), a historian of Xinjiang, observes two predominant modes of state policies towards Xinjiang in the past century despite the many reversals and oscillations: The first, which has arguably proven relatively successful, may be characterized as pluralistic in that it allows relatively greater political and cultural autonomy to local peoples. The second is muscularly integrationist and assimilationist, and it has been disastrous from the standpoints of both the central government and the indigenous peoples. During the reign of the PRC since 1949, there have been both modes of policies in place in Xinjiang and the facts proved Millward right. The success or failure of China’s ethnic policy in Xinjiang cannot be judged when it is

considered as a whole. But when we look into different periods, we understand the pluralistic policy is the superior one, as was proved by the relatively peaceful period in the late 1970s to late 1980s in Xinjiang.

Linguistic Landscape in Xinjiang

Almost all of the languages spoken by ethnic minorities in North China are Altaic³². The only exceptions are Tajik and Russian. “Altaic” is the term used to refer to a large group of Asian languages believed by most investigators to be genetically related. Included in Altaic are three well-defined subfamilies of fairly closely related languages: Turkic, Mongolian and Tungus. Korean and Japanese, which are very similar in structure to the Altaic languages, are sometimes classified together with them as a single language family. But other linguists argue that they are isolated languages that do not belong to any language families in the world. Both Tajik and Russian belong to the Indo-European language family. Tajik is spoken by an ethnic Iranian group living on the western fringe of Xinjiang. Russian is spoken by the Russian ethnic group in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and the three northeastern provinces Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning.

The People’s Republic of China recognizes seven Turkic minorities: Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Uzbek, Uyghur, Yellow Uyghur (officially called “Yugur” in China), and Salar. Of these seven, the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks were previously nationalities in the Soviet Union and now have their own independent countries after the Soviet collapse. The Tatar region is a federal

³² Language families are ascertained by systematically comparing modern language varieties, as well as by reconstructing earlier stages of the language family. Via decades and centuries of applying this so-called historical-comparative method, scholars have established groups of related languages, or language families, such as Indo-European or Sino-Tibetan. Scholars assign languages to the same family when they display systematic correspondences of linguistic features. Though some hypotheses have triggered disagreement, in general, theories of language relationships are widely accepted by scholars.

subject of Russia. There are 4,000 Chinese Tatar in Xinjiang, 900,000 Kazakhs live in China, principally along the Kazakhstan and Mongolian border areas in Xinjiang, although there is also a large patch of Kazakh territory in northern Qinghai Province. The 114,000 Kyrgyz who live in China are found mostly in the western corner of Xinjiang on the southern slopes of the Tianshan Range. The Uzbek language has over ten million speakers in the world. In China, 12,000 Uzbek speakers are found on the eastern side of some of the highest peaks in the Pamir Range.

The Uyghurs and their close relatives, the Yellow Uyghurs (Yugurs) and the Salar, are found almost exclusively within Chinese borders. The Yellow Uyghurs, who live far away from the Uyghurs of Xinjiang, are given separate minority status and called “Yugur” (Chinese: *Yugu/裕固*). They have called themselves the “Yellow Uyghur” (/sariy uiyur/) at least since A.D. 840, when they first moved into their present-day home in Gansu following the destruction of the Uyghur empire by the Kyrgyz. Since that time they have lived separated from the other Uyghurs, long enough for the languages to have become mutually unintelligible. Some of the Yellow Uyghurs gave up their Turkic language and began to speak a variety of Mongolian. Most of the Yellow Uyghurs, whether they speak Turkic or Mongolian, now know Chinese as well. The Yugurs believe in Buddhism. The Salar, like the Yellow Uyghur, are also classified as a separate ethnic minority by the Chinese government’s Ethnic Classification project. For some linguists, Salar language is another dialect of Uyghur (Ramsey 1987: 186). For others, Salar is a mixed language of Turkic, Tibetan, and Chinese (Dwyer 1997). The Salars live far removed from the Uyghur region in a small Turkic pocket in the eastern corner of Qinghai Province. Also, unlike the Yugurs (Yellow Uyghurs), they are Muslims.

The Uyghurs are the sedentary Turkic population of Xinjiang. They are the principal ethnic group in the area. The economy of the Uyghurs is based upon the farming of fruits, cotton,

wheat, and rice through extensive irrigation from the oases and streams scattered around this arid region. This way of life more than anything else separates them from the pastoral peoples of Xinjiang: the Kazakh, the Tatar, and the Kyrgyz, who otherwise share much of the Islamic and Turkic culture of the Uyghurs.

The Uyghurs are often, and perhaps more properly, called the “New Uyghur.” Until early in the 20th century, “Uyghur” was not what they had called themselves; for in fact, they had no name at all. Those living on the previous Soviet side of the border had called themselves *Taranchi*, which meant nothing more than “farmers”; and those Turkic people farming on the Chinese side of the border had taken the name of whatever oasis area they happened to live in. In 1921, at a meeting of the East Turkic people in Tashkent, delegates from both the Soviet and Chinese areas decided to take the name “Uyghur,” after the ancient Turkic kingdom that had flourished in Chinese Turkestan in the ninth century. Until that time, the only people who had continued to call themselves “Uyghur” were the Yellow Uyghurs of Gansu Province.

The “New Uyghurs” are descendants from the “Old Uyghurs,” who had continued to live in Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang) even after their kingdom had been overrun several times and had broken up into a number of small, independent states. But in the ancestry of the “New Uyghurs” there is also a mixture of many other peoples who have lived in that area. The Turkic people of Xinjiang are the racial and cultural product of a region that historically lay at the crossroads of East and West.

In Chinese Turkestan the Uyghurs gave up being nomads and settled into a more prosperous life. Their kingdom lasted for over four hundred years, from 847 to about 1270, long enough for them to make an indelible mark on North China. The degree of civilization they attained impressed even the Song Chinese. Among their cultural achievements, the Uyghurs are

especially known for the so-called Uyghur script – “so-called,” because the Uyghurs did not invent it. By the time the Uyghurs arrived in Chinese Turkestan, it had already been in use for centuries; apparently, some other, unknown Turkic people must have been the originators, and they in turn had merely adapted it from the cursive script of the Sogdians, the Iranian forebears of the Tajik. But the Uyghurs are associated with the script, first of all, because they created a literature with it – Uyghur works on Manichean, Nestorian Christian, and Buddhist teachings, as well as some astrological works and poetry are still preserved – and secondly, because they were instrumental in transmitting the script to others, the most important of whom were the Mongols.

As a regional language, Uyghur has a significant population of semi-speakers and non-native speakers. Uyghur is the native language of 11 million speakers both within and outside of China. Conservative estimates place the Xinjiang Uyghur population at 10 million (2010 PRC Census), with an additional population of 300,000 in Kazakhstan (as of 1993); ca. 90,000 in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (officially 37,000 in 1998); 3,000 in Afghanistan; and 1,000 in Mongolia (according to a 1982 estimate). Uyghurs have also migrated to other countries, particularly Turkey, Australia, and Germany.

Because the modern border was historically porous, there is little difference between the forms of these languages spoken in Xinjiang and those of the respective titular Central Asian republics. Besides a high degree of mutual intelligibility, Uyghurs and other groups east and west of the Pamir Mountains share similar though not identical cultural identities. Yet beyond this intragroup identity (e.g., Kazakhstan Uyghur/Xinjiang Uyghur), a degree of overlapping identities between groups also exists. For example, the Uzbeks, Uyghurs, and Kyrgyz all claim Mahmud al-Kashgari, the well-known 11th century scholar, as their own. The language and culture for the Uyghurs is closely related to that of the Uzbeks. Both groups are primarily oasis-

dwelling and urban farmers and merchants; both speak southeastern Turkic languages and both claim to be the literary heirs to medieval Chagatay culture.

As the Chagatay language was once the *lingua franca* of much of Central Asia, so now is Uyghur a major interlanguage for nearly 2 million non-Han peoples west of the Gobi desert and east of the Pamir Mountains. These peoples include Tungusic Sibes; Iranic Wakhi and Sarikoli (the latter two officially if erroneously termed “Tajiks”); the Mongolic Dagurs; and even Russians in Xinjiang (Dwyer 2005). Some numerically smaller ethnic minorities in Xinjiang use Uyghur even as their first language. These include Tatars, Uzbeks, Akto Turks (who are officially classified as Kyrgyz); and some groups lumped under the Uygur ethnonym, such as the Eynus (exonymically Abdals), Dolans, and Loptuq (exonymically Lopliks). Even major minorities in Xinjiang such as Kazakhs (1.46 million) and Kyrgyz (0.18 million), particularly those who reside in or near Uyghur areas, generally have some competence in Uyghur, learning it as a second or third language. Kazakh also constitutes a *lingua franca*, but only at the prefectural level, i.e. in the Ili and Tarbaghatay (Chinese: *Tacheng*; Uyghur: *Qöqäk Xähri*) areas in the northwest Xinjiang bordering Kazakhstan.

As a *lingua franca*, Uyghur is used in a greater number of social domains than any other language in that area: the home, the marketplace, street and business signs, the media and in many schools, besides being any official language of government and court. Local education officials have tacitly supported Uyghur’s status as a *lingua franca* in that the title “Uyghur” is *de facto* equivalent to “minority nationality” for policymakers and officials. Indeed, for local and national officialdom, the salient ethnolinguistic distinction has been between *hanzu* (“Han Chinese”) and *minzu* (“non-Han”). Thus, those Xinjiang institutions, from daycares to universities, that offer both Chinese-language and non-Chinese-language classrooms call

Uyghur-language classrooms *minzu ban* (“nationality classes”), even though these classes contain students of mixed ethnicity. Uyghur thus has representative status for the minority languages of Xinjiang, just as Tibetan is the flagship language for greater Tibet.

Bilingual Education and Language Policies in Xinjiang

The Status of Minority Languages in China

I use Arienne Dwyer’s pyramid model (1998; 2005) to explain the status of the ethnic minority languages in China (see Figure 4). The sociolinguistic status of China’s languages can be conceptualized as a pyramid, with modern standard Mandarin (*putonghua*, “the common language”) at the pyramid’s very peak. Below the National Standard (Standard Mandarin) in the pyramid are five more levels: Regional Standards (or sub-state languages), including for example Uyghur, Lhasa Tibetan, and regional varieties of Chinese; Primary Minorities and Secondary Minorities (such as Amdo Tibetan and Evenki, respectively); and finally, unrecognized languages without official status (e.g. Tuva). See Figure 4 for a spatial rendering of the language-power pyramid.

In terms of prestige and power, regional *linguae francae* such as Uyghur stand together with Standard Chinese at the top of a sociolinguistic pyramid. Both are high-prestige languages that dominate central institutions including the media and trade on regional and national levels, respectively. Languages in Levels III-V of the language-power pyramid are low prestige nationally. Primary and secondary languages both benefit from preferential language policies, although such policies are often implemented more weakly for Secondary languages. While Primary Minorities often have access to native-language schooling and broadcast and print media

in their languages, Secondary Minorities often are not subject to language planning efforts. Secondary Minorities with new orthography proposals, for examples, do not easily obtain approval from the Nationalities Commission, the ministerial-level state agency that oversees minority policy and governance.

Although all ethnolinguistic groups are equal under Chinese law, from a policy standpoint, only the high-prestige language varieties (those in Categories I & II) are accorded language maintenance support. Only varieties with a large population and a significant body of written literature are a focus of language, education, and media policies. Historically, Chinese elites have considered writing, in particular written Chinese, as the keystone to civilization. Those minority populations with a body of written literature in a non-Latin orthography are accorded significant accommodation by China in administrative, educational, and popular domains. Regional standards (III) are the focus of media policy and can control local government, whereas local Subvarieties (IV) and Unrecognized Languages (V) are ignored on all but a theoretical level. For local subvarieties and unrecognized languages, the “covert monolingual policy of the state eliminates any potential benefits accorded to these languages by the Constitution” (Dwyer 2005: 15)

Figure 1: LANGUAGE AND POWER IN CHINA

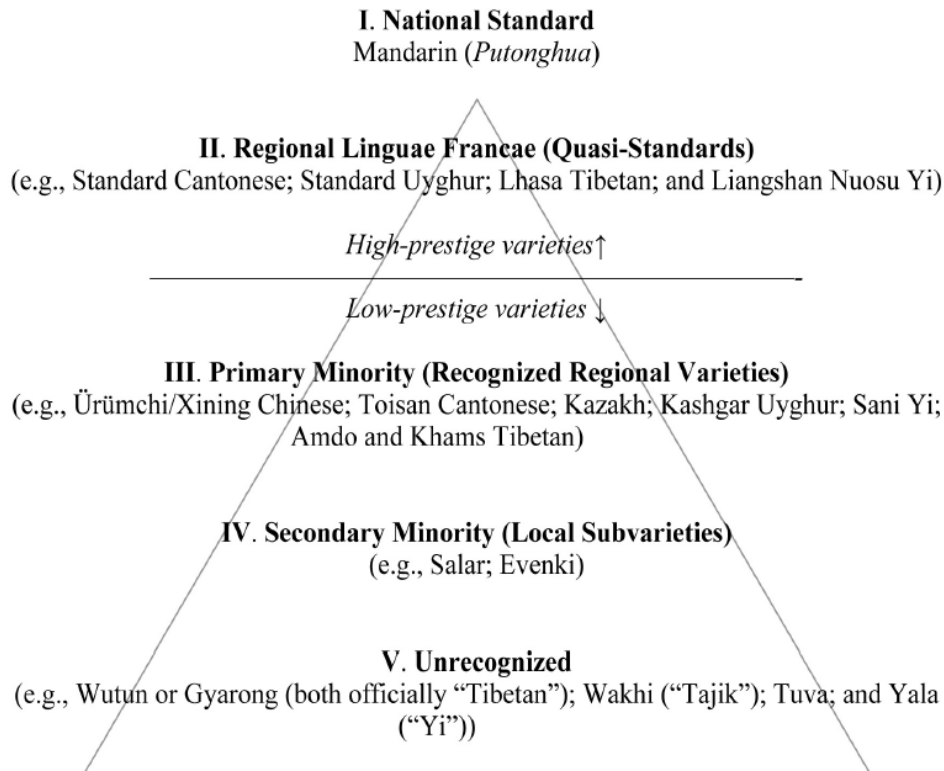


Figure 4: Sociolinguistic Status of Languages in China (Dwyer 2005: 14)

Language Planning in Xinjiang

Minority language planning 1949-1979

The founders of the People’s Republic of China attended very early on to the establishment of official language policies that both tolerated and promoted minority languages of China. Nationwide, tolerance of linguistic diversity was enshrined in the Interim Constitution, allowing all recognized languages to continue to be used, though no resources were specified for

their use. Designated minority areas on China's periphery (so-called Autonomous Regions, Prefectures, and Counties) enjoy written policies promoting minority languages. All languages, regardless of size and status, have legal guarantees; however, major minority languages in these Autonomous Regions are required to share space and resources with Standard Chinese in the domains of government administration, the courts, education, and the media. Article 53 of the September 1949 Common Program (i.e. Interim Constitution), besides promoting a degree of local autonomy in areas with concentrations of minorities, stated that national minorities should have "freedom to develop their dialects and languages, and to preserve or reform their traditions, customs, and religious beliefs."

In the early years of the People's Republic, national minority identification was seen as a key to nation building. Each national minority had the constitutionally enshrined right to develop its own language and culture. Yet during the disastrous Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution of the late 1950s through the early 1970s, the linguistic egalitarianism of the Constitution was jettisoned in the name of Marxist revolution. The newly standardized form of northern Chinese known as *putonghua* ("the common language") became the flagship language associated with the new China; minority languages and cultural practices were to be shunned, as they were associated with "feudalism" or worse. It would be nearly thirty years before national minority-language planning again became a topic of public policy.

Minority language planning 1980-1989

The 1980s were a period of enormous expansion of support for minority languages, with central and local governments establishing and revising writing systems and creating many new

language materials and programs. China's language planning system was responsive to local conditions, including in Xinjiang.

In 1984, the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy (adopted May 1984 and amended February 2001), the law to date in which language planning is an important part, was enacted. Article 47 "guarantees the citizens of every nationality the right to sue in their own nationality's spoken and written language in carrying out litigation." Translation was to be provided for those who do not know the relevant language. It also encourages greater minority representation in Autonomous Region areas and stresses increased autonomy in education and culture. Article 38 encouraged literature, arts, news, publishing, broadcasting, films, and television "in nationality form and with the characteristics of the relevant minority." The Law also supported the publication of minority language books and the preservation of nationality historical and cultural heritage.

The Official Language Standardizing Body

As an indicator of how crucial language is to establishing and maintaining nationhood, a language planning office was opened just months after the Chinese Communist Party established control in Xinjiang. From 1954 to 1986, the official institution for central language planning in Beijing was called the Chinese Committee on Script Reform (Chinese: *Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuan hui*), later renamed the national Language and Script Working Committee (Chinese: *Guojia yuyan wenzi gongzuo weiyuanhui*).

Its manifestation in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, was known as the Autonomous Region Language and Script Working Committee (Uyghur: *Aptonom rayonning til-yeziq xizmät komiteti*). It was this committee that employed linguists to reform the region's Arabic-based

scripts, especially for Uyghur language; the Language and Script Working Committee has branch offices in a number of counties. This committee also published a flagship journal: *Language and Translation*, in the five major languages of Xinjiang: Chinese, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Oyrat Mongolian. As can be seen from the titles of both the committee and its journal, language planning both in Xinjiang and nationwide was fundamentally equated with orthographic standardization and reform.

Orthographic Reforms in Xinjiang

Past Orthographies

Scripts index Uyghur identity, even though writing systems alone are but one small part of ethnic identities. Arabic-script Uyghur, for example, indexes two crucial features of modern Uyghur identity: the Turkic Uyghur language, and being Muslim. Having gone through so many writing systems (chosen or imposed) is one important way that the Uyghurs of Xinjiang differ from their Inner Asian and Central Asian neighbors.

Through two millennia, the Tarim Basin has played host to over two dozen writing systems representing a variety of orthographic types: Sinitic logographic-ideographic scripts (e.g. Chinese or Khitan), Aramaic alphabetic scripts (e.g. Sogdian (Old) Uyghur, later adopted and successively standardized by the Mongols), and syllabic writing systems like Brahmi (e.g. Khotanese), among others. The diversity of orthographies in the area attests to the syncretic effects of extensive long-term exchange across Eurasia to the Indian subcontinent – exchange not merely of goods, but also of religion and language. Indeed, many writing systems were associated with particular religions when introduced into the area: the Sogdian script with Nestorian Christianity, the “Phags pa script” with Tibetan Buddhism, and Arabic with Islam. By

the early 20th century, Arabic-based Turkic and Chinese were the two most common orthographies in the Tarim Basin. The current Uyghur orthography and other Turkic languages in Xinjiang is Arabic based.

Orthographic Reform

1. Sogdian-script Mongolian

Historically, orthographic standardization in Inner Asia was largely confined to the Mongols. From the 13th century at the beginning of the Mongol Yuan dynasty to the 17th century, Mongols employed the Sogdian script adopted from the historical Uyghurs (“Old Uyghurs”). They also used the ill-suited Chinese orthography to write Mongolian. Under Khubilai Khan, the Mongols took a 99-year orthographic detour. Reigning over China and Inner Asia, Khubilai Khan saw the need to have a new script developed that adequately represented the major languages of his empire, and had a high-ranking Tibetan Buddhist lama Phags pa develop a new Sanskrit and Tibetan-based script in 1269. Though it was decreed official, the “Phags pa script” (*dörbeljin üsüg*, “square writing”) never came into widespread use and was abandoned with the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368.

The Sogdian Mongol script, in continuous use since the 13th century, was substantially revised for Oyrat (western Mongolian) in the mid-17th century by the Oyrat leader and Lama Zaya Pandita. This revision, termed *todo bichig* (“clear writing”) eliminated ambiguities in Sogdian script Mongolian. The latter unrevised and older *hudum* script also remained in use and was mandated for some schools in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia from the 1970s to 1990s. In the mid-1990s, the *hudum* script was centrally mandated as the standard for written Mongolian across China. Since 1941, the Republic of Mongolia used a modified Cyrillic standard

orthography based on the Soviet model to write standard Khalkha Mongolian. Since the mid-1990s, however, the country has also been reviving the Sogdian-based *hudum* script.

Such script unification is not without obstacles, however. The vertical *hudum* script is more difficult to learn than a Latin- or Cyrillic-based script, as it contains a number of homographs (front and back vowels are not distinguished, nor are voiced and voiceless stops), and each glyph has three forms (initial, medial, and final). Furthermore, as with Tibetan, the *hudum* script reflects a much older variety of the language, so that many written glyphs are not pronounced. None of these obstacles is insurmountable. After all, English has managed to become an international language despite having an infamously archaic and irregular spelling system; Arabic-based scripts like those used in Xinjiang were also re-designed from the Arabic-derived Persian script to have up to four forms of each character. If the transition from Cyrillic to a Sogdian-based script were successfully implemented in Mongolia, this standardization would allow most Mongols a unified orthography, unlike the Turkic speakers of Inner and Central Asia.

2. Experiments with Cyrillic-based orthographies

According to Dwyer (2005), in the 1920s and 1930s, as Central Asia came under Soviet control, all of the Central Asian Soviet republics were required to adopt diverse Cyrillic orthographies³³. These republics also discussed developing writing systems for the sizeable Central Asian Uyghur population as well, though Uyghur was to be one of the last Central Asian Turkic languages to adopt Cyrillic (Dwyer 2005).

³³ In the earlier period—in 1926, the Central Asian Soviet republics were made to shift from Arabic to Latin script, as this was seen as more “international,” but by 1935 there was another policy change requiring Cyrillic (to help promote Russian language and closeness with Russia) (Roudik 2007:134). Thanks to Laada Bilaniuk for this reference.

The decades following the foundation of the PRC saw a period of orthographic chaos for major Inner Asian languages within the Chinese territory, with language planning flapping along behind ever-shifting political winds. Between 1949 and 1957, Chinese language policy was closely tied to that of the Soviet Union. Though Cyrillic-based Uyghur had already been approved in the Soviet Central Asian republics in 1946, re-standardization of even the Arabic-based Uyghur script was approved first on Soviet territory (Almaty) in 1951. This standard was then adopted on the advice of Soviet advisors for China's new Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1955.

Usage of Cyrillic in Xinjiang reached its peak between 1955 and 1958, when it was introduced into a number of schools and employed in academic publications. Actual policy, however, was chaotic, with Cyrillic officially adopted in 1956, officially abandoned in February 1957, and then reinstated later that year.

3. Arabic-based Turkic orthographies

For the oasis dwellers of the Tarim and Junggarian Basins, an Arabic-based script gradually became dominant between the 10th and 15th centuries as Islam spread eastwards in the region. Before being adopted east of the Pamirs, this script had been adapted for Persian much earlier and then had been modified for the medieval Central Asian Turkic *lingua franca* Chagatay. This orthography has predominated in the region up to the present day.

The Arabic-based script was first revised for Uyghur in 1925. The first Uyghur language-planning meetings in the world were held in 1925 in Samarkand and 1928 in Almaty, at a time when Uyghur speakers were still using essentially the Arabic-based Chagatay script. Switching to a Latin-based script was discussed at the first meeting and formally adopted at the second

(Nadzip 1970, cited in Bruchis 1988). From 1930 to 1946, Uyghurs on the Soviet territory used both the official Latin-based script and an unofficial Cyrillic script for Uyghur, adopting Cyrillic officially only in 1946. East of the Pamirs (i.e. China), where there had been no official change to a Latin-based script, the Arabic-based script continued to be used. Even in the border areas of Ili and Tarbaghatay, the Latin script had not taken hold. Instead, a standardization of the Uyghur Arabic script was proposed by the Uyghur linguist Ibrahim Muti'i (1920-2010) in Urumqi in 1948. In 1979, the Old Script (*kona yeziq*, i.e., Arabic-based) was revived. 1982 and 1987 saw the formal adoption of a revised version of the 1920s Arabic script. Pamphlets and an orthographic dictionary were then published first to facilitate the transition and then to promulgate the latest orthographic reform of the early 1990s (Xinjiang UAR Language and Script Task Committee 1985). Nearly all Uyghurs favor the Arabic script for reasons of practicality, aesthetics, and group identity. Knowledge of this script allows access to the largest body of modern Uyghur and premodern Central Asian literature. The Arabic script is considered by Uyghurs to be beautiful. However, it is Arabic script's fundamental association with Islam that is the crucial argument in its favor: although many (particularly northern) Uyghurs are secularized, being Muslim Turkic is central to a modern Uyghur ethnic identity. Being Muslim distinguishes the Uyghurs from the Hans and all other non-Muslim peoples; while being Turkic speakers distinguishes them from the Chinese-speaking Muslims (known as *Dunggans* or *Hui*).

4. Experiments with Latin-based orthographies

Since the establishment of the People's Republic, however, systematic planning efforts for the country's languages had been implemented, including the introduction of a Latin-based transliteration system for Chinese known as *pinyin* (literally "spelling the sound"). After the

relationship between China and the Soviet Union had completely soured in 1958, the Latin-script-based *pinyin* system replaced Cyrillic for the major Turkic languages of Xinjiang: Uyghur, Kazakh, and later for Kyrgyz.

In Xinjiang, this so-called *yengi yeziq* (“New Script”) was taught on a trial basis in some primary schools starting in the 1960s, and came into wider use in the 1974. Both Arabic- and Latin-based scripts were used concomitantly for about a decade, although those literate in Arabic-script Uyghur and Kazakh were quite reluctant to use the New Script. Nonetheless, the Language and Script Committee formally adopted the new Latin-based script in August 1976. In 1978, this orthography was employed by all the mass media as well as a reported 70 percent of intellectuals and 50 percent of the general citizenry (Jarring 1986: 31). Some books continued to be published in *yengi yeziq* after the Cultural Revolution, especially reprints such as the Uyghur-Chinese dictionary (*Uyghurchä-Hänzuchä lughät*) published by Xinjiang Renmin Press (1979/1982).

The latinization of Chinese minority languages has a precedent, in the latinization of Han Chinese in the early 20th century. During the early 20th century, the colloquializing *baihua* movement included discussions of adopting a Latin-based script in order to “modernize” Chinese. Though latinization was inspired by contact with the West, most policymakers never seriously entertained the notion of replacing Chinese characters by a Latin script. Still, a handful of materials were produced in the late 1920s, with the aim of using the script as a bridge to Chinese characters. These materials may well have constituted a precursor to the Latin-based scripts for the Turkic languages of Xinjiang.

Languages with orthographies have political clout and emotional resonance. People become invested in reading and writing in a particular script and attempts to make changes often

spark resistance. Early on, the central PRC government recognized the importance of orthographic planning. However, the frequent script changes from the 1950s through the 1980s unfortunately cut off an entire generation of Uyghurs from the large corpus of literature and history in the Arabic script written prior to 1950, as well as from written communication with those much younger or older who had been educated in an Arabic-based script. Pupils and students who were in the school system at any time from 1950 to 1976 were subject to these changes.

The return of Arabic-based script in the early 1980s coincided with a gradual relaxation of restrictions on minority religion and language. Since 1989, the PRC government has had an additional motivation to support Arabic-script Turkic. Within a few years of independence from the Soviet Union, three of the Central Asian republics – Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan – moved to switch from Cyrillic to Latin-based alphabets. “The impetus... was perceived as an instrument of de-Sovietization and at the same time as a means of individual nation-building, westernization, and modernization (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001). Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (with larger Russian populations than the other republics) along with Tajikistan opted to continue using Cyrillic alphabets, though the Kyrgyz Republic is also slowly adopting a Latin-based script as well.

That Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and Kyrgyz on the Chinese side of the border had been using the Arabic script since 1979 became a boon for Chinese nation building, since the orthographic differences across the border created a psychological and practical barrier to inter-Turkic communication in Central Asia. The unique use in Central Asia of an Arabic-based script by Xinjiang’s Uyghurs, Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz focused the language-issue discussion inwards and towards Beijing. Thus, both for central government policymakers and for Turkic speakers of

Xinjiang, the Arabic-script policy can be said to be a success (“win-win situation”).

Paradoxically, the policy discourages contact with Cyrillic-Turkic Central Asia, yet fosters a Turkic Islamic identity. Use of the Sogdian script for Mongolic languages like Oyrat and Khalkha has the same emotional effect of reconnecting the Mongols with their past, i.e. the heroic days of Genghis and Khubilai Khan.

The Politics of the Standardization of Uyghur (Spoken) Language

Choosing the “Standard Language”

Standardization involves developing a norm that overrides regional dialects, a process that then allows specific linguistic context to be evaluated and codified. Both Standard Uyghur of China and the Uyghur spoken in the former Soviet Union have undergone language-planning normalization. Both norms are based on northern dialects; Xinjiang’s is based on the regional capital dialect of Urumqi plus that of the Ili Valley bordering Kazakhstan; in Kazakhstan, the standard is simply based on the Ili Valley dialect as spoken in Kazakhstan. Difference between the two standards exist mainly in the lexical realm and are attributable to the influence of different dominant languages (Chinese vs. Russian)

According to Dwyer (2005), Uyghur comprises all the language varieties spoken by sedentary Turkic speakers in the major oases and Tianshan foothill towns of Xinjiang: those in the north and center (Urumqi, Ili, Korla); the east (Qumul (Chinese: *Hami*) and Turfan); the east-central area (Lop Nur); the south (Aqsu, Kashgar, and Hotan). Of the 10 million Uyghurs in Xinjiang, more than half are speakers of Standard Uyghur, which largely overlaps with Central Uyghur. The language of northern Xinjiang including the Ili Valley and the regional capital Urumqi forms the basis for the standard language. By most scholars’ accounts, Central Uyghur

also includes Turfan and Hami. There is, however, some disagreement as to how to divide the language varieties of southern Xinjiang. The prevailing view is that that the area of Hotan and environs in the south constitutes one dialect area; that Kashgar, Atush, and environs in the southwest constitute another; and that Lop Nur in the east-central area is an isolated dialect island.

Yet population and geography also played a role in the standardization of Uyghur. Although the south has often been considered the spiritual and cultural center for the Uyghurs, the Uyghur population, resources (both natural and economic) and political-administrative centers are all concentrated in the north. Income levels in the south are far below those of the north. A contributing factor to this disparity is the harsher, more arid climate in the south, whose ecology cannot support large populations. Moreover, illiteracy is especially high in the rural southern Tarim Basin, where most Uyghurs are impoverished farmers. Not surprisingly, these factors conspired to guarantee that this northern variety of modern Uyghur would constitute the basis for the standard language.

Language Modernization

For long-term vitality, a language must be made an appropriate communication medium for modern topics and discourse forms. Beginning in the late 1950s, the XUAR Language and Script Committee, in addition to reforming the orthography, made efforts to modernize the lexicon. The committee was given the task to standardize the existing lexicon as well as to introduce neologisms from Chinese. Nationwide, regional languages also introduced and standardized socialist political vocabulary for minority languages.

For Uyghur, the percentages of lexemes of Turkic, Arabic, Persian, and Russian origin were carefully noted. Citing percentages of loan words became *de rigueur* even for non-lexicological academic writings on the Uyghur language. These frequent citations were irritating to many Uyghur intellectuals, who found them insulting. My first Uyghur language instructor Professor Hamit once commented on this that it made it sound like Uyghur wasn't a real language, but a patchwork of foreign words thrown together.

New lexical items, particularly in political and technical areas, were adopted. Already common terms previously introduced from Russian (such as *poyiz* (“train”), *ayiroplan* (“airplane”), and *üstäl* (“table”) were augmented with administrative-political terms (*fakultet* – “academic department”). But with the departure of Soviet advisors in the late 1950s, Turkic peoples in Xinjiang were no longer exposed to the Russian language through schools and the media. The new language of modern science and administration in Xinjiang was suddenly Chinese.

The undeniable increase in Chinese loan words into Uyghur that began in the 1960s, however, had much to do with Han Chinese in-migration and geopolitics as with deliberate language policy. Over the course of 40 years, as Chinese engineers, teachers and traders settled in Inner Asia, particularly in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang, local people had much more exposure to the Chinese language than ever before. Certainly the media and the schools played a crucial role in introducing scientific, technological, and administrative terms from Chinese. Eventually, learning these terms would become crucial to the economic livelihood of Chinese minorities.

Yet language planners in Xinjiang were never overly preoccupied with language purism. In marked contrast to the Turkish Language Society, which in Turkey was charged with replacing Arabic and Persian elements in modern Turkish with “Turkic” constructions, the

Xinjiang Language and Script Committee never had a mandate to “cleanse” Uyghur. Rather, demographic and economic pressures have resulted in the adoption into Uyghur of terms from Russian, Chinese and English.

Some Uyghur intellectuals have pushed for a limited linguistic purism: to strengthen Uyghur ethnic identity and stem the flow of Chinese words and structures into the Uyghur language, these analysts proposed to create neologisms from Turkic roots or to revive words from an earlier stage of the language. However, although a handful of Turkic neologisms were indeed introduced, many proved far more cumbersome than their Chinese equivalents. Dwyer (2005: 2005) gives an example, the Neo-Uyghur term *tonglatghu mashinisi* (literally, “freezing machine”) for “refrigerator.” However, Xinjiang Uyghurs all use the far briefer Chinese term *bingxiang*. Similarly, in Sichuan Yi, “school” has been rendered as *ssodde* (literally, “learning place”); yet in conversation, one hears only Sichuan Chinese *xiooxiao* (“school”)³⁴.

Bilingual Education in Xinjiang

Minkaomin, Minkaohan, Shuangyu Ban, and Neigao Ban

Research on education in Xinjiang (Benson 2004; Hannum 2002; Hannum and Xie 1999) indicates that the Chinese government since 1949 has made considerable headway in its effort to provide elementary education for the vast majority of children of all ethnic groups. Overall, literacy rates have risen. However, the Chinese government’s undeniable success is tempered by ongoing problems, some of which trace directly to the continued existence of two separate school systems – one for minorities taught in their own languages and one offering instruction only in Chinese. Such a system inevitably gives rise to questions about the relative quality of instruction in minority-language schools versus Chinese-language schools since the Chinese-

³⁴ This was an example provided by Stevan Harrell to Arienne Dwyer.

language schools are usually better funded and provided with better facilities and more qualified teaching staff. Also, Uyghurs and other Muslim peoples link their concern to preserve their cultural and religious identity with the language of instruction in schools. Therefore, many Turkic speaking parents, especially the Uyghurs, face the dilemma of choosing between maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity and making their children more socioeconomically mobile.

In order to discuss bilingual education in Xinjiang in detail, I must first explain the meaning of some commonly used terms in the Xinjiang education system. They not only index different types of schools, but also become important self-identifiers used among the ethnic minorities themselves as well as the general society in Xinjiang.

Minkaomin is shortened for the Chinese term *minzu xuesheng yong minzuyuyan kaoshi* (literally “ethnic minority students take exams in their ethnic languages”. *Minzu* here stands for ethnic minority). This is a special *gaokao* policy (*gaokao*, another commonly used term in China, meaning “college entrance examinations”) that targets the ethnic minority students who choose to take the *gaokao* in their own languages. It means all the exam questions are in their own language, for instance Uyghur or Tibetan. However, the universities or colleges and the academic majors they apply to are also limited to a certain number which are mostly located in their own autonomous regions (Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia), or provinces that are close to these minority regions (such as Shaanxi and Gansu), or the Minzu University of China in Beijing, originally designed for ethnic minorities. This *minkaomin* system also means that students who choose this system will go to *minzu ban* or *minzu xuexiao* from primary school to senior high school, depending on the availability of the types of schools in their area. In Xinjiang, *Minzu Xuexiao* (literally “ethnic minority schools) are those schools where all

academic subjects except the Chinese language is taught in their ethnic language. Chinese language is taught as a second language. *Minzu ban* (literally “ethnic minority class”) are those classes in a school where both *minkaomin* and Han Chinese students exist and teach academic subjects in ethnic minority languages.

The set of terms that corresponds with *minkaomin*, *minzu xuexiao*, and *minzuban*, are *minkaohan*, *hanzu xuexiao*, and *hanzu ban*. *Minkaohan* is shortened for the Chinese term *minzu xuesheng yong hanyu kaoshi* (literally “ethnic minority students take exams in Chinese). They use the same set of college entrance exam questions as the Han Chinese students. They can apply to all the colleges and universities in China, just like the Han students, only limited by the quota allocated to their autonomous regions³⁵. When they apply, 50 points are added to their original total exam scores if both parents belong to one or two of the eleven designated minority groups. If one parent belongs to any of the designated groups, 10 points will be added. The eleven groups are Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongol, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Sibe, Uzbek, Tatar, Daur, Tibetan and Russian. All these languages are spoken in autonomous regions mostly Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia. This designation also applies to *minkaomin* system. Obviously, *minkaohan* students would choose *hanzu xuexiao* (“Han Chinese School”) and *hanzu ban* (“Han Chinese class”) in their pre-tertiary education. However, after they enter college, unlike other students, both *minkaomin* and *minkaohan* students have to take an extra “preparatory” first year, called *yuke* in Chinese, *Minkaomin* students therefore have to graduate in five years instead of four. Also the courses in the first *yuke* year are math, English and Chinese of the high school level, so basic that many minority students consider them too easy and a complete waste of time.

³⁵ Colleges and academic majors allocated to each province (and autonomous regions) are different. Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia tend to receive less quota (much less universities and colleges come to recruit students in Xinjiang, for instance) and less favorable majors.

In Xinjiang, *Minkaomin* and *minkaohan* are not just indexes of one's choice in the special education system, they have also been incorporated into the local languages, both Chinese and Turkic languages and become part of the daily vocabulary, although pronounced with the Turkic phonological rules by the latter. Furthermore, they are one's linguistic and cultural identities, identities that add more layers to the ethnic identities of the Turkic-speaking peoples and generate discourses. Observers report that those minority students with a Chinese-language education tend to speak, dress, and act like Chinese students, which was both a source of prestige (vis-a-vis Han society) and embarrassment (vis-a-vis local ethnic identity, especially if their Uyghur language skills have slipped). During my fieldwork and previous experience when I grew up in Xinjiang, in daily conversation among the Turkic speaking peoples, when *minkaomin* is mentioned, it entails the connotations of "not good in Chinese," "coming from a lesser educational background," "good in their own language," "more knowledgeable in their own culture and history," "more authentically Muslim," "more knowledgeable about Islam." It can evoke both contempt (mostly from Han) and pride (when facing *minkaohan* students), depending on the situation. For the *minkaohan* students, although they tend to go to better schools and colleges (many go to colleges outside of Xinjiang³⁶), speak Chinese fluently, and get better jobs, this term also evokes connotations such as "not good in their own language," "not knowledgeable about their own culture and history," "not Muslim enough," or even especially for women, "not adhering to feminine behavior and/or loose."

When the term *minkaohan* is used in daily conversation, the usage can range from a friendly bantering among friends, to scolding from the elders. During my dissertation fieldwork, for a month I sat in and observed a private English class that prepared college seniors for the

³⁶ It is considered a great prestige in Xinjiang, by both Han and minorities, if a student is admitted to colleges outside of Xinjiang, especially those top-tier universities in big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, etc.

English exam of the graduate school entrance exams (Chinese: *kaoyan ban*) offered by a male Uyghur teacher who was then a university English lecturer and moonlighted sometimes by teaching private English classes³⁷. All the students were Uyghur, most of them *minkaomin*. His English was perfect and he was well respected by the students. During one class session, the teacher and students decided to give me a Uyghur name when they heard that “Gladys” doesn’t have one (Gladys is my English name and I went by it among the Turkic speakers during my fieldwork). The class suddenly became excited and took turns to suggest names. After the teacher suggested one name, the students all vetoed it and said it sounded like a “Kazakh name” and bantered: “Don’t listen to him. He is a *minkaohan*. He knows nothing (about Uyghur culture).”

One of my Kazakh friends told me a joke commonly known among Kazakh community in Xinjiang. Kazakh *minkaohan* students are sometimes teased as “mengkhaohan.”³⁸ It’s a play on both the Chinese term *minkaohan* and the Kazakh word “mengkhil,” which means mumbling. In daily conversation, *mengkhaohan* is to make fun of Kazakh *minkaohan* students who can’t speak Kazakh fluently (like they are mumbling when they speak) and are possibly not knowledgeable about Kazakh culture.

But sometimes, the *minkaohan* identity can be a traumatic experience, especially when Turkic *minkaohan* students grow up and start to realize their deficiency in their native language and culture among their own community. Nigara, a Uyghur *minkaohan*, writes about his regret at not being able to acquire Uyghur language and culture in his early years in a blog³⁹. At 17 years old, he was admitted to a “key point” senior high school. When he was telling his family how

³⁷ He was later admitted to a PhD program in Europe and is about to receive his PhD.

³⁸ Note that the velar /k/ sound in the original term *minkaohan* is changed to the uvular /q/ in “mengkhaohan.” In Kazakh languages there are two consonants that are probably indistinguishable to the Chinese speakers, but makes a difference in meaning in Kazakh: velar stop /k/ and uvular stop /q/.

³⁹ *Uyghur Human Rights Project* (<http://chineseblog.uhrp.org/?p=116>). Accessed July 29, 2016.

excited he was going to his dream school and the next step would be a top-tier university and his ambition of becoming a diplomat. His father interrupted him and asked him how he was going to introduce himself to other diplomats and talk about this Uyghur culture and history in his own language. He realized he could not introduce himself in fluent Uyghur, not to mention write his own name or say anything about Uyghur history. He didn't even feel comfortable greeting people the Muslim way. He then decided to take private Uyghur lessons from a community elder, and relearn Uyghur customs, traditions and history besides the language. Like many Uyghurs I know, he is not necessarily against learning Chinese, but he laments the loss of his native language due to the monolingual tendency in minority education in China.

The *minkaomin* and *minkaohan* discourses are particularly prominent in my research on the English education among the minority students in Xinjiang. During my fieldwork, the male Uyghur students who have stood out as the winners at different English speaking competitions tend to emphasize that they are *minkaomin* students and had only learned English by themselves for a few years, compared with their opponents, Han students who have learned English for at least ten years since junior high school. They are all very proud of this fact. To understand the implication of this statement, one has to know that in the *minkaomin* schools, Chinese language is the second language⁴⁰ taught in the school and English language is not taught.⁴¹ In the Han schools, English language is taught as a foreign language subject to all students, including *minkaohan* students. The natural conclusion would be that *minkaohan* students have earlier and more exposure in the public school education system, therefore their English should be better

⁴⁰ Chinese language as a school subject is not called *waiyu* (literally foreign language") in the *minkaomin* schools. To say so would be politically incorrect even dangerous, as all ethnic minority languages and Chinese are considered Chinese languages in China. On the other hand, English is frequently referred to as *waiyu* (foreign language) in China.

⁴¹ In recent years, some *minkaomin* schools in the capital city Urumqi have opened English language courses.

than *minkaomin* students. But their performance in the English speaking contests speaks otherwise. This adds to the pride of the *minkaomin* winners in these contests.

A new bilingual teaching mode has become prominent in the past few years: the establishment of “bilingual experimental classes” (in Chinese: *shuangyu shiyan ban*, shortened as *shuangyu ban*) in some Han schools and *minzu* schools. The difference from traditional *minkaomin* and *minkaohan* classes is that some of the courses, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and English, are instructed in Chinese, and the rest, mostly social sciences and humanities-related, such as native languages, ideology and morality, history, and geography are instructed in the native minority languages. The teaching effect and prospect of this teaching mode have become a new subject of research among researchers on Xinjiang education and are yet to show (Ma 2010). There is also the *neigaoban*, which is shortened for *neidi gaozhong ban* (literal meaning “China proper senior high school class/program”)⁴². This program is actually a boarding school program that targets mostly Turkic speaking students from Xinjiang⁴³, ideally those with low socioeconomic status, and sends them to economically developed provinces, such as Zhejiang and Jiangsu, to study. Such classes are part of a normal high school, but they form their own classes, with counselors and cooks from Xinjiang. All courses are instructed in Chinese by the local teachers. They participate in the *gaokao* in the local province and apply to colleges with the local cut-off scores,⁴⁴ which tend to be much higher than the cut-off lines in Xinjiang. By 2010, the *neigaoban* system had graduated six years of 9600 students. 95 percent of

⁴² The Chinese word *neidi* (literally “the inland”) is an interesting word that resists simple translation. As a historical term, it refers to the “Qing Eighteen Provinces” during the Manchu Qing Dynasty where Han people dominate. It excludes frontier areas Xinjiang, Tibet, and Mongolia, as well as Manchu’s home, the three provinces in the northeast, Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning. However, in daily conversation in Xinjiang, *neidi* refers to any place east of Xinjiang in China. It’s Xinjiang vs. *neidi*. It indexes a Han Chinese Xinjiang person identity. For the purpose of writing this dissertation, I translated it as “China Proper.” You might point out that you can’t translate it as “inland,” because “inland” in English means away from the ocean, which would mean Xinjiang.

⁴³ There are also *neigaoban* for Tibetan students. See Yangbin Chen (2008)

⁴⁴ In China, each province has its own cut-off score for the college entrance exams even if that province participates in the national entrance exams.

the students had gone to colleges in “China Proper.” And the majority of the *neigaoban* graduates went back to Xinjiang to work after graduating college. (For more detail on *neigaoban*, see Chen 2008).

Monolingual Tendency in Languages of Instruction

Although China’s language planning on paper seems to be moving towards implementing the ideals of egalitarianism enshrined in the Constitution, including allowing unprecedented freedom of religious and cultural expression and promoting ethnic minority languages’ prosperity, the overall tendency in minority education has been monolingual. 1984 was a watershed year for language policy in Xinjiang. The Autonomous Region Communist Party decided to expand the Chinese-language curriculum at all levels of education. Previously, non-Han pupils began formal study of Chinese in the first year of middle school. In 1984, that start was pushed back into primary school, so that children began learning Chinese formally in the third grade. Changes in practice on the ground had been slower than paper documents. Until the mid-1990s, Chinese had been taught only as a second language in minority-language schools, not as a language of instruction. All subjects except for the Chinese language were taught in the relevant minority language. After the mid-1990s, Chinese became the language of instruction from the third grade. Today, instruction in Chinese is required beginning in the first grade, and it is the minority language (e.g. Uyghur) that is taught as if it were a second language. Even preschools have reduced their minority-language classrooms.

In December 1987, a joint commission of the Xinjiang Education Commission, the Minority Nationality Commission, and the Language office formed an Autonomous Region minority primary- and middle-school working group charged with discussing how to implement

bilingual education (Wang 1992: 248). The bilingual education and teaching training promoted by the regional Party leadership and the Education Commission was designed to “swell the ranks of primary and secondary Chinese-language teachers, raise the quality of the Chinese-language teachers, improve the conditions of the Chinese-language teachers, and raise the status and treatment of Chinese-language teachers.” Chinese-language curricular materials, first introduced in the 1950s, underwent a major revision in 1985, including the development of 10 new textbooks for the added required elementary years (grades 3-6). The set of junior-college textbooks in Basic Chinese (*Jichu Hanyu*), originally published in 1955 and still used in tertiary institutions, also underwent five revisions by 1980. Moreover, Xinjiang Normal College (now Xinjiang Normal University) produced six teacher-training volumes in 1988.

At Xinjiang University, the number of minority-language classrooms was reduced during the 1990s from three to one and finally to zero. In May 2002, it was decided that Xinjiang University would no longer offer courses in the Uyghur language, at least in the first two years of coursework. This change was implemented in September 2002. Xinjiang University was founded in 1949 as a bilingual institution. In its early years after establishment, Uyghur students were required to spend an extra first year at the university intensively studying Chinese, for a total of five university years. Although Han students only attended for four years, Uyghur language classes were part of the curriculum. But it was dropped over the years. For Uyghurs, most of the curriculum was offered in the Uyghur language, including social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics. Now, even Uyghur poetry is taught entirely in Chinese; only for Chagatay (Middle Turkic) poetry is the use of Uyghur in the classroom allowed.

Textbook publishing

The consistent and heavy emphasis on writing, i.e. orthographic and lexical standardization, of PRC language policy has dwarfed other important language planning concerns, particularly the work to expand language-use domains in education. Neither the Language and Script Committee nor language researchers have directed their attention towards improving the quality of minority-language instruction and instructional materials.

Article 37 of Regional Autonomy Law states: “schools (classes and grades) and other institutions of education where most of the students come from minority nationalities shall, whenever possible, use textbooks in their own language, and use their languages as the media of instruction... People’s governments at various levels shall give financial support to the compilation, translation, and publishing of teaching materials and publications in languages of minority nationalities.”

Though basic textbooks did appear in the five policy-relevant languages of Xinjiang (Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Oyrat, and Sibe), only language-study textbooks were offered for the latter three languages. For other subject areas, pupils who spoke these languages were dependent on textbooks in Uyghur or Chinese. For Xinjiang’s two largest minority groups, the Uyghurs and Kazakhs, scholastic publishing in the language was also often limited to the humanities and social sciences. Though some of these materials were created in the local language with some local illustrations (e.g. a Kazakh alphabet book or a Uyghur book of classical poetry), many other texts were not written in the local language. They were translated from Chinese and mostly printed in Beijing.

The rise of the HSK Testing System

In 1990, the Beijing Language and Culture University developed the first standardized test for assessing the Chinese competence of non-native speakers: the HSK⁴⁵ (*hanyu shuiping kaoshi* – “Chinese competence test”). The HSK test has been put to use largely for the assessment and “encouragement” of non-native speakers of Chinese. In 1992, the Education Commission announced a plan to implement regular HSK assessment in national minority schools; and a 1997 document specified that a trial assessment of the test would occur between 1998 and 2000 in schools in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, and Jilin (Education Commission 1997, cited in Bilik n.d.). HSK tests are now being used as a requirement for minority advancement at some historically minority universities (such as Xinjiang University). Only achieving a minimum score on an HSK test can guarantee academic promotion.

Han- Chinese language competence in Uyghur

A sharp contrast to the firm implementation of the language policy towards the Turkic minority peoples in Xinjiang and the phenomenon that more and more Turkic youth are learning and speaking Chinese is the toothless flaccid official effort to execute the language law among the Han officials and the alarming inability of the Han Chinese to speak any Turkic languages.

Article 49 of the Law on Regional Autonomy states that “cadres of Han nationality should learn the spoken and written languages of the local minority nationalities”. In practice, however, hardly any Hans learn more than the Uyghur greeting *yaxshimusiz* (“hello” “how are you?” Literally “are you good?”). No Han Chinese in urban areas really care about learning Uyghur or Kazakh, the languages of their colleagues and neighbors. One example of this dynamic can be found in the brief television broadcasts “One Sentence a Week” (*Mei zhou yi ju*

⁴⁵ The test is an imitation of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) by ETS in the United States for testing international students.

hua) and their companion book. These ten-minute broadcasts featured a prominent and engaging Uyghur linguist who gamely repeated one sentence – such as “I am very pleased to meet you” – in standard Uyghur and then again (and again) in perfect Mandarin Chinese for the entire ten-minute segment. Though a noble effort on the part of the producers, motivated learners needed much more structured and systematic exposure to the language. While excellent Chinese-Uyghur textbooks have been available since the 1980s, only a handful of Han university students have taken the opportunity to learn Uyghur. I grew up in a Han school and Chinese-speaking environment in Urumqi. It never occurred to me that I should learn *their* language because my *minkaohan* Uyghur friends could speak *my* language. Not until I became a doctoral student in linguistic anthropology at the University of Washington, did I start to study Uyghur language, thanks to the Uyghur program in the Near Eastern Language and Civilization Department.

In the Internet age, there is also a type of text circulating among the Han people both within Xinjiang and outside of Xinjiang, especially those who are interested in tourism in Xinjiang. This is to teach you how to speak survival Uyghur sentences and words, but spelt out in Chinese characters or *pinyin*. However, if pronounced according to the Chinese *characters*, none of these sentences or words will mean anything to a native Uyghur speaker. A few examples will suffice to explain the uselessness of the learning method:

English	Latin spelling of Uyghur	Chinese Characters	<i>pinyin</i>
“Thank you”	rehmat	热合买提	<i>rehemaiti</i>
“Good”	yaxshi	亚克西	<i>yakexi</i>
“What do you want to eat?”	nime yeysiz?	尼马 叶依司子?	<i>nima yeyisizi</i>

This learning method reminds me of my parents' generation⁴⁶ who did not take foreign language subjects in school seriously and the common story that they took notes next to the Russian or English list of words with Chinese characters to spell out the pronunciation.

More problematic and even racist and sexist discourses have emerged recently on the Chinese social media WeChat where Beijing tourists teach you “useful” Uyghur sentences when you visit Kashgar in a self-made video. Two men who speak Chinese with a Beijing accent posed in front of the camera. A asked B who had just been back from travelling in Xinjiang if he had learned any Uyghur. B answered that the only two Uyghur sentences he learned are: First, “Do you provide *fapiao*⁴⁷?” And second, “Hi, girl, you’re so pretty. Sleep, sleep?” He said the whole sentences in Uyghur, but with a Beijing Chinese accent, which is absolutely unintelligible to any Uyghur speaker. Although Speaker A never explained what “hulang hulung” (the Chinese transliteration for “sleep” in Uyghur) means to B and warns him not to use it, but the subtitles of the video caption the whole conversation. Also he says this with a completely carefree attitude and a lewd expression on his face.

In the day-to-day interaction with the Han people in Xinjiang and outside of Xinjiang, Turkic speaking people face constant negative comments on their accent when they speak Chinese. One male Uyghur *minkaomin* student during my research told me that he wanted to learn Chinese well when he first entered college. So he made a pact with his roommates that they would be conversation partners to teach each other Chinese and Uyghur. However, eventually it was only him speaking Chinese and not the other way around. Also his (male) Chinese roommates and classmates constantly laughed at his accent. He said: “I lost confidence and then

⁴⁶ They studied Russian.

⁴⁷ *Fapiao* means invoice, but it indexes a Chinese phenomenon. In China, people who are on business trips asks for *fapiao* when they buy transportation tickets, check in hotels, and buy food, so they can get reimbursement from their work units or companies. This has also generated a whole illegal underground business of printing fake *fapiao* for people to cheat money out of their work units.

interest in speaking Chinese. They are not nice to me. But the Chinese girls in college tend to be nice to me.”

Naming

The last topic I address in this chapter is about naming politics in Xinjiang – Chinese names or transliterations for Turkic personal names or place names. All Turkic names are given transliterations in Chinese characters on legal documents, such as their household registration cards, ID cards, and passports, or wherever they need official documentation. Their Chinese colleagues or friends, or neighbors would all call them by their transliterated names in Chinese. For instance:

Uyghur names (in Latin)	Transliterations in Chinese Characters	Pinyin
Abdulkerim Abbas	阿布都克里木·阿巴斯	Abudukelimu Abasi
Gulzar Anwar	古丽扎尔·安瓦尔	Gulizha'er Anwa'er

Although there is a transliteration convention that has been followed in Chinese translation of foreign terms in practice for many years and the characters chosen are mostly “good meaning” characters, these transliterated names don’t mean much to the Turkic speakers, but they are used so often both in official and unofficial settings, that Uyghurs are forced to accept them as their “second identities,” especially interacting with the Han Chinese. Han Chinese would address their Turkic colleagues or friends in the Chinese way. For instance, the endearing way of calling someone older (mostly males) in Chinese would be adding *lao-* (literally “old”) before that person’s surname, such as *Lao Wang* and *Lao Li*. And one adds *xiao-* (literally “young” “small”) before one’s surname for someone who’s younger. For instance, *Xiao*

Wang and Xiao Li. This practice is also applied to Turkic speakers. It's quite common to call a Uyghur speaker Abdulkirim "Lao Ah," omitting the rest of "Abudulkelimu" and using the first syllable "a-" as if it's the surname. While the Chinese name structure is surname first, given name last, the name structure of the Turkic names is given name first, patronymic last. And the second name is not a surname or a family name that passes down as in English or Chinese. Rather, it is the father's given name of one person. So Addulkerim Abbas should always be addressed Abdulkirim or Teacher Abdulkirim, or Mr. Abdulkirim. Calling him Mr. Abbas would be addressing his father. This is particularly important when addressing a female Turkic speaker. For instance, in the name "Gulzar Anwar," Gulzar" is a female name which means "flower garden." "Anwar" is a male name and it means "luminous" in Uyghur⁴⁸. Calling her by her last name like Miss Anwar would be not only calling the wrong person, but also making her a man. A university professor I know told me about the common mistake made by well-meaning Han Chinese colleagues and students. Suppose her name is Gulzar Anwar, Han Chinese at her university want to show respect, so they address her as *Anwa'er Jiaoshou* ("Professor Anwar"). She has to correct people because this is not only mistaking her gender, but also because her father is also a professor in the same university and he should be called "Professor Anwar"! Furthermore, Han Chinese would also "respectfully" call her *Gu Laoshi* ("Teacher Gu" or *Gu Jiaoshou* ("Professor Gu" and even *An Laoshi* ("Teacher An" or *An Jiaoshou* (Professor An), as the same pattern as "Lao Ah" or "Xiao Ah," making her sound like a Chinese. Yet another story comes from a male Uyghur friend of mine whose given name is Umit. The Chinese transliteration in characters would be "玉买提" (Pinyin: Yumaiti). One of the Han Chinese registrars at his university who probably was both careless and not so conscientious about Turkic

⁴⁸ Anwar is the English transliteration of two Arabic names commonly used in the Arab world: the male given name 'Anwar (أنور), meaning "luminous" or the female given name 'Anwār (أنوار), meaning "a collection of lights". However, in the Uyghur context, it's mostly used as a male name.

names (and his job) wrote his name as “王买提”(Pinyin: Wang Maiti). 王 (Pinyin: Wang) is a very common surname in Chinese and the only difference between this character and 王 (Pinyin: Yu) is just one dot stroke at the lower right corner.

The naming politics also manifests itself on China’s ID cards and passports. Before the so-called “Second Generation” ID cards were issued in 2004, ethnic minority peoples in China complained about the names on their cards. It would look like something in Figure 5, where everything including their names, were written only in Chinese. Since 2004, the new ID cards addressed the problem by giving bilingual scripts in Chinese and one of the six languages: Zhuang, Yi, Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongolian and Korean. For residents in Xinjiang, all ethnicities (including Han) have the categories marked in Chinese and Uyghur, such as “Name,” Gender,” etc. The Uyghurs have their personal information part also in bilingual script. Han and other ethnicities can choose to have their personal information part in Chinese and Uyghur if they want, but they can’t have it in other minority languages such as Sibe, or Mongolian. Han Chinese in non-ethnic provinces have their ID card design similar as the first generation cards, as is shown in Figure 5. For those who are lucky enough and finally got out of the country for either a short-term pilgrimage to Mecca or long-term study in America, there is another layer of problems for the Turkic speakers. Unlike the Chinese ID cards where there is only one category “Names”, on the Chinese passport the “Surname” and “Given Name” are separate categories and marked bilingually in English and Chinese. Since the passport issuing system uses the names on the ID cards, but follows the Chinese “Surname first, given name last” order, for a Turkic speaker named Abdulkarim Abbas, his passport would have the Chinese Transliterations *Abudukelimu* as the surname, and *Abasi* as the given name, completely reversing his original name. For a

woman, the consequence is more severe. Gulzar Anwar would have her names as Gulizha'er under "Surname" and "Anwa'er" under "Given Name." So they would be called "Abudukelimu" and "Anwa'er" by U.S. immigration officers and other Americans who don't know them well, messing up their names at different levels.



Figure 5: A prank on a Chinese website to demonstrate the "new generation" (Second Generation) ID Card with U.S. president Barack Obama's image (On it reads (in translation): Name: Aobama; Gender: Male; Ethnicity: Kenyan; Date of Birth: August 4, 1961; Address: Pennsylvania Ave 1600, White House, Washington DC; ID number: 123456196108047890).

This chapter first explains the various meanings and usages of the term *minzu*, the basis of ethnic classification, and the recent debate on a Second Generation Ethnic Policy in China and the ramifications of the *minzu* paradigm on the indigenous minority peoples in Xinjiang. It then moves on to provide an overview of the histories, political structure, economy, religious freedom and lack thereof in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. These two parts set up the background for the discussion that follows on the ethnic minority education and language policies in Xinjiang, and the language politics, ideologies and practices that these policies generate. This chapter discussed the other aspect, i.e. national language Mandarin Chinese and Turkic languages in Xinjiang, of the trilingual language and power relations I aim to document, while Chapter 1 discussed the relationship between the international *lingua franca* and Mandarin Chinese. Terms and concepts such as *minzu*, *minkaomin*, and *minkaohan* will be referenced frequently in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 3
EMBODYING AND TRANSCENDING *MINZU* IDENTITIES:
ENGLISH SPEAKING CONTESTS IN XINJIANG, XINJIANG CONTESTANTS IN
BEIJING

12:40PM August 7, 2010. Urumqi, China. Riveted to the chair in my living room, I gazed at the TV with expectation and excitement, looking forward to the final result for the college students group of the national “2010 CCTV Star of Outlook English Speaking & Talent Competition.” 12:45PM. Umit Haji, a Uyghur computer science major from the Xinjiang University of Finance and Economics who had merely two years of self-taught English education, beat the runner-up Guo Wen’na, an English major, veteran public speaker and student leader from Beijing Foreign Languages University. Umit soon became a national idol among English learners in online discussion forums in China. They were impressed by his “near-native British accent,” “well-organized impromptu speech,” “calmness when faced with the judges’ picky questions,” and “fluency achieved mainly through self-study.” For the Uyghur students in Xinjiang, Umit is a hero who represents Uyghur pride and a shining example that they want to emulate. For the Tavpik Language Training Center in Urumqi, which is run by the Uyghurs and for the Uyghurs and other Turkic-speaking students, Umit as the new teacher is their biggest commercial attraction to the minority students and provides a competitive edge against several other such schools.

During my dissertation field research, both Han Chinese and ethnic minority students actively participated English speaking competitions and the talent shows are often part of them. One cannot ignore their existence, especially someone like me, who is interested in the language

politics of interplay between English, Mandarin Chinese and the Uyghur language. The scales of the English contests ranged from college departmental to national and participants included English learners aged from kindergarten children to college students. On different occasions I had been asked to take on roles as either coach or judge. These roles enabled me to not only observe the preparation and organization of the events besides the events themselves, but also speak with contestants, coaches, judges and organizers. Some coaching tasks could last for as long as two months.

What is interesting about the case of Umit Haji is that he is just one among many Turkic-speaking students who have had high achievements in English speaking competitions in recent years (see Appendix 1). Since 2004, Turkic-speaking students, mostly male Uyghurs have excelled and dominated the top places in contests at the provincial level. Some made it to the national finals in Beijing and won various awards.

English Speaking Contests in Xinjiang

In Xinjiang there are two types of speaking contests in terms of organizers: official ones and unofficial. The first type refers to contests organized through official organizations such as universities and TV stations. The most influential in the first type are CCTV Star of Outlook English Speaking & Talent Competition (henceforth Star of Outlook Cup) and the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press Cup English Public Speaking Contest (henceforth FLTRP Cup). Both are national competitions. The second type is organized by the local private English schools. These two major types differ in scale, prestige, training style (or lack of training), and the ethnicity of participants.

Though contests in the first type may vary in the degree of commercial participation from private English schools and training centers, their main sponsors are always official. The organizing committee of the Star of Outlook Cup in Xinjiang consists of Central China Television, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Communist Youth League, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Education Department. There are six age groups in the CCTV Cup: kindergarten (age 4-6), primary school A (Grades 1-3), primary school B (Grades 4-6), junior high school, high school and college/adult. The Kindergarten and primary school A groups did not participate in the national competitions. Most participants in the pre-college age groups, led or sometimes forced by their parents, register individually through the language training centers to which the actual organizing work was outsourced. The participants represented themselves in the competition. However, the college student participants are a different story. Though they could register individually, most college students participate through the selection process within their universities. Then the winners compete with contestants from other universities to enter the semi-final at the provincial level in order to go to Beijing. This means each college contestant will represent not only themselves, but more importantly their universities. Universities treat this competition seriously as their honor is at risk. A lecturer or professor from the English department will coach each finalist. This coach also accompanies the finalist to Beijing, and helps design the speeches and other parts of the final competition. All provincial finalists, i.e. the top five, regardless of age groups, have to go through six rounds of competitions before they can stand on the stage of the CCTV studio and be seen by the whole country. Theoretically, students from all ethnic groups can participate in the competitions.

The FLTRP Cup, however, is only for the college students. It is more official, less commercial, and less open to the general public. I had witnessed the provincial selection competitions in 2010 and 2011 and been on the coaching team for the Xinjiang Normal University for two months in 2010. To me it is more of a competition among universities than individual students. Contestants are judged in two groups: English majors (*yingyu zhuanYe*) and non-English majors (*feiyingyu zhuanYe*)⁴⁹. In the 2010 Xinjiang provincial selection contest, thirty-nine contestants were non-English majors (officially called College English Group) and thirty-five were English majors. Though it is assumed that English majors should perform better than their non-English-major counterparts because they had more professional training, the reality was quite different. Overall the speeches made by the non-English majors were of better quality than the English majors in terms of pronunciation, clarity and logic, the major areas that were judged in an English speaking competition. This can be partially explained by the larger base of the participants from which the final contestants were selected for the non-English major group. There are also more ethnic minority students in this group. Among the thirty-nine contestants in 2010, ten were Uyghur students, four Hui, and one Tibetan. Only a few were ethnic minorities in the English-major group. Ethnic minority students also seemed to excel in the final results. In the top seven finalists in the non-English-major group, Uyghur students took all places except the third, which was taken by a Han Chinese student.

⁴⁹ *ZhuanYe* is a Chinese educational term that does not have a neat equivalent in English. It can be translated into “major,” but the major in the U.S. is different from the *zhuanYe* in the Chinese context. In the U.S. context, when one has an academic major, one also takes classes in other areas. In China, one spends most of the time on this one major. For instance English majors in China would spend most of their study time in required English-language related courses such as speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, writing, translation, linguistic theory and English literature. However, this situation has changed in the past ten years. More and more universities allow students to take courses in other departments and pursue double majors. The term *zhuanYe* also has a political and organizational meaning in China. College students who are in the same *zhuanYe* tend to live in the same dorm and form a *ban* (cohort). They have political meetings, participate in university events, etc. as one unit.

The “21st Century Cup English Speaking Contest” is another one that targets college students in China. It is sponsored by *China Daily*, China’s state English newspaper and organized through its student version newspaper *The 21st Century*. It has a longer history than the other two and the Xinjiang region participated in it every year, but it is not as influential as the Star of Outlook and FLTRP among ethnic minority students, based on my observation in the field. Uyghur instructors at the private English schools tended to market their credentials in participating in either Star of Outlook Cup or FLTRP Cup (formerly CCTV Cup), but not the 21st Century Cup.

Though the contestants took these official competitions seriously, the local organization of the contests could be quite haphazard and not necessarily based on “objectivity.” The choice of the judges at the local level was not always based on experience. A few faces of native-speakers (read white) on the judges’ bench give much symbolic value to the contests. My American friends who were studying Chinese in Urumqi’s universities were often called upon, sometimes somewhat against their will by their department chairs, to act as judges for various English-speaking competitions⁵⁰. They were chosen not because they were trained EFL teachers or had any experience in teaching English. They were chosen only because they were American, and preferably white. My friend D once recommended me to the organizers of a qualifier contest to fill his place as a judge because he had to care for an emergency. Everything went well on the phone when I introduced myself to the organizer in English until I switched to Chinese and told him that I’m actually local from Urumqi. The voice from the other end of the line hesitated and said maybe they should look for a native speaker. And he hung up.

⁵⁰ White foreigners have to perform other tasks for their departments or their universities such as tutoring English for someone’s children, or posing as writing calligraphy and playing Chinese musical instruments in the universities’ promotion brochures.

The second type of competitions is organized by the private English schools run by ethnic minorities. Though less prestigious and of much smaller scale than the first type, it is well attended by the Uyghur students. The atmosphere was more intimate. In Xinjiang as in the rest of the country, private English schools blossomed in the past ten years. What is different is that there are three types of private English schools in Xinjiang: schools run by the Han Chinese, such as the New Oriental Urumqi Branch and other smaller ones, schools run by foreigners such as English First (EF), and the schools run by Turkic-speaking people, mainly Uyghur, and for the Uyghur students⁵¹. Students from all ethnic groups can be spotted in the first two types of schools, though Han students predominate. The third type, however, is attended solely by Uyghur students, as English is taught through the Uyghur language. English speaking contests of the third type are to promote the image of the schools and compete for prospective students. The contestants, audience, and judges are all Uyghur except that sometimes they could get hold of a few native English-speaking travellers from the U.S. or U.K. or even English-speaking Europeans as judges, but white Americans are seen as most prestigious. I was probably the only Han Chinese who ever attended this event, let alone served as a judge in the history of their competitions. The reason I was welcomed there was that many in the audience saw me as an American too – an Asian American.

Many Uyghur instructors at the private English schools in my research marketed their credentials in the “CCTV Cup English Speaking Contest.” Therefore I need to provide a brief explanation of the complex relationship between CCTV Cup, FLTRP Cup and Star of Outlook Cup. From 2002 to 2009, the FLTRP had cooperated with CCTV to hold the CCTV Cup. The provincial selection competitions and the national semifinals were carried out in a close

⁵¹ There are not many Kazakh-run private English schools. And their business is not as good as the Uyghur-run schools, partly due to the smaller population of Kazakh English learners in Xinjiang.

environment, video-recorded, but not televised. It was the final stage during which the China Central Television was involved. The final competition was recorded, edited, and broadcast through the CCTV International Center English Chanel. It was at this stage when the competition started to acquire an entertaining element. Before this stage, contestants stood behind a podium on the central stage (and were supposed to stand only at this spot without moving around, as the camera fixed on this spot) and completed all their prepared speech, impromptu speech and Q&A at this spot. The Masters of Ceremonies stood at another podium and introduced the contestants and judges. Yet at the final stage, professional TV hosts were used to host the program, the contests were dressed up and given make-up at the dressing room before they entered the stage, music and flashing screens were employed.

Since 2010, because the CCTV rearranged their channels, the FLTRP decided to stop the cooperation and started their own independent English-speaking contest. The CCTV Cup English Speaking Contest was renamed FLTRP Cup English Public Speaking Contest and FLTRP invited the College English Teaching Advisory Board and the English Major Teaching Advisory Board under the Ministry of Education to be the co-sponsors of the contest. This was when the contest took a more formal and academic turn. The finals in Beijing were no longer televised after 2010. The competition has been carried out in a setting closed to the general public. One can only access the speeches of the FLTRP Cup through the books and DVDs published by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. And note that FLTRP added the word “Public” to the contest title and turned it from “English Speaking Contest” to “English Public Speaking Contest.” Both the format and content of the speeches started to emphasize public speaking skills, i.e. to give a speech to the public, not communicative skills or carrying out daily conversation anymore. The honorary judge Stephen Lucas’s book *The Art of Public Speaking* is recommended

reading for the contestants. On the part of the Star of Outlook Cup, some regulars at previous CCTV Cup contests such as judge Teng Jimeng, a university professor and CCTV host Liu Xin, who used to host for CCTV Cup, joined the Star of Outlook Cup English Talent Competition production team, which started in 2000, as regular judges. The Star of Outlook Cup used to be a negligible program at CCTV and now was further promoted to be a major annual event, though a commercial one, under the new CCTV10 Science and Education Channel.

At each university, student participants in the more formal speaking contests such as the FLTRP Cup went through long-term training. The lead coaches, usually young lecturers from the English department, because senior lecturers and professors would not want this tedious and time-consuming legwork, would call the contestants during their extracurricular time, mostly in the afternoon after classes and before dinner to congregate in a classroom. They were given pages of handouts with instructions on content, structure, and on-stage performance styles they should follow in their speeches, as well as possible topics and questions for impromptu speech and Q&A to exercise on. Most of the training time was spent on mock practices of impromptu speech, which is considered the hardest part in an English-speaking contest, as one cannot predict what questions might be asked and it requires coming up with a logical speech with a short preparation time. In the fall and winter of 2010, I was asked by the Xinjiang Normal University team to co-coach with two young professors from the English department. Therefore I had the chance to witness the training process and followed the team from Urumqi to Aksu, a southern city in Xinjiang, for their provincial selection contest. On the “non-English major” team, which I was responsible for, two were Uyghur males, one was a Hui girl (Chinese Muslim) and one a Han Chinese girl.

A glance at the list of their practice topics can make anyone nervous, be it native speakers or non-native speakers, as they are many times unsolvable social problems or personal dilemmas. However, the point is not that one should give a perfect solution, but to be judged in their clarity, logic and fluency in speech. Questions tend to concentrate in the following areas:

Conflict between the modern and traditional.

For example:

- Is marking Western holidays a sign of a modern China or of traditions sacrificed to commercial interests?
- Now in the age of the Internet, reading books does not seem as important as it once was. Do you think people can learn as much as on the Internet as they can by reading books? Which method do you prefer?
- It is easy to get the impression that many of China's ancient philosophies and traditions are becoming less and less relevant in the new world. Do you agree that old traditions are irrelevant? And do all successful nations need to let the past go and welcome change to their cultures?

Social and environmental problems

For example:

- Euthanasia has been legislated in several countries. However, many doctors in those countries still refuse to carry out the law. If you were a doctor, would you agree to carry out euthanasia? Please give your reasons, too.
- Do you think that cannabis should be legalized in China? Why or why not?
- In China, many young couples choose to live together without having a child, and this kind of family is called "DINK" – Double Income No Kid. Could you talk about the reasons why there are so many "DINK" families continually appearing in our society?

-- How do you interpret “low-carbon lifestyle – the new concept of life”?

World Politics

-- Should India, Brazil, Japan and Germany become UN Security Council members?

-- What are China’s primary responsibilities to the world?

-- What should China do to promote peace between North and South Korea?

Personal Choice/Dilemma

-- Which qualities do you look for in a boyfriend/girlfriend?

-- More and more couples around the world and in China are choosing to live together instead of getting married. Why do you think this is and do you think it’s a good thing?

-- What’s your view on public displays of affection such as kissing on campus?

-- Some people prefer to live in a small town. Others prefer to live in a big city. Which place would you prefer to live in?

This is just a sample of the ocean of personal, social, and global problems that these young people in their early twenties have to solve within three minutes of speech with less than fifteen minutes of preparation, sometimes no preparation at all if they are in the Q&A sessions. One has to be a walking encyclopedia in order to understand all the issues in discussion, not even mention come up with wise solutions to these problems. These questions orient the students in Xinjiang towards an imagined China and a global community without touching much on the real political issues at the local level. What are missing are questions that have any relevance to the local politics. Among all the questions I have seen in the FLTRP Cup training sessions and actual contests, only one question is about Urumqi and it was only a Q&A practice question during the training: should using public transport in Urumqi be free of charge?

Sometimes contestants did not even know the words in the questions, such as “euthanasia” and “cannabis.” In the 2011 FLTRP Cup Xinjiang Contest, a male Uyghur contestant approached me when I was standing outside the auditorium and asked me what “cannabis” means on that unfortunate slip of paper he happened to draw for his impromptu speech. I whispered the Chinese *dama* (大麻) into his ears and he nodded his head. Coming from southern Xinjiang where cannabis is traditionally cultivated and consumed by Uyghur men, he must at least know what this plant is even though he didn’t know the English word for it, but in his impromptu speech, he proposed that it should not be legalized in China because there is no cannabis and it is not applicable to China’s situation (*guoqing* 国情).

The speaking contests in the private English schools, however, are a different scene. They were much more relaxed, intimate and exciting. I attended the 2010 Tavpik English speaking contest as an observer in the qualifier and semifinal and as a judge in the final. The contest lasted for twenty days in November. About thirty students competed in the qualifying competition. They were equally divided into two classrooms used as ad hoc competition sites, with four judges for each site. Three of the four judges at each site were Uyghur instructors at Tavpik, all male. My friends D and J, who were from the U.S. and attending Chinese language classes in 2010, each served at one site and acted as the foreign experts and foreign faces on the judges’ bench. The weather in early November was dry and cold in Urumqi. Inside the building the heating was not turned on high. Some people were even wearing down jackets and coats inside the classroom. The classrooms were not brightly lit. But the spirit was high. The classrooms were filled with an audience, listening attentively to the speakers.

Both the semi-final and the final were held in the big auditorium on the third floor of Tavpik. Both times the 180-seat room was completely full and some students were standing behind the last row. The Tavpik staff was very serious about technology. The whole process was video-recorded with high-end video cameras. During breaks, images of the training center and its instructors were also shown on the big screen behind the podium. On the day of the final competition in late November, the atmosphere was the most exciting. An hour before the competition, almost half of the seats were taken by audience members. A band of five student musicians and a singer were tuning on stage: four men playing hand drum, *dutar*⁵², *rawap*⁵³, and guitar and a woman playing *ghijäk*⁵⁴. The woman singer was wearing a red cashmere shirtdress with a black and gold belt accentuating her figure, looking very pretty. The band and singer practiced a few Uyghur folk songs while the audience was gradually filling up the seats and the staff was busy with preparation. A male singer joined them sometimes when the song was a duet. Live performance during preparation and score calculation periods in an English speaking competition is very common both in the official contests such as CCTV or FLTRP cups or contests run by the Uyghurs. But the music of this band was not the stereotyped *minzu* songs or dances that are often seen on CCTV Gala programs and imitated at the FLTRP Cup and Start of Outlook Cup by the Han Chinese performers. And to the ears of the majority Han population in China, the music played at Tavpic might sound strange and not to their usual taste.

⁵² A *dutar* is a traditional long-necked two-stringed lute found in Iran and Central Asia. Its name comes from the Persian word for "two strings", *dotār* (تار دو < do "two", تار *tār* "string"), although the Herati *dutar* of Afghanistan has fourteen strings. When played, the strings are usually plucked by the Uyghurs and strummed and plucked by the Tajiks, Turkmen, and Uzbeks.

⁵³ The *rawap* (Uyghur: رازاپ) is a stringed instrument from Xinjiang. It's particularly associated with Uyghur music and culture. Similar to a lute, it has 7 strings in 3 courses. Uyghur *Rawaps* have decorative goat horns above the body of the instrument and the body may be covered in hide or snakeskin.

⁵⁴ *Ghijäk* is a spike lute, either with a bowl soundbox (similar to *kamancheh*), or with a box soundbox often made from a tin can, with three or four metal strings. It is used by Afghans, Uzbeks, Uyghurs, Tajiks, Turkmen and Qaraqalpaks. The Uyghur *ghijäk* is a fiddle with a soundboard of stretched skin.

Yelled orders from the staff, folk music from the band, laughter and chat from the audience were all at once mixed in the air. The Master Ceremony F, a third-year college student from Xinjiang Finance and Economics University, dressed in white shirt and black suit and tie and wearing rectangular glasses, looked even smarter than usual. He was pacing up and down at the podium and practicing the script in his hand. The first row was reserved for the judges. The name stands showed each judges name: Mr. L, Mr. H, Mr. G, Mr. U, Mr. A, D, J⁵⁵ and my name Gladys. My role that day was called the “Question Master.” I worked with another “Question Master,” a Uyghur teacher at Tavpic to ask questions to the contestants and test their abilities to carry out a conversation. Bottled mineral water and soft drinks of the common Chinese brand Wahaha were laid on the desks for the judges. On the screen the promotion page was more elaborate than at the black-and-white semi-final, with bright colors and layers of shadows.

Although the topics at the Tavpic contest follow the same format of prepared speech, impromptu speech and Q&A session as other contests and the questions are all politically correct, the topics are closer to the local life. For instance the topic for the prepared speech was “If I were the mayor of Urumqi.” Contestants tended to address problems that were relevant to local people’s lives, such as public transportation and housing, though avoiding anything about ethnic conflict. There was also one additional part where participants were asked to do a PowerPoint presentation on any topic they are interested in. Many students chose to speak on traditional Uyghur culture or renowned historical figures such as Mehmud Kashigheri, an 11th Century Turkic scholar and lexicographer of Turkic languages from Kashgar, or *Qutadġu Bilig* (“*The Wisdom Which Brings Good Fortune*”; Chinese: *fule zhihui*/福乐智慧), an 11th Century Karakhanid collection of words of wisdom. All these topics would be frowned upon by officials

⁵⁵ I omitted their full names to protect their identities.

as they smell of Uyghur nationalism from the Chinese official standpoint if brought up at the official speaking competitions. However, in the close and intimate environment of Uyghur-run private English schools, contestants felt comfortable enough to present on topics like these, among others.

The awards were monetary and big in amount: 1500RMB for the champion, which was won by my friend Anwar, a biology graduate student from Xinjiang University. The runner-up with a 1000RMB prize and third-place with 500RMB were won by two girls respectively. The three prize winners held their red certificates with big Chinese characters “*rongyu zhengshu*” (荣誉证书) and English letters “Honorary Credentials” and envelopes with big characters marked with the amounts of their prize stood with Tavpik’s owner Mr. G and posed for the cameras. The champion Anwar was also presented with a crystal trophy engraved with gold letters “Tavpik English Speaking Contest Championship.” Other prizewinners were given big Cambridge English dictionaries and GRE vocabulary books published by the New Oriental as awards, which are considered expensive books for the students.

Xinjiang Contestants in Beijing

Only two or three from Xinjiang can make it to the final competitions in Beijing each year for the FLTRP Cup and the Star of the Outlook Cup. And most of them are Uyghur students (see Appendix 1). However, the speech become even harder for ethnic minority students, especially *minkaomin* students because they had less access to formal education and are less familiar with the Han culture-centered themes at the national contests. If we take a closer look at the speech topics and questions listed in Appendix 2, we get a sense of what China has been “talking about” in the past decade and what people have been allowed to “talk about.” The state

has tried to cultivate a generation of young people who are “global citizens” oriented towards the world, actively participate in the international events held in China such as the 2008 Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai Expo, care about China’s development and social problems, but only social problems that are allowed to be discussed in public. From 2002 the year when China won the bid to hold Summer Olympics in Beijing to 2008 the year China actually held the games, the Olympics had been the officially favored topic in the public forum, therefore it frequently appeared in the speech topics and contestants’ speeches. Actually both the FLTRP Cup (formerly CCTV Cup, 2002 to present) and the Star of Outlook Cup (2000 to present) were initially designed to echo the state’s call to mobilize the whole society for the bidding and later preparation for the Beijing Olympics. China’s entry into the WTO in 2001 was another catalyst in China’s process to “link up with the international standard” (*yu guoji jiegui*). The CCTV Cup opening ceremony in 2002 pointed out the “increasing status” of the English language in Chinese people’s life as an “international lingua franca” (*guoji tongyong yuyan*)⁵⁶. The effort from the CCTV Cup to promote English learning intensified in 2006 to 2008 and they specified their goal was to “show the talent of the contemporary college students, stimulate the interests of the whole country to learn English, elevate their English level, especially improve their skills in spoken English and practical abilities, further meet our country’s expanding need for international exchange, and provide a favorable language environment for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Let the world know China and let China walk to the world.” However, one has to wonder how such an elitist competition that restricts its participants to only registered full-time college students and below the age of 35 can improve the English language skills of the general public.

The themes of the topics at the Star of Outlook Cup have also been closely related to the promotion of state events. According to its official website, from 2006 to 2008, the organizing

⁵⁶ <http://www.cctv.com/lm/861/11/62641.html>

committee of the competition had cooperated with the Beijing Olympics Organizing Committee to “spread knowledge about the Olympics and Olympic ideals.” From 2009 to 2011, the Star of Outlook Cup Organizing Committee cooperated with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to promote concepts of “Nature and Environmental Protection,” and knowledge about “energy conservation and emission reduction” in the competition topics. This was to “contribute to the sustainable development and *harmonious* society construction in China.” (Italic emphasis is mine. Please see my analysis on the “harmonious society” later in this section.) During my fieldwork in 2010 to 2012, keywords such as “living a green life,” “low-carbon lifestyle,” and “emission reduction” had become popular in the speaking contests and training sessions. The Star of Outlook also cooperated with the Shanghai Expo in 2010 and in 2011 with the Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee (the 2nd YOG was held in Nanjiang in 2014) to promote the events respectively. In 2010 in Urumqi I noticed that the Shanghai Expo was frequently mentioned in both private English schools’ newsletters and English speaking contests. Similar topics on the Shanghai Expo and World Wide Fund for Nature can also be observed in the FLRTP Cup contests (see Appendix 2).

In order to win the competitions, especially the FLTRP Cup, which promotes more state ideology, contestants not only have to have good pronunciation, appropriate gestures, smooth delivery, clear and rich content, they also have to pay attention to the news and understand what the “hot issues” are in the contemporary world. Besides the state events such as discussed in the previous paragraphs, students have to be a walking encyclopedia in almost everything. A look at the list of topics will intimidate everyone including native speakers: education, IT, media urban planning, agriculture, migration, transportation, environmental protection, consumer rights, the film industry, the EU and the United Nations, global warming, just to name a few. One minute

you are the representative of the People's Congress and will make suggestions to the central government, the next minute you are introducing the earth to ET visitors. On the stage, every contestant is supposed to come up with a solution to all the problems in the world in three minutes. Students are supposed to be cosmopolitan and nationalistic, globally oriented and patriotic to China all at the same time.

Even if the ethnic minority students were assumed to have the same access to resources and acquire the same type of world knowledge as the Han Chinese students in China proper, and this is far from the case, there is yet a particular type of questions that are very hard and unfair to them: the questions on the so-called "Chinese culture" or "Chinese traditions." When "Chinese" was used in this situation, it actually means Han Chinese culture and traditions. For example, a question that featured in the competitions for several years was on the restoration of the Old Summer Palace (Originally called the Imperial Gardens; Chinese: *yuanming yuan*/圆明园, literal translation: "Gardens of Perfect Brightness"). It was a complex of palaces and gardens in present-day Haidian District, Beijing, China. Built in the 18th and 19th century Manchu Qing Dynasty, it was considered the "Pearl" of Chinese traditional architecture. In 1860, it was ransacked and destructed by the invading British and French troops. The invasion of the Old Summer Palace was considered a humiliation to China and mentioned as a dark phase in China's grand historical construction and a reminder to the Chinese youth not to forget the past in the high school history textbooks. At the conference commemorating the 300th anniversary of the Palace's establishment in 2007, the restoration question was raised again, and the debate continued and intensified in 2010, the 150th anniversary of the "looting of Yuanming Yuan." The key issue was whether rebuilding the Old Summer Palace is a celebration of past glory or a betrayal of history. And this question was carried into the 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2011 FLTRP

final competitions. I wonder how many *minkaomin* Uyghur and Kazakh students were clear about the history of this summer palace.

Another popular topic is on China's efforts to have a number of cultural events and art forms listed as World Cultural Heritages. In 2009, the semi-finalists at CCTV cup were asked to choose one from the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, seal engraving, calligraphy, and paper cutting to make a speech to persuade the UNESCO committee to enlist it. All these are Han Chinese cultural events and objects and one has to be at least familiar with them to give a speech. A similar topic was given to the six finalists in 2010's FLTRP. The six contestants were each assigned a cultural symbol from the Three Gorges Dam, the Bird Nest⁵⁷, the Confucius Temple, the Temple of Heaven, the Yellow River, and the Great Wall. Each person had to give a speech to argue that their choice represented the "Chinese Spirit" the best to the judges and debated with a rebuttal team consisting of a professor of English, a CCTV English Channel anchor, and the British Council Director. *Minkaomin* students would be at a disadvantage when they encountered this type of questions, as was in Umit Haji's case. Although he gave a very nice prepared speech in 2009 FLTRP's final, he lost points in two out of the four quiz questions. One question had to do with the Chinese novelist Mao Dun (1896-1981) and the other with Peking Opera. However, Umit won the championship for the 2010 Star of Outlook, which is a far more flexible contest that focuses more on communicative competence and where he had the freedom to demonstrate Uyghur musical culture.

Other speech topics on Chinese culture and traditions include whether Peking Opera should be taught in primary schools in China, whether the Chinese character "He (和, "harmony") should be selected as the "most Chinese" of Chinese ideograms, or which presents the better

⁵⁷ The Bird Nest is the nickname for the Beijing National Stadium because it looks like a bird nest. The stadium was designed for use throughout the 2008 Summer Olympics and Paralympics and will be used again in the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. It has become one of the national icons for China since 2008.

image of China to the world, Confucius Institutes⁵⁸ or made-in-China products? Sometimes students were asked to comment on Chinese philosophy such as the Confucius quotation “the wise enjoy the waters; the benevolent enjoy the mountains” and other times to identify if *fengshui* is Chinese superstition or science. Beijing is the only city that appears in the topics and questions. Contestants, the majority of them from other provinces and cities than Beijing, were asked to comment on local problems in Beijing such as if Beijing should introduce measures to reduce private cars on the street or if public transport in Beijing should be free of charge.

The FLTRP (CCTV) Cup has very restrictive criteria for what is considered good performance in English public speaking. From 2002 to 2007, the contest brochure specified under the “language” section in its evaluation criteria that contestants should use “standard British English or American English.” However, what was really preferred was British English over American English. Not only the foreign judges were overwhelmingly British, the Chinese judges and the contestants’ coaches, who were mostly trained in the public English education system which uses British English, speak and write British English. The majority of the contestants tried to imitate a British accent, or carry a typical Chinese version of the British accent, a recitational intonation (*langsong qiang*) often heard at Chinese poetry recitals or Chinese language speeches. A few contestants who spoke with an American accent tended to perform it over the top, with very exaggerated body language and a rapping style. None of the contestants who spoke American accent made the final six in all the years from 2002-2011.

A few contestants did challenge this “norm,” but they had to tread carefully. Tashi Rabden, the Tibetan student from Qinghai Minzu College, played a joker style in his prepared

⁵⁸ Confucius Institute is a non-profit public educational organization affiliated with the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, whose aim is to promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teaching internationally, and facilitate cultural exchanges. It has branches all over the world.

speech in the 2006 national semifinal. The semifinal's prepared speech topic was "Unity and Diversity." Under this general topic, contestants could focus on what they see as fit content. Tashi's subtopic was "Body Fusion," in which he gave a very logical argument that the human body consisted of different parts that have different functions but together they make up a wonderful human body. And he extended this to the unity and diversity in the universe. For a three-minute speech with an over-general topic, one can not expect the contestants to give a deep speech that solves all the social problems in the world. I would say that Tashi's speech is as good as the others'. And his pronunciation was also clear and easy to understand. However, his problem was that he deliberately chose a clown style and moved around on the stage, but never stayed at the podium where he was supposed to be. One can notice the camera that was first fixed on the central podium showed an empty podium. A few seconds later, the cameraman woke up to the new change and followed Tashi around. Unlike other contestants, the judges were also shown in Tashi's video clip. Their dumbfounded faces showed that they were shocked by Tashi's out of the ordinary performance. It was easy to predict that Tashi Rabden didn't make to the final. Interestingly, Tashi showed up again in the 2011 national contest and performed the same kind of joker style in his prepared speech "Global Citizenship Begins at Home – Dying for a Drink." I was quite impressed by the background research he did for the speech that shows him to be a very knowledgeable person. This time, instead of black suit and tie, he wore a traditional chuba. He failed again. Not so hard to predict. However, it all looked to me that Tashi was just having fun, as I am sure he or his coach had read the brochure that states under "delivery techniques" one should show "a sense of humor, but not pantomimic humor or joking."

Over-the-top American accent and rap were also frowned upon at the FLTRP (CCTV) Cup. Chen Bo in 2005 national semifinal rapped through his prepared speech "Testing Myself to

the Limit” after a short introduction: “Yo, yo, my mind messed up yesterday; I locked myself in the room I was so afraid; Jesus, the impromptu speech was so hard to make! I stood there not knowing what to say! How am I supposed to win the 3-man-debate!.... If I test myself I may lose my face. But if I give away I may lose my fate! That’s not the limit – I just created it. ...Standing here now I’m feeling great. Just as free as a snowflake.” Compared with the many boring and empty speeches at the contest, his speech was interesting and he composed the rap himself, which showed much ingenuity. However, this format was in conflict with the FLTRP preference, as it is shown in the comments on his speech by both official commentators: “The speaker has clear articulation and a very nice American accent. He looks confident and has good eye contact. He chose a rather unique style of presentation, the rap lyrics, which, as he had hoped, helped him stand out among all the contestants. But is rap the best form of presentation for a nationwide public speaking contest?”

To push back the norm, one has to stay within the performance style prescribed by the organizing committee, but carefully implant messages into the main content of the speech. Sun Man Lek from Macau Polytechnic Institute succeeded in openly challenging the organizing committee’s ideal of “standard British or American accent” by starting his speech like this: “I am sure many of you have read the ‘CCTV Cup’ brochures. Do you know pronunciation and intonation will be part of our, the contestants’ assessment? What do pronunciation and intonation mean anyway? Many of us have spent loads of time trying to ‘correct’ our pronunciation and intonation so that we sound like a British, American, or Australian.” He asked why we couldn’t speak English with some Chinese characteristics. Using examples of Mahatma Gandhi, Henry Kissinger and Pope Benedict XVI, he questioned why the contestants and general Chinese learners of English have to sound “native” and not have traces of our first language when

speaking English. Sun Man Lek made it to the final and ironically, won the Best Pronunciation Award with his crisp and deliberate Received Pronunciation. In his later semifinal impromptu speech, final prepared speech and impromptu speech, Sun seemed to deviate from the other contestants in his content by promoting more unconventional ideas than those of the mainland Chinese students, yet he never deviated from the expected performance style, either linguistically or aesthetically. He wore a nicely fit suit all the time and in the final, his grey bow tie, white rimmed rectangular eyeglasses and faux hawk hairstyle made him stand out among the contestants. He looked a little bit more fashionable than the other male contestants and reminds me of the older generation in Hong Kong and Macau who imitate the English gentlemen style and typically wear bow ties in formal occasions, but “spiced it up,” as he suggested in his speech about adding Chinese characteristics to English, with his young chic.

Different from the “calculated passions” (Crespi 2009) and recitational intonation (*langsong qiang*) typically found in the Han Chinese contestants’ speech, the Uyghur and Kazakh contestants tend to have a more “natural” accent, composed manner and smooth delivery, though not without flaws, as it was noticed by the commentators. Unanimously judges and commentators noticed their styles and specifically commented on them. On 2005 CCTV Final Second Prize winner Adiljan Abdukelim’s prepared speech on “The Greatest Invention in My Eyes – Electricity,” the commentator said: “This is a very good public speech. The speaker gives the audience a firm and confident impression with his smile and enthusiastic gestures. His voice is special and magnetic. He has got perfect pronunciation, showing painstaking efforts in practice. He is sounding just like a native speaker. This speaker also has a good sense of pacing and articulating. It’s easy to notice that he always emphasizes the key points during the speech to

raise audiences' attention; in delivering other parts of the speech, he uses some vocal linking to enhance the flow of information." Another commentator said: "The structure of the speech is very clear. After a brief beginning, the body of the speech comes out in the chronological order. Rhetorical devices, such as restating the point and parallelism, are also used to make the ending powerful. The language used in this speech is easy and clear. It is a prepared speech, but it does not have the trace of recitation. It is delivered naturally, passionately and powerfully, thus the audience is more than ready to accept the point of view of this speaker."

On Adiljan's semifinal impromptu speech, the commentator said: "This speaker manages fairly well to communicate with his audience. His gestures and facial expressions tell the audience that he has something important to tell and this grasps the audience. He is confident, calm and very friendly with his audience. He is not making a speech. He is telling you something he firmly believes in and wants you to trust him." The commentator also praised Adiljan for his structure and logic and said he is "a very mature and confident public speaker."

Kasim Abdurehim, the founder of Atlan Language Training Center in Urumqi, won the third prize and Audience Choice Award in the 2004 CCTV Cup. On his prepared speech, Sue Kay, a regular judge at the FLTRP (CCTV) Cup from 2002 to 2012 and then "Foreign Expert" at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, commented: "This speaker has a very good grasp of language and speaks fluently. The speed and variation in pace and pitch are good and he speaks with conviction. One gets the impression that he really cares whether people understand what he has to say but he managed this without being overly emotional. His gestures are strong and generally appropriate though they are a little overdone, rather repetitious and could become a distraction in a longer speech. He had a passionate clear message in what was a very personal speech. Although, he ended with advice to "step up and seize the opportunity," it was refreshing

that, unlike many speakers, he didn't sound like he was giving an order or telling everyone how they should live their lives. His delivery style is committed and enthusiastic and this is persuasive.” However, although Sue Kay thinks that Kasim is interesting to listen to, the content of his speech lacks depth. She points out that Kasim is a good example of how a speaker can be convincing even when they have a relaxed and chatty style. “It is rare that such a personally oriented speech would be considered a great speech and this was not, but it was entertaining and pleasant to listen to,” said Kay. However, Sue Kay showered the same Kasim with praises without any reservation on his one-minute impromptu speech: “This is a very good speaker. He is confident and poised. His command of language is excellent and his delivery very effective. He is relaxed yet in command. His enthusiasm is obvious but he doesn't let it run away within his words. He knows what he is saying. His eye contact, gestures and voice make the audience listen and feel involved. The content of this very short speech (one minute) was well-structured and the message was clear. ... This is a mature and effective public speaker.”

Other Uyghur contestants were also praised by the judges and commentators for their “naturalness” on stage, good pronunciation and voice, despite flaws in stressing and structures or content of their speeches, compared with Kasim and Adiljan's better speeches. Maerhaba Ishakh was praised for being a “natural public speaker” “She spoke clearly, with a good flow in delivery. She had nice pronunciation and intonation except for a few problems with stress as in words like *'fasci'nated'* – ‘fascinated,’ *'rea'lized'* – ‘realized,’ *'exagge'rated'*—‘e'xaggerated,’ and *'appreci'ated'*—‘ap'preciated’ where all the stresses were misplaced. She was very good at adding stress to the word “every” by having a stop after the first letter ‘e,’ which is a pretty advanced skill of using stress. She looked cheerful and her lovely personality shined through as she spoke. She had good eye contact and natural gestures, and spoke with conviction, sincerity

and warmth.” For Azizmehmet’s speech in the 2003 Semifinal, Sue Kay praised him for his “good delivery style,” “delightful personality,” “good strong voice and excellent pronunciation,” but critiqued his “natural” and “effective” but “overdone” gestures, as well as his messy start, irrelevance of certain facts and “bad habits” such as repeating “you know,” and making unnecessary comments such as “the next thing I’m going to say.”

Ershat Borat, a graduate student from Xinjiang University, delivered his prepared speech on “Being Abnormal is My Top Concern,” in which he argued that students should not bury their heads in the textbook, but be brave to be “abnormal,” that is, different from the others. Education should promote “creativity, imagination and practical abilities” in students. The commentator thinks he has chosen a very meaningful topic, which has a lot to do with education and matches his identity as a college student. He has “excellent delivery, such as strong eye contact, good pauses and much vocal variety, effective gestures, etc. “ He has much enthusiasm for the topic and he does care a lot about the message he would like to convey to the audience.” But the commentator also pointed out that Ershat’s topic is too big and he “simply doesn’t have clear central idea.” For his impromptu speech, another commentator praised Ershat’s “near native-like fluency,” “his confidence and enthusiasm revealed in his resonant voice, his smile and his adequate and proper gestures,” and all these demonstrate him to be “an experienced public speaker.” “Everything seems perfect until the careful audience think about the content.”

Both ethnic minority and Han students are expected to demonstrate the same kind of cosmopolitan knowingness of the contemporary world in their prepared speech and impromptu speech. However, only the minority students are expected to start their speech with a stylized traditional greeting according to their ethnicity and wear ethnic clothes. Interestingly, contestants

of Han Chinese from both Xinjiang and other provinces donned exotic ethnic clothes and performed ethnic songs or dances even if they have nothing to do with that ethnic group. But the judges and audience see them as less “authentic.”

The Uyghur students have selectively performed their ethnic identity to their advantage, yet at the same time push back the stereotypes represented in mainstream media about them. In terms of clothing, how much ethnic element should be shown at the provincial contests and at the national level can be a subtle matter. At the provincial level in Xinjiang, contestants, especially men, tend not to show too much ethnicity in their appearance. They usually wear suit and shirt without a tie and look casually smart. This can be partially explained by the fact that the educated Uyghur and Kazakh men have adopted western style suits long before the Han Chinese did in Xinjiang and they tend to dress up in suits and leather shoes in formal occasions. Another reason is that they don't have to indicate their ethnicity through clothing, because usually their phenotypic features are noticeable and their names definitely identify them as ethnic minorities to the judges and audience, therefore they don't have to. Being fully dressed up in ethnic clothes can be seen as trying too hard, and the more successful speakers tend to show a little bit of ethnicity in their clothing, but not over the top. For instance, national finalist Ershat Borat wore a white shirt with a cross-stitch embroidered collar and a black suit in both the provincial final and national semifinal, looking special yet smart. Kazakh female contestant Dina wore a white wool waistcoat with bright blue embroidery typical seen on Kazakh and Mongolian rugs and yurts. With a matching pin on her ponytailed hair, she looked both uniquely traditional and cosmopolitanly chic.

However, ethnic minority contestants who entered the final stage in Beijing all chose to “perform” their ethnic identity and showed their ethnic pride in some way, in their clothing, body

language, speech title and content, or talent show. The majority of the female contestants who went to Beijing wore blouses or dresses made of the traditional Uyghur textile *atlas* in different colors during the competitions. *Atlas* is the Uyghur name for *ikat*, an ancient dyeing technique used to pattern textiles that employs resist dyeing on the yarns prior to dyeing and weaving the fabric⁵⁹. The 2006 finalist Mirajgul Osman wore a *qizil-atlas* (red atlas for girls) silk dress, a red embroidered *doppa*⁶⁰, and a pair of black Mary Jane heels. The combination of atlas dress and *doppa* can be easily recognized as a Uyghur women's outfit by most Han Chinese in China even though they might not know the Uyghur names for the cloth and hat, as this outfit is commonly represented in the mainstream media, especially in the CCTV's annual Chinese New Year's Gala where ethnic groups don their ethnic clothes, sing and dance. Male contestants, though, most of the times wearing suits like other (Han) Chinese contestants, all greeted the audience with a Muslim greeting – putting the right hand over one's heart and bow slightly.

In their speeches, ethnic minority contestants almost always mentioned and discussed their ethnicity. In 2006 CCTV Cup's semifinal prepared speech stage, this was particularly visible, because the general topic that year was "Unity and Diversity." While contestants from other provinces extended the topic into areas such as the unity and diversity of the human race, or universe, or world languages and cultures, or globalization, the two Uyghur contestants, both female, one representing Xinjiang Autonomous Region and the other representing Tianjin

⁵⁹ *Ikat* is produced in many traditional textile centers around the world, from India to Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Japan, Africa and Latin America. The Uyghurs use it only for woman's clothing. The historical record indicates that there were 27 types of atlas during the Manchu Qing occupation. Now there are only four types of Uyghur *atlas* remaining: *Qara-atlas* (*Darayi*, black ikat used for older women's clothing), *Khoja'e-atlas* (yellow, blue, purple ikat used for married women), *Qizil-atlas* (red ikat used for girls) and *Yarkant-atlas* (*Khan-atlas*). *Yarkant-atlas* has more diverse styles; during Yarkant Khanate (16th century), there ten different styles of *Yarkant-atlas*.

⁶⁰ The *doppa* is a square or round skullcap originating in the Caucasus and worn by Kazan Tatars, Uyghurs, Tajiks, Uzbeks. The *doppa* means hat in Uzbek but however a baseball hat is not called a "Doppa" normally. The *doppa* is derived from a Turkic, more pointed, ancestral cap. In contemporary Uyghur culture, the color of the men's *doppa* tends to be darker, in black, brown, or dark green, and simpler in embroidered pattern. Women's *doppa* tends to be more colorful and the embroidery more complicated.

Municipality, discussed their Uyghur identity. In her speech titled “Cultural Assimilation and National Identity,” Mirajgul from Xinjiang University described Xinjiang as “vast in land, rich in natural resources, and a home to more than 13 ethnic groups,” a typical official description of Xinjiang by China’s mainstream media. The following sentence “A kaleidoscope of various cultures is what fosters the unique Xinjiang culture, diverse but progress in *harmonious* unity” is also very politically correct. She then critiqued “some people” who are “not enthusiastic about” the unity and diversity in Xinjiang. “They see the unification of diversity a looming danger of assimilation and a loss of cultural identity.” “How can we produce a recognizable national identity?” They asked. My answer is, “Diversity is a vital feature of the natural world, because although every single culture differs from the other, it shares commonality in obeying the laws of nature.” Finally she declares that “I’m Uyghur in blood, Chinese in nationality and have been holding a dream of giving a speech in English to an audience as diverse as I am. Today my dream has come true!”

Shabahat, who went to Tianjin Foreign Languages College and represented Tianjin, also drew on her Uyghur identity in her speech titled “A Uyghur girl Can be Different and the Same.” She told a personal story of being different from Han Chinese and her education path to Tianjin. She was self-aware of her difference by opening the speech with “most of you may know where I am from, for my appearance tell you I am a Uyghur girl. Yes, I am from Xinjiang, a place which is famous for its natural beauty and ethnic diversity.” She then recounted: “I am so different from most of you sitting here. I was raised up among Uyghur people. My mother tongue is totally different from Chinese and I have a great passion for music and dance as the other Uyghur people.” She explained why she went to Tianjin for study: “I am proud of our unique Uyghur culture, but at the same time I know it is not everything in life..... I want to enjoy

the high quality education, which my hometown lacks...” She wishes that as a Uyghur girl, she could “bridge the gaps” between her and her peers, between Chinese people and foreigners, and also between Uyghur people and Han people, “making the world we are living a more *harmonious* one.”

One has to know the political environment in 2006 in order to understand why the word “harmony” and its derivatives “harmonious” have become “keywords” in early to mid-2000s in the contestants’ speeches. The concept of the “Harmonious Society,” though originally a Confucian ideal, was re-developed into a key feature of Hu Jintao's signature ideology of the Scientific Development Concept promoted in the mid-2000s, being re-introduced by the Hu-Wen Administration during the 2005 National People's Congress. Like many slogans that became popular in the mainstream media then fell out of favor when the next CCP leader invented a new concept, the “Harmonious Society (*hexie shehui*)” “harmony (*hexie*)” and “harmonious (*hexiede*)” became catchphrases in the general society and used in everyday language. It is not surprising that many contestants, probably under their coaches’ direction, wrote these phrases into their speeches, in such a politically correct public speaking event⁶¹ in 2006. The administration of Hu's successor, Xi Jinping, has used the philosophy more sparingly, likely in favor of emphasizing his vision of the Chinese Dream.

⁶¹ However, like many other propaganda phrases in China, people also played on these phrases to achieve satirical effect in their daily conversation. While initially the public's reaction to the idea was positive, over the years “Harmonious Society” has emerged as a euphemism for “stability at all costs,” and has garnered its share of critics. The government often uses “Harmonious Society” to justify the suppression of dissent and the tight control on information in China. Some social commentators have pointed out the irony that in building a “harmonious society” the country has become less just, less equal, and less fair. Meanwhile, some of Hu's critics say that application of the “Socialist Harmonious Society” concept has resulted in anything but itself. China scholar Cheng Li said that Hu's failure in implementing the Socialist Harmonious Society program has been his “gravest pitfall” during his tenure. Critics cite the increased wealth gap, higher internal security budgets, and unprecedented corruption in state-owned industries as evidence that Socialist Harmonious Society has failed in practice. The term “River crab” (Chinese: 河蟹; pinyin: héxiè) has been adopted as Internet slang in Mainland China in reference to Internet censorship. The word river crab sounds similar to the word “harmonious” in Mandarin Chinese. In addition, the word “harmonious” can itself also be the placeholder verb for “to censor”, most often referring to posts on a forum that have been deleted because of its unacceptable content, or the censorship of stories reporting sensitive issues in the press. Something that has been censored in this manner is often referred to as having been “harmonized” (被和谐了).

Male Uyghur contestants tend to emphasize the fact that English is their third language, or they learned this language *by themselves*. In the 2003 Semifinal, Azizmahmet started his speech titled “The Future is Now – The Prospect of the New Century” by calling on college students to make sure “all the things we are doing is closely related with creativity” in the “new century.” He then said: “And, so as like a student like me, I have to study like very different languages. So English is my third language. For a minority student like me, I have to study Chinese first. I have never taken any English class before.” Although Azizmahmet’s speech pointed out a poignant fact that was discussed in Chapter 2 that Uyghur students who go through the *minkaomin* system like him and many other Uyghur contestants won’t get chance to learn English in school until college, this was dismissed by the judges and commentators as irrelevant to his speech. Sue Kay commented: “The relevance of this information to the topic was not made clear. It would have been better, for example, had he explained how he needs English when studying western medicine rather than trying to impress by saying it was his third language and he’d never had a lesson – amazing though that is.” Atlan Private English School owner Kasimjan also told the story of a self-made man and how he taught himself English because he saw the usefulness of the language in business. Umit Haji in his 2009 CCTV Cup speech briefly mentioned one of his “*Uyghur* citizens” invented a new type of generator in his speech about “Culture Smart or Science Intelligent” without sounding like he was imposing the information on the audience. In the 2010 Star of Outlook English Talent Competition, he mentioned he had only studied English by himself for two years in one of his speeches.

Kasim Abdurehim at the 2005 CCTV Cup Semifinal in Beijing told the story of his life journey from someone who didn’t see the value of education to someone who firmly believed in it and has held the motto of “live and learn.” It was not until he realized the importance of the

English language in the business world that he started taking night classes. He was able to communicate with foreign customers after two years of English learning. Afterwards he realized only a well-rounded education could guarantee his success in the future. At the age of nineteen, only having completed elementary school, he went back to senior high school after four months of tutoring in different subjects. For his first college entrance exams he scored one point lower than the required score (*fenshu xian*) He tried a second year, and was admitted to Xinjiang University as an English major.

Who's the Champion?: Umit Haji vs. Guo Wen'na at the 2010 Star of Outlook Cup Final

The Star of Outlook English Speaking and Talent Competition aims to entertain the TV audience. It is a more elaborate version of the final stage of the previous CCTV Cup and employed the same group of TV program staff. Like many *darenxiu* (a direct transliteration of “talent show”) in China, it invited people from all ages and walks to take part in the local open auditioning, go through levels of selection process and if one's good and lucky enough, go to Beijing to stand on the grand stage of CCTV studios. Talent shows, an imitation of British shows such as *Idols*, *Got Talent* and American ones like *American Idol* and international ones such as *The Voice*, started to gain popularity in China since 2004. They are usually promoted by provincial commercial satellite TV stations to compete for audience ratings. *Chaoji Nüsheng* (English name: *Super Girls*) and *Kuaile Nansheng* (English name: *Super Boys*) by the Hunan Satellite TV, *China's Got Talent* by Dragon TV (headquartered in Shanghai) and *The Voice of China* by Zhejiang Satellite TV were the most popular.

The finals of the Star of Outlook Cup have been held at the CCTV studio in June every year, edited and broadcast on CCTV-10 Science & Education Channel in August (before 2010

broadcast through CCTV-2), as part of the Outlook English program that targeted young audience. Compared with the FLTRP Cup, which is mostly in English, it is more of a bilingual competition as both Masters of Ceremonies and judges speak English and Chinese (Chinese most of the time) and questions from the judges were also bilingual. Therefore, the contestants answered the questions in the language that judges used in each question. The MCs Xu Yinqi and Ding Yuanyuan were winners of previous Start of Outlook competitions and later selected by CCTV by their anchors. The judges in 2010 were Teng Jimeng, a professor from Beijing Foreign Languages University, Liu Xin, a TV anchor at the CCTV-English, and David Moser (Chinese Name: Mo Dawei), a sinologist who was then working at the CCTV as a part-time anchor and a consultant at a language training center. They are all regulars at different English language TV programs and English language competitions, either as judges, commentators, or guests.

Another difference from the other speaking competitions is that the Star of Outlook, like many other talent shows on TV, aims to entertain. The talent show part is as important as English speaking. Therefore the contestants try all kinds of methods to attract attention. The Star of Outlook follows the elimination system as do other talent shows in China. In the first round of the final, five out of the ten finalists would be eliminated; in the second round, two would be eliminated; in the last round, after the third place is decided, the last two finalists compete for the championship. All the elimination takes place on the spot. The two big buttons in front of each judge decide the fate of the contestants. The big red ✓ indicates a pass and the big green ✘ means no pass. If the contestants get all three passes, they enter the next round directly. If they get three “no pass,” they are eliminated right away. If they get one or two passes and tie with another contestant, whoever get more votes from the twenty-one “audience judges” votes enters

the next round. In each round, a one or two-minute prepared speech is given, the twenty-one audience judges vote (called “popularity index” and shown on the big screen with the height of a red arrow), and the three judges engaged the contestant with picky questions.

Like other talent shows, the cruelty of the immediate elimination creates suspense for the audience on site and the audience in front of the TV all over China and attracts them to watch. When being broadcast on TV, the whole final contest is cut into chunks and made into 30-minute programs and released at a fixed time every day. Boring parts are edited out and information is chopped up and fed to the audience as one minute or two-minute or 30-second pieces. The meaning of each piece is interpreted by the voiceover and the captions. Short clips of backstage interviews of the contestants or images of them preparing for the speech would be inserted after each speech right away. A short video documentary that introduces each contestant is used before they appeared on the stage. This type of piece-meal presentation also creates excitement. The audience onsite were encouraged to cheer and clap their hands loudly, and sometimes whistle, whenever a contestant enters the stage, finishes a speech, forgets words, or anywhere there was a gap. The whole contest feels like a sports event, or even a horse race.

In the first round, the contestants were required to give a one-minute speech under the general topic “My Time to Shine.” During the speech, the contestants were expected to also embed some elements of talent show. Therefore they have to do a lot within a very short time and attract the attention of the twenty-one audience judges right away, because it is they who vote first to give the “popularity index” before the “professional judges” ask questions. Although their votes are not as important as the three main judges, their votes can have a positive or negative impact on the contestant’s feelings, and confidence to face the picky questions, which come right afterwards. Martial arts performance, singing and dancing, playing musical

instruments are the popular forms among others. Most wear colorful costumes and some are over the top. It seems “performing an ethnic style” was particularly popular among the contestants. What is interesting is that most of them are Han Chinese and the ethnic minority clothes they wear or the ethnic dance they dance have nothing to do with their own identities.

In the 2010 Star of Outlook College Students Group, the final duel between Umit Haji from Xinjiang and Guo Wen’na from Beijing was an exciting one and controversial. It is controversial because some audience on the internet discussion forum believe the runner-up Guo Wen’na was the better one. Both played the “ethnic card.” Yet the former was authentic and the latter cliché, as seen by one of the judges. Guo Wen’na was a veteran public speaker and had much experience in stage performance. The introductory video showed her as one of the 2008 Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony actresses, wearing Jingpo ethnic attire. In 2009 she was on the China team for the World Universities Debating Championship. And in 2010 she was on the Chinese Youth Delegation to the Toronto G20 Summit. Umit Haji, a computer science student from Xinjiang University of Finance and Economics, was *minkaomin* and according to his introductory video, only learned English by himself for two years. From my own interaction with him and his stage performance, I can see Umit is a very shy person both on and off stage. He said he was intimidated by the other contestants who had studied English for twelve to fourteen years. He likes to make friends, but he can be nervous when he first meets them. So he hoped he could win the judges’ hearts with his music and his (calm) personality.

Guo Wenna performed a few moves of Dai⁶² dance in the first round and gave a speech on “the magic of dancing,” telling the story of how she started dancing at a very young age. And in her Q & A session she said she wanted to tell the whole world the pretty (dancing) girls can be smart too. They can speak English. The bright-yellow two-part dance costume with a short and

⁶² Dai is one of the 56 recognized ethnic minorities of China and live in southwest China.

tight short-sleeve shirt that exposes the waist and a tube skirt that reaches the ankles is the stereotypical exoticized and eroticized ethnic clothes for Dai women and often seen in ethnic dance performances such as the CCTV Chinese New Year Gala. Her dance moves are nothing out of the ordinary, as they are often taught as the ethnic dance genre in Chinese schools. In China, there are several popular ethnic dance types: Uyghur, Mongolian, Tibetan and Dai. Both the costumes and moves have been stylized and fixed. To contrast with the more masculine Mongolian and Tibetan dances, the Dai is usually performed by women and designed as very feminine. However, it has been performed so much since Mao's time it is no longer considered novelty anymore. In the interview clip that was inserted to Guo's entry to the stage, she said she chose the Dai dance because "the combination of Dai dance and English speaking" would be a "Chinese half jade and Western half-jade combined into one" (*zhongxi hebi*, a Chinese idiom that means to combine the Chinese and the Western styles in one thing) and this should attract the attention of the judges.

Umit didn't wear any ethnic costume and he probably didn't have to. On the rolling screen in the studio his basic information including his ethnicity was shown when he was giving the speeches. In the introductory video, he introduced himself as a Uyghur boy from Xinjiang and greeted everyone in both *nihao* (Chinese greeting for "How do you do?") and *As-salāmu 'alaykum* (Arabic "May peace be upon you," a common Muslim greeting) and introduced himself in both Chinese and Uyghur. He wore the white kurta style shirt with cross-stitch embroidered collars that is popular among Uyghur men and a black doppa, carried a rawap and danced a few moves of Uyghur dance. In the first round speech, he greeted the audience with a

Muslim greeting (right hand over his heart and a slight bow), played mukam⁶³ on his rawap and gave a speech on Uyghur music and Mukam. Although his English was not as good as Guo's, as was commented by both Liu Xin and David Moser, for instance he may mispronounce some words⁶⁴ and made grammatical mistakes, he was fluent and answered the judges' questions with sincerity. He didn't seem to care to give the "right answers" that many contestants thought the judges wanted to hear. He only spoke his mind as if he were carrying out a daily conversation. His manner was neither humble nor pushy. The judges called him "calm and gentle." However, Guo appeared very aggressive and proud. In the after-speech interview she said she wants to challenge the authority (meaning Judge Liu Xin who asked her picky questions) and she will do it again in the next round).

In the second round, the contestants should give a speech under the general topic "My Time to Persuade." Guo donned what she called a Manchu court princess dress and gave a speech on "Revitalize Traditional Chinese Culture and Civilization." In the interview video played on the big studio screen before she entered the stage, she said she was one-fourth Manchu blood, therefore she wanted to introduce a little bit of the Manchu culture and persuade everyone to revitalize Chinese culture. Obviously for her, both Dai culture and the Manchu culture are part of the "Chinese culture." However, her speech was filled with cliché content on the global vs. the traditional and many big empty words. And nothing about Manchu culture. Accompanying the speech was the theme song from the *My Fair Princess* (*huanzhu gege*), a very popular 1998-1999 television costume drama produced in China about the fabricated story of a Manchu Qing princess. The stereotypical ethnic dress and the music didn't impress. The judge Liu Xin

⁶³ Mukam is Mukamlar (singular: mukam) is a term for bodies of musical repertoire for the Turkmen dutar (two-stringed lute) or tüydük (an end-blown flute). Mukamlar represents the most important repertoires in the Turkmen classical tradition after the baksy songs.

commented her dress as “old-fashioned” (*laoqi*) and her speech content as trite and “old as Adam” (*laodiaoya*, literally “old and toothless”)

Umit told a true story of his friend, a Uyghur college student who was in bed suffering from leukemia and needed six hundred thousand RMB for his treatment. He therefore auctioned his rawap with a bottom bid RMB500. Although this was a staged performance and nobody actually bought his rawap on site, he was quite persuasive in that this was a true story and a concrete example to prove that there were many people in need in Xinjiang. The Judge Liu Xin asked him: “There are many poor people in need and why do we have to help this one? Are there other ways to help them?” Umit answered: “There are many poor Uyghur people are learning small skills such as repairing computers and cellphones. Maybe you can contribute to their education by teaching them new things and help them change their minds.”

Although Guo won more audience votes than Umit, which showed she was more popular with the audience on site, the one vote that decided Guo and Umit’s fates came from Liu Xin, the female news anchor from CCTV. Her reason for voting against Guo was that she was too confident about herself and she could have performed better with all her past experience. But for Umit, a Uyghur boy from a “far-away place,” he showed humility and dignity.

Turning Championship into Capital in the Private English Schools

The phenomenon of the English speaking competitions is particularly connected to the private English schools in the case of Xinjiang. One of the goals of many Uyghur college student contestants is to use the ranking (the higher the better) as a credential to find a teaching job at the private English schools that are owned by the Uyghurs and for the Uyghurs, and eventually open one by themselves. Most of the teaching jobs are highly paid and well respected in the

community. This is an instance where linguistic capital is directly translated into economic capital in the ethnicized labor market in Xinjiang. Because jobs controlled by the state that need the English language such as teaching positions in universities, public schools, top positions in governments and banks, are mostly occupied by Han Chinese, and there are not so many foreign companies in Xinjiang, Uyghur speakers of English tend to set up their own enclaves of business from which they can profit from transferring their linguistic capital of English skills to economic capital. Uyghur-run private English schools mushroomed since 2005 and a top prize from a provincial or national English-speaking contest is often their start-up capital. Almost all the champions and top winners from the English speaking contests since 2005 are either teaching in a private English school, or own one by themselves. The owner of the biggest one Atlan Language Training Center in Urumqi, Kasimjan Abudureyim won the third place and Audience's Choice Award in the 2004 CCTV English Speaking Competition. Students in the private English schools look up to their teachers and emulate them. If they can not be easily selected in the official contests system, they actively participate in the contests held by the their private schools.

What is interesting here is that what the ethnic minority contestants choose to do with their awards won from the speaking contests differs by gender. Almost all the male contestants who entered the national speaking contests (see Appendix 1) had used this credential to either teach at private English schools or open their own English schools. None of the female contestants did so. On the teaching staff at the major private English schools Atlan, Tavpik and SABA, very few women had participated in any English speaking contests. The credential they use are mostly what university they have been to, what degrees they get or what national and

international tests they have taken. The next chapter will discuss the private English schools run by Uyghurs in more detail.

CHAPTER 4 PRIVATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN XINJIANG

An Overview on the Private English Schools in Xinjiang

There are three types of private English schools in Xinjiang. Most schools are located in the provincial capital Urumqi. The first type is run by foreign companies, such as the English First program under Education First (EF), which is an international education corporation that “specializes in language training, educational travel, academic degree programs, and cultural exchange.” It was founded in Lund, Sweden in 1965 and now headquartered in Lucerne, Switzerland. Another example of this type is Pattison English, an English training program under Pattison International Education Group based in Vancouver, Canada. This type of schools has branches in other cities in China, mostly big cities on the east coast and central China. Although in reality they hire both native English speakers from English speaking countries and Chinese teachers who have acquired TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate, they advertise their strength in native-speakers only (read white English speakers⁶⁵) to the potential customers in China. The tuition is the highest among all private English schools. Han Chinese students dominate the student body, but there are some ethnic minority students as well.

The second type is run by (Han) Chinese companies, which either have headquarters in other major cities or are based in Urumqi. These include New Oriental Education Corporation (based in Beijing), Urumqi Springleaf School (based in Urumqi), and others. The most influential is the New Oriental Corporation. Its Urumqi branch owns two locations, one across the street from the Xinjiang Medical University and the other in the Central Business District

⁶⁵ For my pilot fieldwork in Beijing, dissertation fieldwork in Xinjiang and stories told by my Chinese American friends about their English teaching experience in China, I notice that Chinese Americans are often not considered native speakers of English.

near the People's Square⁶⁶. Both are in the commercial areas in Urumqi, within walking distance from universities, a major source of students who would take courses at these training centers. Their tuition is in the middle range among the private English schools in Xinjiang. Students are predominantly Han Chinese.

The third type is owned and run by the ethnic minorities and attended by students from corresponding ethnic groups. This type is the most unique in terms of its ethnicized nature. I cannot find any similar case in Tibet or Inner Mongolia or southwestern China, where private English schools run by ethnic minorities exist in such a great capacity. Except two small Kazakh-run schools in Urumqi, Uyghur teachers run most of the private schools in this category. Most of the owners of the schools are young Uyghur males in their late twenties to early thirties. Students consist of males and females of relatively equal numbers. It is hard to count how many private language training schools there are in Urumqi, as some small-size ones emerged and others closed down. The most famous one are Atlan, Tavpik, SABA (Imagine), and Orhun, which have run for a long time and been doing well. There are also English language schools in other cities in Xinjiang, such as Gulja in the northwest, and Kashgar and Asku in the south. The tuition prices in this group vary by school and reflect their students' economic status. Some elite programs under big school such as Atlan can be as high as English First and some can be very low.

All the three types of schools have their brand name that they advertise and that is officially registered at the local Trade and Industry Bureau. Most of them have their teaching building property that they either bought or rented. Some schools in the third category in their early stage of development have to find ad hoc classrooms on university campuses during winter

⁶⁶ The People's Square is a large public square located around the major intersections of Central Business District of Urumqi.

and summer breaks. They all have relatively stable teaching staffs. Besides these three major types, there are also training centers and classes that are associated with universities and colleges, which mostly hire their own university lecturers and offer English language, Chinese language (to ethnic minorities), and computer science classes among others during the summer and winter breaks. Also, university lecturers and college students who moonlight as tutors or teach a group of students are countless and harder to track. Their reputation is word of mouth and their student source tends to be more stable. I also met some people from this category during my fieldwork.

In the following sections, I describe representative schools from each category in more detail and discuss their influence on the English learning scene in Xinjiang, the hope they opened up to the ethnic minority students in Xinjiang, and the limitations they have because they are in Xinjiang. An instructor at the New Oriental Urumqi proudly pointed out to me: “private English schools in China are no longer just supplementary to the public English education system. Rather, we are more influential if not equally important. It’s like the ‘one country, two systems.’”

There is an increasing degree of closeness and elitism correlated with the school’s tuition. Among the different types of schools I visited in Urumqi and Kashgar, the international schools such as EF is completely closed to visitors unless one is a potential customer and emits a sense of secrecy. They never openly advertise how much they charge for the tuition. One has to call up to schedule a trial class before knowing the prices. When I asked if there was any opportunity for me to teach there, they told me they only recruited foreign teachers who are native speakers of English. The national schools such as the New Oriental also have a close-door policy and are somewhat hostile to researchers like me. However, it’s possible to sneak in with friends who are parents of students who study there. The local Uyghur-funded schools are open to the public.

There are no guards at their doors to check visitors' ID and students and their friends come in and out of the doors all the time. The atmosphere is more relaxed.

Foreign-owned English Language Training Centers – English First Urumqi Branch

EF leaves a mysterious, VIP and elitist impression in the public eyes in Urumqi. Most of my friends who have children have heard of EF, “the expensive school,” and that’s all they know about it and how much they care. Unlike other private schools in town, EF never publicizes the prices of their courses and programs in their brochures, newsletters, and websites. Neither do they post instructors’ information in these public advertising spaces. Only when one visits their schools’ actual locations, can one see a few wall posters where a select few instructors’ first names, portrait pictures, and short self-introductions, all white faces, and their prize-winning students’ pictures and stories can be seen. Their websites encourage interested customers to call up and try a trial class first for free. I never got the chance to know any instructors or sit in the classrooms because on my first day, I was already barred from coming in. The staff told me that since I’m not a foreigner from an English speaking country, they would not recruit me as a teacher. Unless I have children to send in, I cannot have access to any part of the school. Even parents can only wait outside in the rest area. They don’t welcome researchers either.

EF tends to promote “globalness” and “cosmopolitanism” through generic images of people that they assume can be applied to anywhere in urban China, such as advertisement in Beijing which features the white man and (Han) Chinese woman couple discussed in Chapter 1. But this advertisement does not work so well in Xinjiang, at least not for the ethnic minorities, such as the Uyghurs and Kazakhs. In Urumqi, because the local adults would not spend money on improving their English as their chance of travelling abroad or interacting with foreigners is

rare, the young couple that was used in Beijing would not be appealing to the Xinjiang locals. What is used instead are images of teenagers, which targets the student population in Urumqi, as well-off parents would send their children to EF to study.

In the EF Urumqi Newsletter Issue 20 (Summer 2010), one advertisement features a young (Han) Chinese woman with long hair dyed into sophisticated dark brown, in a sleeveless little black dress decorated with a pink leather belt at the waist, and black high heels. On her left hand she holds a pink smartphone or iPod, in exactly the same color matching her belt. A white volume-controllable earphone cord connects the device in her hands to her ears. On her right hand she casually drags a brand-new black suitcase. It doesn't look heavy or burdensome at all as for actual international travellers. She half turns towards the readers while she is walking, with a confident smile showing half of her straight white teeth and lip color matching the pink of her belt and smartphone. Her background is a clear blue sky with some white clouds. A collage of famous foreign buildings occupies the bottom one-third of the picture: Saint Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, the Colosseum in Rome, Egyptian Pyramid of Khafre, London's Big Ben, New York's Statue of Liberty, San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, Notre Dame in Paris, CN Tower in Toronto, and the Sydney Opera House. It's quite obvious that not only the architecture, but also the young woman's image is photoshopped into one imaginary space. Ordinary urban Chinese cannot name all these buildings, yet visually they are images that appear often in daily life, such as weather reports on international cities on CCTV, or product packages that want to send a message of modernity and foreignness. So collectively they create a cosmopolitan desire – that one can travel freely to these places. And the young woman's facial expression and leisurely body language indicates that she is the one who's cosmopolitan, not only can she travel freely, but also at ease. And the key to all this, of course, is to speak the English language, as the readers

are reminded of the importance of the English language by the big pink-colored characters “With EF Explore the World,” in both Chinese and English.

On the right of the photoshopped picture is a slightly smaller square, with white-colored characters on a pink-colored background, specifying information of EF Urumqi. On the top, aside from the EF logo, it claims that EF is the “global outstanding English language training expert” for children, adults, entrepreneurs and overseas study. Hotline numbers are given to the Nanmen branch and Youhao Branch, both located in the commercial areas in Urumqi. The Nanmen (南门/South Gate) belongs to the old south Urumqi. It’s the unspoken yet well known dividing line between the southern and northern part of the city, separating the Uyghur population in the south from the Han population in north. The Youhao area (友好/Friendship) is named after the Friendship Shopping Center in the relatively new commercial area in northern Urumqi. Below this general information are the specific summer courses it advertises. The target students are 15 to 22 years old, according to the information on the advertisement. The courses include College Preparation Courses (six weeks of listening comprehension and spoken English intensified training), IELTS⁶⁷ Preparation Course (taught by certified IELTS testers, all non-Chinese), study abroad preparation course, and one-on-one VIP course. It adds that the extra Life Club course hosted by foreign teachers with diverse teaching styles will bring you more opportunities to practice speaking English. The summer program also features weekly outdoor themed activities, constant competitions and many prizes. At the right bottom corner, tiny pictures of sample prizes are shown, such as earphones, notebooks, messenger bags, T-shirts, and

⁶⁷ IELTS stands for International English is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers. It is jointly managed by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment,[6] and was established in 1989. IELTS is one of the major English-language tests in the world, others being the TOEFL, TOEIC and OPI/OPIc. IELTS is accepted by most Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand academic institutions, by over 3,000 academic institutions in the United States, and by various professional organizations across the world.

insulated plastic coffee mugs, all branded EF. In a yellow circle connecting the two parts of the advertisement, it is stated that free Expo 2010⁶⁸ tickets worth 4880RMB are now part of the prizes given out by EF.

The other advertisement on Page 6 has the same layout and design, but targets students ranging from 7 to 14 years old. Instead of a world-travelling young woman, this photoshopped picture shows a young boy in a striped French sailor's T-shirt, effortlessly pressing down one end of a balance scale, on the other end, is a world globe with bright yellow land and deep blue sea. This image derives from the well-known quote by Archimedes, if he were given a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, he should move the world. The quote is often shortened into "Give me a fulcrum I shall move the world" in many self-help books that encourage young people to find the right opportunity to succeed in China. The message implied in this advertisement is that EF, as the best private English training education institute in the world, is that fulcrum -- that opportunity. The courses provided to this younger group include three-week comprehensive applicable training (mostly listening comprehension and spoken English), three-week Expo 2010 Shanghai themed course, "Marco Polo Exploring the World" Club, training musicals, sit-coms, and plays, weekly outdoor activities, and graduation performance. What is interesting is the slight difference in the Chinese translations of the English slogan "With EF Explore the World" for these two age groups: for the 15-22 age group, the literal meaning of the Chinese translation is "Follow EF, travel around the world (跟着英孚, 走遍世界/genzhe yingfu, zoubian shijie)." While for the 7-14 age group, the literal meaning of the Chinese translation is "Follow EF, explore the world (with Expo)" (跟着英孚, 博览世界

⁶⁸ Expo 2010 was held in Shanghai, China from May 1 to October 31, 2010.

/genzhe yingfu, bolan shijie)." The first advertisement is to target senior high school students and college students who are planning to study abroad for high school, college, or graduate school education. And the second targets primary school and junior high school children who are more likely to visit the Expo 2010 in Shanghai with their parents during the summer vacation.

The high price of EF courses and their eliteness are not a secret, but the actual prices are only whispered among some interested parents, as not everyone can afford such a high price and not everyone cares about it. Luckily, one of my high school friends sent her eight-year-old son to EF. I collected some information on the approximate price. The annual fee for two semesters of a 7-9 year-olds program is 16,000RMB. And this fee is going to increase next year. Classes meet every Sunday for two hours except winter and summer vacations. This means parents pay 320RMB for a two-hour class and they have to spend at least two hours delivering and picking up their children. Parents usually have to kill their time waiting in the rest areas, window-shopping in the nearby shopping mall, or in a fast food restaurant like KFC (very popular among the locals in Urumqi). 160RMB (US\$25) per hour is a huge investment in children's extracurricular education, considering the 2014 average annual disposable income in Xinjiang is not very high at 15,097RMB (monthly 1258RMB/191USD). Even for Urumqi urban residents, only a small percentage of the population can afford to send children to this kind of school. For my friend it is also a big financial sacrifice. However, when asked how effective the course is, she answered that at least her son likes it very much. She said, compared with the "exam-oriented education" (*应试教育/yingshi jiaoyu*), the pedagogical style is "more relaxing" and it is easier for children to accept. According to my friend, the small class size with 9 children also makes it possible for every child to be noticed and given attention.

The Beijing Road Branch of English First rents the first floor in a nice office building next to the Provincial Sports Stadium and across the street from the Wuika Times Square Shopping Plaza, the commercial area in the Xinshi District in Urumqi. It is the latest branch in Urumqi. From the EF website and interviews with my friend, I can have give a description of the EF classroom setting: inside there are 13 brand new classrooms for children with E-media whiteboards, 3 VIP classrooms for adult students, world movie theater, E-kitchen, and “Life Club Zone.” Surrounded by shopping malls and restaurants, it is said to be convenient for the parents and children to kill time before and after class. In their online advertisements, only foreign teachers are mentioned: “this branch is equipped with certificate holding foreign teachers and the majority of them hold both TEFL and Cambridge TKT⁶⁹ certificates. Since TEFL is a generic term for any kind of certificate in the field and TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) is an online multiple choice test that does not involve any testing of practical training, EF teachers who hold these certificates have not necessarily had any teaching experience before they came to China. Also, according to my friend, only half of the teachers are foreigners and half are local. However, EF is the one school in town that caters to the top-echelon of the society through marketing their “foreignness” and “whiteness.” In their advertisements, all faces of the teaching staff are white, yet in reality, among the half foreign teachers, some teachers are non-whites from the Philippines. The rest are young expats from the U.S., U.K. or Australia who work on contract.

On the “Teach in China” website forum, some EF teachers complained bitterly about the exploitation and bad treatment they received from the management and suggest that newcomers

⁶⁹ TEFL stands for Teaching English as a Foreign Language. It’s a generic term for the field and the various certificates that are issued to TEFL teachers. Therefore, what kind of TEFL certificate this advertisement refers to is not specified here. However, Cambridge TKT, which stands for Teaching Knowledge Test, issued by Cambridge English, is a professional credential that focuses on core teaching concepts for teachers of English as a foreign language. It does not have a practical teaching component and focuses more on the specialized language and abstracted concepts of ELT than on the actual application of ELT concepts in lesson preparation and delivery. TKT assessment takes the form of a multiple choice test, made up of three modules, which can be taken together, or separately in any order.

avoid EF Urumqi “at all cost,” others pointed out that most of the foreign teaching staff are “not qualified.” Unprofessional behaviors are prevalent among expat teachers such as arguing and swearing in the classroom, showing up drunk at staff meetings, leading students to bars during class time, and video-recording underage female students from their class and distributing the videos online. One teacher with the screen name “balance” commented as a response to some teachers’ complaints of the local management in EF Urumqi: “With few exceptions, very few of you were there to teach, most of you are there because you have no jobs in your home countries and you resent the few real teachers who want to teach, and do not screw their students. The local management have their issues but ask yourselves, do you deserve to be treated any better? Are you worthy of the respect that you demand? The colonial thoughts simply do not go away. You still prance around as though the world worships you.”

Although EF promotes its image as an English teaching institute that emphasizes communicative competence instead of “mute English” typical of the public English education system and other private English schools, it reproduces the same kind of exam-oriented English education, just replacing the old exams with new exams and certificates and branding them as “internationally recognized,” “high class” and elite. The difference is not a revolutionary one, only a matter of degree of prestige. Two exams the EF promotes are EFCELT and TCL ESOL. EFCELT stands for English First EF Cambridge English Level Test. It is a new English test that is launched by EF Corporation and Cambridge University English Language Assessment (Cambridge ESOL). EF advertises that the EFCELT uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (shortened as CEFR or CEF) and this connotes authority. On the EF bulletin, EF staff and Cambridge ESOL Examinations board members hold a placard showing “Research and Innovation,” standing in front of an imposing

Cambridge University building. For many Chinese parents in Urumqi, what Cambridge ESOL does exactly for “research and innovation” for English education doesn’t really matter, but the name Cambridge University conveys much authority and truth.

TCL ESOL stands for Trinity College London English for Speakers of Other Languages. TCL is an international exam board based in London, England. It offers qualifications across a range of disciplines in the performing arts and English language learning and teaching. The board conducts exams in over 70 countries. It not only offers certificates for non-native speakers of English, but also Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) for teachers. Although it is said to be designed to test spoken English skills, it doesn’t seem to be much different from other tests. It is ranked into different levels and graded and the goal for the exam takers is to get another certificate.

On Page 2 of the EF newsletter, the TCL certificate is given a visual reading with pointing arrows and little bubbles with explanations of what each item and icon means on this piece of paper, emanating a sense of royal authority and uniqueness. Under the picture, it explains that the Trinity College London certificate can help students who pass the test: 1. apply to study in overseas schools, colleges and universities; 2. apply to positions in international corporations; 3. to prove their English performance under the international standard. The benefits that the TCL ESOL test can bring to the students and their parents include that students can clearly analyze their improvements through “internationally standard” and “fair external” testing system. They would feel “extremely proud of themselves” when they study hard in order to get an internationally recognized certificate and eventually achieve their study objectives. The emphasis on communicative skills by the TCL ESOL test is going to positively change the classroom paradigm. In order to prepare their students to be ready for the test, the test is going to

encourage the teachers to impart effective communicative knowledge. In a word, the Trinity ESOL testing system can effectively monitor the classroom teaching quality and ensure the English courses are “integrated into the international standards” (*yu guoji jiegui*).

Students at EF do not seem to enjoy their study at EF. In the “EF Students Essay” section of the EF newsletter, in the essay “Give Myself More Chances” by Lu Jiazhi, she wrote: “I found some questions are really difficult to answer. Our conversation always started with some special situations which hardly happen in our daily life. I have to try my best to think of as many possible questions to continue the conversation and make it longer.” Another 12-year-old student Xiang Xinya commented in her essay “Sunshine always comes out after rain”: “TCL ESOL Grade 7 is a test more suitable for adults, limited by age, experience and life knowledge, I encountered many obstacles in studying. My teachers and parents have encouraged and motivated me to keep going at the time when I wanted to give up on this boring task.” Although all these students are trying to express their gratitude toward their EF teachers, their testimonies also prove the contradiction between what the communicative skills that tests such as TCL ESOL want to espouse and the hard realities that students just treat it as another test they have overcome.

(Han) Chinese-owned Language Training Center -- The New Oriental Urumqi Branch

The New Oriental Urumqi School owns six campuses and one test center⁷⁰. Like EF, they are all located in the commercial areas or near the main universities in Urumqi. All of them are located in the central to northern side of the city with predominantly Han population. Its first campus was the Medical University campus, located on the Liyu Road, across the street from

⁷⁰ They are Medical University campus, Dashizi campus, Wuxing Road campus, Railway Bureau campus, Yellow River Road campus, Nanhu Campus, and the Time Square Foreign Tests Center.

Xinjiang Medical University and one of the famous Uyghu-run English Schools Tavpik. This New Oriental Urumqi Liyu Road Branch was established on June 25, 2011, during my fieldwork. Nanhu campus is the most recent one, located right next to the Municipal Government building, opened in February 2016. When I came back from my summer visit to Seattle for the second phase of my fieldwork in September 2011, the huge green signs “New Oriental” of the Medical University campus appeared imposingly above the “Popular Frontier” shopping mall in the same building.

When I finally accessed the school, it was already the cold winter of 2011. Although the inside of the building with its dilapidated stairs and elevators, like many other commercial buildings in Urumqi in winter, doesn't look so grand as the signs, once I got past their front door, inside the school is orderly, quiet and modern. The VIP rooms for adults are small rooms with see-through glass doors. The classrooms for children have ordinary doors with a small window peeking into the room, like many school classrooms in China. When I visited, it was before the class started. Parents were dropping off their children and the teacher was trying to send off the parents. Adults did not seem to be welcomed in the classroom. Colorful small chairs, tables, and tools characteristic of children's education and big English letters accompanied by animals' images decorated the wall. There are also classrooms for older students. They are regular classrooms with rows of desks and chairs that are bolted to the floor. The biggest classroom hall can accommodate 200 to 300 students. New Oriental's brand-name Dogwood Bookstore, which specializes in test practice workbooks is at the end of the long corridor.

On one of the pamphlets in 2011 when they established the first campus, the New Oriental declared that their teaching staff came from all over the country to “spur the educational level of Xinjiang” and have brought the most advanced “multivariate intelligent teaching

method.” This kind of marketing is based on the idea that Xinjiang is underdeveloped economically, culturally and educationally and needs the help from the inland “big brothers,” like the idea underlying the “Develop the West” campaign. Yet, if one takes a closer look at their “multivariate intelligent teaching method,” one finds it doesn’t really deviate from the exam-oriented educational model that is still very prevalent in China.

On their promotional advertisement, fifty-six teachers’ professional portrait pictures are arranged side by side on a 15-by-11-inch piece of paper. Each portrait shows a teacher posing for the camera. Most of them wear a black suit and white shirt and a few women wear red, either with two hands across the chest, or one hand holding the edge of their glasses. They all smile and look confident, smart, and professional. At the bottom of each photo, two or three lines of Chinese showing their names and briefly describing their credentials and courses they teach at the New Oriental. “Gulzar⁷¹, I’m the Star Teacher at Ningbo⁷² New Oriental School, (I) teach Cambridge Standard⁷³.” “Zhang Jingwen, I graduated from Australia’s South Queensland University, (I) teach high school English.” “Li Ling’er, I got 9 points on listening comprehension in IELTS. (I) teach listening comprehension in IELTS and TOEFL.” “Zhao Ruotong, I passed the Band 8 for English Majors. (I) teach IELTS Spoken English and Grammar.” “Wu Li, I got the first place in the national English speaking competition. (I) teach the New Concept Book One.” These are just a few examples. It is not hard to notice the pattern that these “star teachers” present their best linguistic and educational capital in the advertisement. Their

⁷¹ Gulzar is a common female Uyghur name. It means “rose garden,” or “garden of flowers.” “Gul-“ is Gulzar is a Persian word with its origin being Gul, which literally means rose, or generally means a flower.

⁷² Ningbo is a sub-provincial city in northeast Zhejiang province on the east coast of China. The New Oriental Corporation has one branch school in Ningbo.

⁷³ “Cambridge Standard” (*jianqiao biao zhun*) is shorthand for *Touchstone Cambridge Standard English Course*, a textbook series co-published by the New Oriental Corporation and the Cambridge University.

credentials mostly concentrate on what tests they passed, the highest academic degrees, preferably a degree from overseas, and competitions where they got a prize.

Among the fifty-six ‘Star Teachers,’ forty-four are female. Five are Turkic-speaking ethnic minorities, all are female. They all had experience either studying or teaching in provinces outside of Xinjiang and mostly on the economically developed east coast. The main courses taught at the Urumqi branch include several categories: international English tests for study abroad (IELTS and TOEFL); Domestic English tests (College English Tests Band 4 and 6, National Graduate School Entrance Examinations); Basic English Training (listening comprehension and spoken English, The New Concept English); YouCan Middle School (Education (English, Math, Chinese, Science, Humanities, Summer and Winter Camps); Pop Kids Education (English, Chinese, Math Thinking).

One teacher I interviewed at the New Oriental, Ms. Liu, is from Lanzhou, Gansu province. She had taught at the Lanzhou New Oriental before she came to Urumqi. When asked about private English education in China, she said private English education is not just a supplement to public English education anymore. It has become such a strong force that we can say it’s “One country, two systems” (*yiguo liangzhi*), referencing the political system proposed by Deng Xiaoping to solve the problems with Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Many young people are willing to take the riskier path of working in private language training schools such as the New Oriental, as long as they offer good salaries, instead of working in the relatively secure yet dead environment of public schools. She said the New Oriental also provides them benefits such as health care if they work there for a long time.

The New Oriental markets itself as a learning institute that is different from the exam-oriented public education system in China. However, I argue that the main reason that the New

Oriental as a private educational institution can survive and thrive is that it depends on the exam-oriented educational model in China. Forty-five of the fifty-six Star Teachers teach English, and the rest teach math, chemistry and physics for entrance exams and contests. The cheapest course is College English Band 4, at 24RMB (4 USD) per two-hour session. The most expensive class in 2011 was 78RMB (13USD) per two-hour session, titled “Crash Course for the English Subject of the College Entrance Examinations” and nicknamed “Devil’s training course.” The course offerings (no GRE course, a popular course in big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai), and the price differences (higher for high school students and lower for college students) can be explained by the particular population composition in Urumqi. The majority of the college students in Urumqi come from poorer areas in Xinjiang. Instead of aiming at going to graduate school in the United States upon college graduation, they tend to apply for graduate school in Xinjiang or other provinces first as their method of acquiring more educational capital, if they choose graduate school at all. Most college students are more concerned about finding a job when they graduate. So the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) would not have a market in Urumqi. However, middle school and high school children in Urumqi tend to have more economic and educational resources because they live in the capital city. Their parents are richer and willing to invest in their education through paying for extracurricular crash courses. The College Entrance Examination is the most important test for Chinese teenagers. The parents are willing to invest in this test that almost “decides their children’s future.” Many Uyghur students from well-off families, however, choose to leave Xinjiang and go abroad as soon as they can, so they choose IELTS over TOEFL, because European countries have an easier immigration policy for foreigners than the U.S.

The Ethnic Minority-owned Language Schools

Walking on the streets and through the underpasses of Urumqi, one can easily notice the ubiquitous advertisements by the local English language schools run by the ethnic minorities, mostly Uyghur. Big posters with instructors' pictures and names are glittering with the cold and white fluorescent background in a glass case, contrasting with the dark and dirty underpasses in the Urumqi winter. The instructors in the pictures, male and female, are all in dark colored suits, looking sharp and professional. Introductions to each instructor are in Uyghur language if the advertisements are located in the southern part of the city where Uyghur population predominate and bilingual in Chinese and Uyghur if the advertisements are in the north, where Han Chinese dominate.

Different from the generic images of the white male instructor coupled with young Chinese women often used in English First advertisement as is discussed in Chapter 1, advertisements by Uyghur-run English language schools where the famous instructors' names, pictures and qualifications are displayed, invoke a sense of local community, as most of them are well known personally by the students. I would argue that these schools utilize their instructors' fame and popularity to compete in the market.

Atlan Education Language Training Center/阿特兰

Atlan Language Training Center (later renamed as Atlan Education & Technology Co. Ltd in May 2014) was officially established in September 2006 and the school had an area of 600 square meters on the 6th floor of Urumqi Xinhua Bookstore's office building. Today Atlan is relocated to its newly bought Atlan Education Building in July 2014, across the street from the Education Bureau of Xinjiang Autonomous Region in Urumqi. It is now 3000 square meters.

The total number of students has reached ten thousand students annually. Eighty thousand students have taken classes at Atlan (Rukiya, Liu, and Long, 2014). Kasimjan, the owner said to the media that he wants his foreign language-training career to be “number one in Xinjiang, in China, and even the world (Rukiya, Liu, and Long, 2014).” He has at least achieved his first goal and Atlan is the biggest and most influential private language-training center for ethnic minorities in Xinjiang.

In both Atlan’s own PR promotion and the news media, Atlan’s history of development was presented as the success story of its founder Kasimjan Abdurehim. Atlan is Kasimjan. I observe similar marketing strategies in other English language training centers run by Uyghurs. The good teaching quality and the Uyghur language as the instructional language instead of Chinese are appealing characteristics common to all, but the initial appeal to the students is the charisma of the owner and lead teachers at the school. The charisma can be different types. Some advertise their instructors’ ability to win in national English speaking competitions, such as in Atlan and Tavpik schools. Others market their owner’s status as the famous folk singer in the Uyghur community, such as SABA.

Kasimjan’s public image, as portrayed in different news reports, is a self-made businessman who taught himself Arabic when he was fourteen years old. At sixteen, he started to teach himself English because he wanted to study abroad. In order to go abroad, he sold two shops owned by his family. Born and raised in the southern city, Kasimjan showed entrepreneurial spirit early on. When he was self-learning English in Kashgar, he already opened his first English language training program. In his first year as an English major at Xinjiang University, he opened his second training school named MOSAIC, with two campuses at Xinjiang University and Xinjiang Medical University. In 2004 Kasimjan participated in the Star

of Outlook English Talent Competition and the CCTV Cup English Speaking Contest and won “the best pronunciation award” and “Audience Choice Award,” respectively. In 2005 he attended International College Students’ Debate Competition on the China team in Sydney, Australia. For some reason unspecified in any of his stories, he decided that his opportunity and future career lie in his “motherland” and he wanted to open the best English language training center in Xinjiang: “Xinjiang has developed really fast in recent years and ethnic minorities are very motivated to study foreign languages. This is a big opportunity for me.” After the failed trial of opening Atlan in 2005 and losing his investment of 250 thousand RMB, he reopened Atlan at the Xinhua Bookstore location and the business kept thriving.

I argue that Atlan is so successful, despite the politicized correlation the government might link Uyghurs with the private English schools is because Kasimjan is an acute businessman who sees and grasps opportunities in the private English language market, but more importantly, a politically savvy businessman who knows how to handle his relationship with the government. The first day I visited Atlan in 2011, what struck me as interesting were the two enlarged photographs hanging on the French window facing the entrance. They were so big that no visitor could neglect their existence. The photograph on the left is the present Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian in the center of the photo and Kasimjan on his right, introducing the school to him. In front of Zhang, children’s heads can be seen, and behind him are accompanying officials. Under the image the text in Uyghur and Chinese reads: “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian visiting our center and inspecting our work.” This photo was taken in February 2012. The photo on the right has former chairman of Xinjiang Tumur Dawamet (1985-1993) and a top official from Atlan standing next to each other. Under the image is the inscription Tumur left on the day he visited Atlan on September 27, 2007, in both Uyghur

and Chinese: “The establishment of Atlan Language Training Center is significant in raising the overall *suzhi* of the young generation.” I was told by an instructor from another English training center that Party Secretary Zhang Chunxian’s visit schedule didn’t include Atlan, but rather he was inspecting an IT company on another floor in the same building. Kasimjan invited Zhang to inspect the school and took the picture. Three years after the July 5th incident, a public display of this political capital is a smart management strategy that the Atlan employs. The pictures with these two important CCP leaders inspecting Atlan gives the school credit that it follows political correctness and is not an organization where young separatists congregate.

During Atlan’s ten years’ development, Kasimjan had invited other regional and municipal officials to inspect the schools. In 2008, the chairman of Youth Federation of Xinjiang Autonomous Region Anwar Abdurahman and accompanying federation members visited the school. In 2011, Aynur Mahsat, the Secretary of Youth League Committee of Xinjiang Autonomous Region inspected work at Atlan. In 2012, Deputy Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Organization Department Tian Wen and Commerce Director He Yiming led a team of businessman to Atlan to do research. Atlan has also actively participated in governmental events and applied for governmental credentials. Instead of shunning the mainstream CCP and governmental organizations, Atlan actively seeks collaboration with them. For instance, its Teacher’s Meshrap⁷⁴ was held on the national Teacher’s Day and in the Xinjiang TV station and its Atlan Cup English speaking contests were co-organized with the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Youth League. Atlan was awarded several times by the Xinjiang CCP and Regional government, including Urumqi Tianshan District Education Bureau, Xinjiang CCP Committee Propaganda Department, Autonomous Region Urban and Rural Employment and Training

⁷⁴ Meshrep is a traditional male Uyghur gathering that typically includes poetry, music, dance, and conversation within a structural context. Nowadays it is not restricted to just males. Meshrep can simply mean a cheerful gathering.

Leading Group Office, Human Resources and Social Security Department, and the Industry and Commerce Federation, among others. It was elected a member of council on the Autonomous Region Minzu Trade Association. Kasimjan was awarded as the “Star of entrepreneurship” and “Young Entrepreneur Mentor” by the Xinjiang Youth League, and “Top Ten Young Pioneer Working Stars” by the Urumqi Tianshan District. As a representative on China’s Youth Delegation, Kasim paid a one-week visit to Indonesia.

Besides aligning itself with the politically correct route, Atlan also promotes its image as a modern and cosmopolitan learning institute. In 2012 I visited Atlan when it was still at its old location on the sixth floor in the Nanmen Xinhua Bookstore, at the intersection of Shengli Road and Yan’an Road in southern Urumqi. During the winter, it is hard to keep the floor clean in any office building in Urumqi because people would bring in melted snow to the inside, which turned into pools of dirty water. Regardless of the prime location of the Nanmen Xinhua Bookstore, it looks a bit dilapidated in the winter. Pushing through the heavy curtains made of olive green military quilt that functions as a wind stopper, frequently seen in Northern China during cold winters, I entered the hall of the Xinhua Bookstore building. When I came out of the elevator, my spirit was instantly lifted by the vibrant yellow, green, red, and green colors of the interiors of Atlan teaching areas and young people coming in and out of the rooms. The waiting area is located in the center of the lobby, with four or five white-color small round tables in hard plastic. Each table is surrounded by four hard plastic chairs in bright blue or red. To the right of the tables and chairs is a small store selling pastries, hot drinks and cold drinks. I took a closer look at the glassed pastries display cabinet and to my surprise, most pastries available in an American campus cafeteria could be seen here: muffins, bagels, donuts, cakes, and cheesecakes, a still rare phenomenon in Urumqi. Customers order their hot drinks like coffee or tea from the woman

sitting behind the window and take the cold drinks from the big white refrigerator against the wall and pay at the window. A row of orange-colored hard plastic chairs is bolted against the wall on the left side of the entrance. This area comprises the waiting and rest areas in Atlan. Facing the entrance and behind the rest area are two Atlan administrative offices where prospective students and their parents seek consultancy on courses and prices. In one of the consultancy rooms, a female customer in a pink down jacket could be seen sitting on the sofa with a male consultant discussing something. Two female staff were sitting behind the desk checking courses on the computer for the customer. Like many offices in China now, a few green plants and small Chinese national flags decorate the desks. On the wall hang many award certificates. What is noticeable is that all Atlan offices and the VIP classrooms are glass-walled. The see-through view conveys a transparent and modern sense to the visitors. To the right of the rest area is the front desk where four female staff members in standard black suit and white shirt are working with files or on the computer. And above their heads were the two enlarged pictures in which Zhang Chunxian and Tumur Dawamet visited the school.

On other walls in the rest area, big posters with four teachers' images when they attended the CCTV English speaking contests are shown with bilingual text explaining their achievements in Uyghur and Chinese. "Azmat Rusdam – Famous teacher at Atlan Language Training Center. Won 2004 'CCTV English Speaking Contest' "The Best Pronunciation Prize." "Kasimjan Abdurehim – The founder of Atlan Language Training Center. Won 2004 "CCTV English Speaking Contest" "First Prize." "Faruk Mardan – The Dean of Atlan Language Training Center Teaching Tem. Won 2008 "CCTV English Speaking Contest" "Audience's Favorite Contestant Prize." "Adiljan Abdukerim – Vice-president of Atlan Language Training Center. Won 2005 "CCTV English Speaking Contest" "Second Prize."

The wall behind the front desk divides the sixth floor into the administrative/rest area and teaching area. The long corridor on the right side of the front desk watershed is decorated with national flags from various countries, making the corridor a “United Nation.” On both sides of the corridor are classrooms. Students in front of computers could be seen practicing speaking and listening through the glass walls of the VIP Vitamin classrooms. Other classrooms are named for a famous university, such as Harvard, Stanford, MIT, or Oxford, or a city or a country’s name, such as China, America, London, etc. People within Atlan, staff, teachers, or students will use these room names as references, such as “meet at the London Room.” The time schedule for the elitist Vitamin program also uses names such as “China,” “London,” “Ireland,” “New York,” and “America.” On the bulletin board in the corridor, several student posters themed “High School Musical”⁷⁵ introduce the main characters in this popular Disney Channel Original Movie with pictures from the musical. Within the classrooms, famous people’s portraits like Einstein with their quotations were framed and hang on the wall.

Atlan has held annual Talent Shows since 2007. In recent years, they have been held twice a year, one in the summer and one in the winter. Since 2015, Atlan started the teachers’ talent show too, where the Atlan teachers put on a performance show for the students at the new Atlan Education Group building. The talent shows usually include singing, dancing, poetry recitation, etc. by Atlan students, teachers and sometimes famous Uyghur singers, dancers and MCs that were invited to the show. The annual student shows were always held in a big theatre. I attended the winter Talent Show in February 2012 held in the Xinjiang Arts Theatre near Yanan Road in the Southern part of Urumqi. The whole theatre was crowded with audience. Before the

⁷⁵ High School Musical is a 2006 American teen/romantic comedy musical television film and the first installment in the High School Musical trilogy. It was adapted in Argentina, Brazil and China. The Chinese version was called *Disney High School Musical China* (歌舞青春), also called *High School Musical China: College Dreams*. It was released in North America on DVD under the Disney World Cinema Brand.

show started, images of Atlan owner Kasimjan and other famous teachers in the community were shown on the two side screens with textual introductions. The MC this year was a famous Uyghur singer. Like many other gala shows, the talent shows includes both modern dance and traditional dance by the students. What is most interesting was the part when six people, three men and three women, from poor families, received a donation of 51395RMB. They stood on the stage in a row, clueless and awkward, with Atlan owner Kasimjan and the famous MC on their side, being handed over a huge orange color sign with the amount of the donation in big letters and Atlan's logo and full name in Uyghur and Chinese. The six people's rural look contrasted with Kasimjan's suit and the MC's shiny white dress.

Atlan held another Talent Show within six months in August 2012 and donated RMB17965 to the students in need. Atlan on other occasions also donated to poor people or students in particular. Atlan (i.e. Kasimjan) also promotes its public image as the charity giver in other contexts. It is reported in the multilingual (Chinese, Uyghur, Kazakh, Russian) Yaxin Net, the Xinjiang portal site, and the Hong Kong-based Phoenix New Media that Kasimjan has led his Atlan Education staff several times to send office supplies, clothing and "Atlan shoes" to the 120 students in Aktun Hope School in Tawatule Towship in Hotan County in the Taklimakan Desert. And Kasimjan said: "Atlan will provide more support to the grassroots education and make our own contribution to the education career in Xinjiang."

On the Atlan website, they listed their administrators and teaching staff with their names and pictures, course titles that link to the online registration, their alma mater, and their interests. Every person has a "professional profile" that links to stories of their educational and career path if this person chooses to provide more information. Among the 90 people listed (see Appendix 3), 5 are top administrators that include one president (Kasim Abdurehim) and other vice-presidents,

all male. 17 are non-teaching staff that help with course consultation, fiscal, and legal tasks. Most of them are female. Among the 90 people, 69 are teaching staff. Among them, 47 are English language instructors. Among the 47 teachers, three are foreign teachers from the United States. The rest are all Uyghur. Gender distribution seems to be equal among the English language instructors: 24 are male and 23 are female. There are also 12 Chinese language instructors, 3 computer instructors, 2 Uyghur language instructors, and 2 are “other language” instructors. The majority of the administrative and teaching staff has a college degree. Most of them went to college in Xinjiang. Some went to prestigious universities outside of Xinjiang. The interests/hobbies category shows a cosmopolitan but conservative tendency. The majority shares the hobbies of “reading,” “learning languages,” “watching movies,” “photography,” “exercising,” and “travelling.” Women add dancing and singing and shopping. Men also like playing soccer and basketball and watching sports. Nothing else stands out.

Atlan provides courses in English for both children and adults (see Appendix 4). The price ranges from RMB 8.05 to 44.64 per hour. The cheapest classes are basic classes that teach grammar or New Concept 1. The more expensive classes tend to be international test preparation class such as IELTS, a popular test among Uyghur students because it gets them to study in Europe, or classes for children or young teenager, for whom well-off families are willing to invest. The most expensive course is the Vitamin Program and its price is not listed publicly. According to my students interviewees they pay RMB20, 000 for a three-month intensive program. But the price also varies by the level they are in. They were all from well-off Uyghur families. The Vitamin English VIP program is an online course system that Atlan co-developed with Auralog, a famous language teaching software company in France (now merged with RosettaStone) in 2009. Although it is designed as an online course system, Atlan couples the

online self-learning part with personalized one-on-one tutoring by the Atlan instructors. Students can come to the Atlan computer lab to get online and schedule meetings with their teachers for Q&A sessions, or training in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing. The whole program is graded into levels and students who pass the test for the first level move on to the next, if they want to. When I visited Atlan, I could see through the glass walls of the computer lab that students were working hard on the computers with their headphones on, reading out aloud.

Atlan also extends its business into Information Technology and tries to establish a trilingual public image. It not only established an elaborate official website in English, Uyghur, and Chinese, but also launched a WeChat⁷⁶ public platform, which sends posts of idioms in three languages for its language learners. In 2014, the mobile platform of the English online courses was released, and Atlan Education was renamed Atlan Education & Technology Co. Ltd in the same year. The messages the three language versions of the website send are different. For the “News” section, the Chinese language and Uyghur language versions contain almost the same content, with a focus on promoting new programs and events to the local residents in Xinjiang, such as talk on how to learn Chinese, Chinese speaking competition, and new classes on E-business. The English language version tends to promote Atlan’s corporate image as an international enterprise through reposting news articles about Atlan, for instance from China Daily, Atlan’s annual talent show, its owner Kasimjan’s success stories, and Atlan’s new textbook series titled with the company’s name (see Appendix 5)

Tavpik (Golam)/特别科(Tebieke)

⁷⁶ WeChat is a mobile text and voice messaging communication service developed by Tencent in China, first released in January 2011. It is the most popular social media in China now.

Tavpik is another big language training center located in the northern part of the city, right outside of the Xinjiang Medical University and close to the Xinjiang Normal University. The Xinjiang Agricultural University is 20 minutes away by bus. Due to its location to these major universities, it has its safe share in the ethnic minority (English) language training market in Urumqi, as its major competitors Atlan and SABA are both located in the southern part of the town. Originally named Gholam, after the owner's name, it was renamed Tavpic in 2011. Tavpik means "success" or "encouragement" in the Uyghur language. Tavpik also refers to Memet Eli Tewpik (Tavpik is another way of spelling the word), the influential jadidist⁷⁷ education reformer who was active in the 1920s and 1930s and later was killed by the Xinjiang warlord Sheng Shicai in 1937. He was well-respected by progressive modernist Uyghur intellectuals and the English training school used his name to encourage their students to be educated in the English language.

Located at the intersection of Liyushan South Road and Xinyi Road, Tavpik is on the commercial street on the east side of Xinjiang Medical University. This commercial street, though only 500 meters long, is the daily business center that serves the students, teachers and staff of Medical University and people who live in the neighborhood, with its grocery stores, restaurants in both foreign fast-food styles like KFC and Dicos⁷⁸, and different local flavors in Uyghur, Kazakh, Hui and Han, numerous banks, Telecom companies, hotels, shopping malls, pharmacies, and a branch of the biggest chain of gyms, Manhattan. The New Oriental also has one branch located in this prime location, right across the street from Tavpik. I sometimes

⁷⁷ The Jadids were Muslim modernist reformers within the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century. They normally referred to themselves by the Turkic terms *Taraqıparvarlar* ('progressives'), *Ziyalılar* ('intellectuals'), or simply *Yāşlar*/*Yoshlar* ('youth'). It was also prevalent in Central Asian Xinjiang.

⁷⁸ Dicos (德克士/Dekeshi) is a Chinese fast-food restaurant chain owned by the Ting Hsin International Group. The chain ranks third among China's top three fast-food enterprises, as it has almost as many restaurants as McDonald's. It is very popular among the locals in Urumqi.

walked from my home in Xinjiang Normal University to this business center to eat, shop or work out in the gym during my field research.

The row of commercial buildings where Tavpik is located is all two or three stories. Tavpik's front desk, main office and six classrooms are on the second floor and their big auditorium is on the third floor. Tavpik is not as big as Atlan, but it seems to function as well as Atlan. Whenever I visited the school, there were always prospective students checking out classes at the front desk and the main office. Current students were either in their classrooms studying or hanging out chatting with friends in the hallway. This is a tight community enclosed in a small environment. The theme colors of walls, posters, banners, and furniture are predictably similar to other language training schools in China: bright blue, green, yellow, red and orange. As I enter the small doors on the second floor, facing me is the front desk and to the right is the main office where the teachers hang out during break. A huge abstract world map hangs on the wall, bright yellow background with bright blue blocks of continents. To the right of the map, the big poster has the three "brand-name" instructors of Tavpik posing: the owner Gholam in the center, and Mr. Ababekri and Mr. Umit Haji on his left and right⁷⁹. Each wears suit and tie, looking directly at you, smart and sharp. Umit has his left hand lifting his glasses. On the top of the poster it writes: "IF you want to know us, you must learn English." Big "NEW TAVPIK" in capital letters lay over the three instructors' images, with a small girl and books beside the letters. This poster is themed blue. As I discussed at the beginning of this section, English language schools run by Uyghurs and Kazakhs are more local and community based. They tend to market the fame and charisma of their leading instructors, who are already well-known among the Uyghur students either as the winners of a national English speaking contest, such as Umit Haji

⁷⁹ After Umit Haji left for the U.S. for graduate school, the more recent posters at Tavpik feature only Mr. Gholam and Mr. Abadekri, standing behind a key-shaped door, both in smart suits. It indicates that they are the key to the kingdom of English learning.

(discussed in Chapter 3), or who are really good at teaching, for instance Ababekri and Gholam. Therefore, “if you want to know us, you must learn English” is very appealing.

On the left of the world map, the poster is themed reddish orange. In the center is a round thread ball that looks like the earth with a black square academic cap. The three words “French,” “English,” and “Chinese” dispersed randomly on the earth to indicate major languages. Around the globe the text in small size reads: “Language is the base of globalization.” Under the globe image are big letters “NEW TAVPIK LANGUAGE TRAINING CENTER.” These two posters were to promote the name change of the school from the previous “Gholam” to the current “Tavpik” that took place in the year 2012. In front of this wall, seven blue chairs formed the ad hoc waiting area for the visitors. On the ceiling of the second floor hang banners with Tavpik’s logo, the instructors’ team standing in a row, or images of foreign students smiling in front of books, very similar to the decoration seen in the Atlan and other language training centers.

Tavpik’s classrooms are bigger than the average size of Atlan classrooms but the number of classrooms is less. This means each classroom accommodates more students. The school is less elite and cheaper than the small-size classroom teaching at Atlan. Usually a bigger classroom is suitable for teaching popular basic courses like New Concept or the Cambridge series, or courses related to national and international exams such as IELTS or Band 4 and 6, as more students enroll in these kinds of classes that either get them started on the path of English learning, or eventually get them a certificate for those more advanced students as in the latter kind. In the classrooms, encouraging posters that ask students “JOY AND HAPPINESS. WHAT WILL YOU CHOOSE?” and to follow the “STEP TO NEW YORK” decorate the walls.

SABA/Imagine/智慧

SABA is another influential language training center in Urumqi. Located in the southern part of the city, it is across the street from the famous Urumqi Senior High School (formerly No. 6 High School) on the Tuanjie Road. They rented one floor of a business building on which one can find the lobby, the administrator's office, the registration office and classrooms. The interior design including the structure and the color theme looks similar to that of other language training centers in Urumqi except that its size is smaller than Atlan but bigger than Tavpik. It is also cleaner than both places. I wonder if it is due to the fact that there are fewer students and the classrooms are newer than the other two schools. What is special about SABA is that they have a permanent school motto printed in both Uyghur and English on the wall in the lobby: "Mirror to wisdom be language, eloquence makes a man shining sage. – Yusup Has Hajip. SABA – A Gift to the Gifted." Yusup Has Hajip was an 11th-century Turkic poet from the city of Balasaghun, the capital of the Karakhanid Empire in modern-day Kyrgyzstan. He was the author of the *Kutadgu Bilig* (English: The Wisdom which brings Happiness; Chinese: 福乐智慧). Yusup and his *Kutadgu Bilig* are revered by the Uyghur people as the jewel of the classical Uyghur literature and wisdom and also promoted by the Chinese state as the exemplary historical Uyghur figures for the purpose of ethnic policy propaganda. It is translated into Chinese language. Often *Kutadgu Bilig* is considered part of the "zhonghua minzu" wisdom. Some authors believed that Yusuf Has Hajip died in 1085 at the age of 66 in the city of Kashgar, and was buried there. There is now a mausoleum erected on his alleged gravesite.

The same afternoon in February 2011 when Atlan held its annual Talent Show, SABA held a concert, as if in competition with Atlan, Mominjan Ablikim, also the co-owner of SABA, as the main performer, together with other famous folk musicians and dancers in the Uyghur

community. It is obvious that the SABA concert is more traditional than the Atlan Talent Show. At the SABA concert only folk music and dance were performed by professionals, while at the Atlan Talent Show both traditional dance and modern dance in “Michael Jackson” style were performed by the students. Audience at the SABA conference tended to be older, i.e. middle-aged or over and they sat in rows at long tables that were covered with table cloths and provided with traditional snacks such as candies, dried fruits, and pastries, and tea. It looked more like a tea party with music and dance, while audience at the Atlan Talent Show sat in rows in a theatre, facing the stage.

Kazakh-owned English Language Schools in Urumqi

The A08 Section “Economic Horizons” of the 2014 June 18 *Xinjiang Daily* reports the stories of Kazakh young man Qiersibieke who taught himself English and started a private English school from scratch, with the title “Kazakh Young Man Founded Foreign Language Training School” (Tuo Ya 2014). Qi was born in an ordinary workers’ family in Altay, the northernmost area of Xinjiang, neighboring Kazakhstan. When he graduated as a clinical medicine major from Xinjiang Medical University in 1994, he was assigned to work at a local hospital in Altay⁸⁰. When he learned that many of his classmates got opportunities to further their studies through the national graduate entrance examination, he decided to start learning English even though he had never studied a foreign language before⁸¹. Qi said: “In order to go to graduate school, I have pass the English language exam. I’m a *minkaomin* student and never even learned ABC, but I’m confident I can learn it well.”

⁸⁰ In 1994, college graduates were still in the system of job assignments.

⁸¹ This is up to debate. Even though he was a *minkaomin* student, he probably had contact with Chinese and Uyghur and other Turkic languages in Altay and was able to comprehend and speak some. However, it is politically incorrect to call these language foreign languages because they are spoken by Chinese citizens in China.

Through three years of self-study, Qi passed the TOEFL exam, and got admitted to Indiana University in the U.S. However, he didn't have the money to pay the expensive tuition. He gave up this opportunity to study abroad, resigned his job at the hospital and came to Urumqi to work. Besides working daytime, he studied in his spare time and took the TOEFL again in 2001. This time he got a higher score of 617. With this score, he was able to find jobs as substitute English teacher in various universities in Urumqi, such as Xinjiang Agricultural University, making 15RMB an hour. In order to improve his English, Qi went to Beijing to attend English training courses at prestigious universities such as Peking University. Gradually he generalized his own bilingual study techniques. "The key is to master the grammatical structure and pronunciation of English. I generalized the models English teachings of Chinese universities, reduce the parts on lecturing and listening comprehension practice, and increased speaking and practice. This way when students' interests in learning English were spurred, study becomes easier," he said.

With his teaching abilities recognized by more and more students, in 2003 Qi had the idea of having his own foreign languages training school. "Many people want to learn foreign languages well. I think my method of 'comparing the minority languages and Chinese language to teach English' will help other people to learn a foreign language," said Qi. To save up start-up money for the new school, besides working as a substitute teacher at different universities, he also worked as a tutor. He persisted for three years working 14 hours everyday and eventually saved enough money to found a school.

In 2006 Qi founded the Weierdun Foreign Language Training School in Urumqi. At the very beginning his school already attracted 600 students to his evening classes and weekend classes. Besides Kazakhs, there are also Kyrghyz, Mongolians, Daurs, and Hui among his

students. Besides English classes, they also had classes in Russian and Chinese. Nowadays, every year nearly 2000 students study in over ten different levels of classes and all classes are taught in Kazakh and Chinese. The reporter noticed that among the 2013 students from the graduate entrance exams training course, 93 out of the 110 students had got admissions into their preferred graduate majors.

On June 16, in the classroom of one of the full-time classes on the fourth floor, the reporter met Mahabath, third-year journalism major from Nazarbayev University. Her English was quite good, but she came to improve her grammar and writing skills. “I came here upon my friend’s recommendation. Although the course was only 20 days, the teacher’s method on grammatical analysis has helped me improved my writing,” said Mahabath.

Qi’s school offers reduced tuitions for students who can provide the school with a poverty certificate and students who are preparing the graduate school entrance exams. Every year 300 to 400 students benefited from this policy. Qi said: “Our students are from the agricultural and herding areas in Altay, Yining, and Changji. Considering the low income status of the students’ families, we charge less than schools of the same kind. Although my school is not making a lot, it’s good to see many young people start to like learning foreign languages through our effort. I’m going to continue the school and make sure more people come to study here.” This foreign language training school uses Kazakh language to teach foreign languages has trained more than ten thousand English learners so far.

English Language Schools in Kashgar

Compared with the provincial capital Urumqi, English training schools in Kashgar are of much smaller scale and recruit fewer students. The physical conditions of the schools are far less

favorable than the Urumqi ones. It is not so hard to locate the schools in Kashgar. Due to their small size, they tend to be close to college students. Outside the South Gate of Kashgar Normal College is the street where students find all kinds of convenience and fun in their daily life: print and copy shops where they print their papers, telecom stores where they charge their cellphone credits, bookstores where they buy or rent novels, small and cheap restaurants where they add a little change to their daily campus dining hall meals, fruit stalls, where they can buy fruits in all seasons, including the winter. Located in southern Xinjiang, Kashgar's winter is dry and warm, except in December. Embedded in these stores are two English language training schools tucked at the corner: Talent Izbil and New Rouse.

Talent Izbil only has two classrooms, partitioned by a military green quilt curtain to stop the winter cold wind in December. The electric heater was turned off on days when it was not so cold to save electricity. Students wore winter jackets or coats and hats in the classroom. Two teachers were both male who just graduated from college and all students were female, about seven or eight in the winter break class. Most students at the Normal College had returned home when the winter class started. I was a little surprised by the small number of students in the classroom because it means the teachers were not making much money and the students were so determined in learning English that they chose to stay in Kashgar instead of going home.

To accommodate these seven female students who were not from Kashgar city, Teacher Eli had to find a place for them. I followed Teacher Eli and the students and witnessed the whole process of how they cleaned up an apartment to live in. This three-bedroom apartment with a kitchen and a bathroom was located in a gated residential area southeast of the Normal College and north of the famous Kashgar Central Asia International Grand Bazaar. After we bought cleaning equipment such as brooms and dustpans at the grand bazaar, we walked to the

apartment. Judging from the architectural style, I saw the apartment was an old one remodeled in a building built in the 1990s. Walking up the dark and dirty stairways with walls patched with advertisements selling faked legal documents, we reached the third floor. One of the girls opened the double metal doors with several keys. I was shocked by the unreadiness of the apartment for anyone to live: as the remodeling team was in a rush to leave the apartment, the floor was covered with cement dust at least two inches thick. Paint buckets, painting tools and leftover building materials were laid around in every room. The windows and the toilet were covered with white paint. I could see the surprise in the students' eyes, but the students didn't complain at all, assigned tasks among themselves, took over different rooms and started to work. They were going to live in this apartment for two months.

Although the English language schools in Kashgar are much smaller than the Urumqi ones, they employed similar techniques in types of courses offerings, teaching methods and student recruitment methods. They all emphasize the linguistic capital that their lead instructors acquire through participating in the regional and national English speaking contests such as CCTV Cup, Star of Outlook Cup and FLTRP cup as discussed in Chapter 4. In the shabby looking stairways of the teaching building where Talent Izbil and New Rouse were located, the walls were plastered with big posters by both schools, showing pictures of the instructors competing at the CCTV Cup and Star of Outlook Cup. There were also pictures of the instructors lecturing in nicely equipped classroom and students taking outings. Outings in the mountains seem to be another appeal that all the Uyghur-run English schools advertise.

The prices of the courses, the course title (mostly named after the textbook they use), the duration of the course, meeting times and the instructors' names were all listed on these posters. The pricing at the English language schools in Kashgar is less precise than the Urumqi schools.

It was based on the textbook they use. For instance, a College English 1 textbook published by Shanghai Foreign Languages Press would be RMB150 and half of the New Concept 1 published by Longman would be RMB120 (it is considered a better textbook and taught more carefully). The overall estimate class hours was 40, so the hourly fee would be RMB3 to 3.8. The most expensive course at Talent Izbil was CET 4 Intensified Training class at RMB 400 in 40 hours, which is RMB10 per hour. This is much cheaper than Atlan in Urumqi, where the regular courses range from RMB8.05 to 40 per hour. And it seems from the posters all the other schools in Kashgar charge at the same price range. Since the lead instructors at each school all know each other in this small environment in the same building, they would not compete by lowering or raising their course prices. Rather they compete by showing off their qualifications in tests they passed and scored high (national ones such as CET 4 and CET 6, international ones such as IELTS and TOEFL), certificates they got and the English speaking competitions they participated. Besides English, other subjects that were offered regularly include computer science, Chinese, math, Russian and Japanese, in the order of popularity.

Curricular Innovation and Safe Space at the English Schools and Their Future

Both linguistic anthropologist Arienne Dwyer (2005) and TESOL researchers Mamtynyn Sunuodula and Anwei Feng (2011) have critiqued the use of the Chinese language as the instructional medium in current public English education among the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. When English is taught to minorities, it is taught through the medium of Chinese. According to Dwyer (2005: 42), 80 percent of Uyghurs learn English through Chinese. The remainder learns more or less directly from English. In Xinjiang, however, authorities justify that lack of Uyghur-language English textbooks by stating that there is no demand for such

instruction, so the Chinese textbooks can be used. Some foreign and Chinese academics (Beckett and MacPherson 2005; Cao and Xiang 2006; Zhang 2002) also argue that ethnic minorities in China lack motivation to learn English because they see learning Chinese as more important and burdening the ethnic minorities with another language would further augment the education inequalities. Therefore they argue for lowering the expectations for minority students' English proficiency.

Both Dwyer (2005) and Sunuodula and Feng (2011) argue that Uyghur students in Xinjiang are highly motivated in learning English. My field research in Xinjiang also supports their view. A female Uyghur interviewee who majored in English in Sunuodula and Feng's research said: "Yes, I think the use of mother tongue as the explanatory language in classrooms and textbooks will bring about better results. Students can use the mother tongue to learn grammar, to recite vocabulary, and this helps memorize things easily." Other interviewees also commented on the correlation between creative thinking and the use of the mother tongue. They seemed to agree unanimously that the use of the second language as the instructional medium (*zhongjieyu*) inhibits the thinking and learning process rather than facilitating it. One interviewee pointed out: "There is a practical problem here. In exams, there is always a part that asks us to translate English in Chinese. This is where Uyghur students who are not good at Chinese lose points. What can you do?" The instructional medium Chinese limits the minority students' options of learning strategies and affects their learning outcome as measured by high-stake tests.

Dwyer (2005) listed a number of reasons why minorities, especially the Uyghurs should learn English directly, either via a monolingual English textbook or a bilingual Uyghur–English textbook. On the issue of monolingual versus bilingual textbooks, the Chinese experience is instructive: English classes at Chinese universities are generally of far less quality than those

taught by private tutors (either individually or at schools). With a tutor, English is often taught directly through near-monolingual instruction in English, whereas at universities, not only is English taught *through* Chinese, but also nearly monolingually *in* Chinese, with occasional rote recitation in English. Furthermore, Uyghur vocabulary contains a number of Indo-European lexemes, loan words from Russian and Persian. While Chinese is a tone-based language, both English and Uyghur are stress-based. In addition, Uyghur language has a larger consonant and vowel inventory than does Chinese, making most English sounds easier for Uyghur speakers to learn. For all these reasons, by the accident of language typology, combined with the common Indo-European vocabulary, speakers of Uyghur are on average able to learn English much more rapidly and with more accurate pronunciation than their Chinese-speaking counterparts. Teaching English directly via Uyghur will require textbooks and an English-Uyghur dictionary. For Uyghur students, an English word such as *computer* must first be learned through the Chinese gloss *diannao*, instead of via the perfectly good Uyghur word (of Russian origin) *kompyuter*.

Both Dwyer (2005) and Sunuodula and Feng (2011) call for monolingual English textbooks or bilingual English-Uyghur textbooks for the Uyghur students. However, though they both noticed the private English sector (tutoring, or rarely mentioned private English schools), they tend to brush aside this private market as unimportant and focus on public education instead. However, the problem is that many Uyghur students cannot wait for the slow changes in policy making in areas of English education and ethnic minority education in China. They want to catch up with the globalizing English learning trend as other young people in China. Like my interviewee Teacher Liu at the New Oriental said, the private English sector is no longer a “supplement” to the public English education system. Rather, “we are “one country, two systems

(*yiguo liangzhi*).” They are as strong as the public English education. In my research, I also found numerous examples where private English schools or individual instructors have designed their own bilingual English-Uyghur or trilingual English-Uyghur-Chinese textbooks. Atlan has launched its own trilingual textbooks series *Atlan English* (compiled by Kasimjan Abdurehim) in eight books in September 2013 and officially uses them for teaching English at Atlan. Its accompanying smartphone app *Atlan English Mini Dictionary* was also released. Besides Atlan English, they also launched smartphone apps such as Atlan Kids English and the WeChat platform which sends trilingual, but mostly Uyghur language messages about learning English. One of my interviewees from Kashgar, an experienced teacher at a private English school in Urumqi also published his own bilingual English-Uyghur textbook *The Secret of English*. In the foreword, he praised the (Han) Chinese writer Wang Meng (王蒙) who was sent to Xinjiang to be “reformed” in the labor camp and taught himself Uyghur language. All these textbooks are influential and currently being used among the Uyghur students.

The private English schools also provide the Uyghur students an affectively “safe space” to learn, exchange ideas, make friends and have fun. I remember my first day of fieldwork in August 2010. It was a typical dry and hot afternoon in Urumqi. A British Education fair was held at the Activities Center of Xinjiang Normal University. In the air-conditioned lecture hall, the audience automatically group themselves by ethnicity. The Han Chinese teenagers and their parents dominated the left, front and center parts of the hall. A few clueless Uyghur college students, mostly male, sat the right corner. I sat in front of them and started chatting with them. I could feel that they felt timid and uneasy in the hall. For some reason, a Han Chinese woman (from the tag hanging from her neck, I judged that she was a staff member of this event’s organizer) thought I was a spy from a competing agency and came to interrogate me. The

atmosphere was very intense. The Uyghur students led me out of the hall and invited me to have dinner in the Normal University halal dining hall and invited me to the English corner of the private English school Tavpik (Golam) in the evening after they heard I was a researcher interested in English learning among Uyghur students. When we reached the Tavpic School, the atmosphere changed completely. The Uyghur students I was with instantly looked more relaxed, greeted other instructors and students they knew, and quickly merged into the crowd. A similar relaxed atmosphere could be observed in every Uyghur-run private English school I observed. This is *their* space where they communicative in their mother tongue and feel safe. It's amazing to see how speaking in one's native language also has an effect on their body language.

Yet, during research I also felt the unpredictability of these schools' future. Their existence and prosperity also depend on the volatile political situation in Xinjiang. Across Xinjiang, private English instruction was shut down by the government in the mid-1990s, amid concerns that private schools could be conduits for anti-government political propaganda. A year before I started my field research, on July 5, 2009, ethnic riots and conflicts put death toll at 296 and paralyzed the city. The government shut down the communication system including internet and international phone calls for 200 days. According to my interviewees, they closed their schools by themselves and sent their students back home for before the government asked them to, for fear of being accused of "illegal congregation" in such a "sensitive time." Only one year afterwards, in summer 2010 when I arrived in Urumqi, schools were just starting to pick up business and recruit students. The English language and the Uyghur language were seen suspect, carrying different loyalties and ideologies, by the Chinese government in different historical times, as is discussed in Chapter 2. It is hard to predict what will happen to these schools in the future. It seems to all depend on the political stability in Xinjiang.

EPILOGUE

I started my fieldwork in 2010 with the assumptions that since Xinjiang is delayed in economic and educational development compared with the coastal areas and big metropolises in China, ethnic minority students in Xinjiang would have less access to English education compared to their counterparts in the more developed areas. Furthermore, ethnic minority students tend to have less public English education due to the language policy that requires them to acquire the national language Mandarin Chinese first before they go to college. Although these assumptions still hold true, my field research revealed to me that what is happening “on the ground” is much more complicated. In the past ten years, the *minkaomin* students (ethnic minority students who go to schools instructed in their native languages in Xinjiang; see discussion in Chapter 2) who chose to the *minkaomin* education system either by their own will (or their parents’ will) to keep their ethnolinguistic identity or limited by the options available in their areas have resorted to the newly emerged private English education market that is ethnicized into Uyghur-owned, Kazakh-owned, Han-owned, and foreign-owned private English schools. Most *minkaomin* Uyghur students choose Uyghur-owned private English schools or smaller sized evening and weekend classes taught by Uyghur teachers due to their affordable prices and the fact that they teach English through Uyghur, not Chinese. Some rich Uyghur students choose expensive elite programs such as Vitamin at Atlan or foreign-owned schools such as EF for their promise of study abroad or all native-speaker teaching staff. Minority students translate the linguistic capital acquired at the provincial or national English speaking contests into socioeconomic mobility through well-paid teaching jobs at the private schools and eventually opening their own schools, thus forming a local economy. However, this does not necessarily translate to geographical mobility within the country or internationally. In my

research, most Uyghur private English teachers or owners stay in Xinjiang, because the ethnicized market is there. Some applied to graduate schools in the U.S. and Europe and many returned to Xinjiang as Xinjiang is their cultural and linguistic root and indigenous home. Their students, however, are trying hard to get out of the country, though as Xinjiang residents, their ability to get a passport is restricted by the sheer reason that they are Uyghurs. The *minkaohan* students (ethnic minority students who go to Han Chinese schools in Xinjiang; see discussion in Chapter 2) who had entered the sinicized education system earlier than their *minkaomin* counterparts, or the *minkaomin* students who eventually yielded to the Chinese education system by taking the Chinese-language college entrance exams, and for some people graduate school entrance exams to study in *neidi* (“interior China” or China Proper), finally get into the civil service, academia, or big companies in economically developed coastal areas or metropolises. In my research, although female students are as talented in learning English as male students, they tend to face curfew at night, less opportunities to hang out with foreigners, and more family pressure to get married in their twenties.

Much has happened in Xinjiang since I came back to the U.S. from my fieldwork in 2012. Atlan continued to develop its business. Xinjiang Atlan Vocational Skills Training School was founded with the authorization of Autonomous Region Human Resources and Social Security Department, which focused on training IT skilled workers for Xinjiang’s IT industry. Atlan Language Training Center was renamed Atlan Education & Technology Co. Ltd., in May 2014. In July 2014 Atlan relocated from its old 600 square metered teaching site on the sixth floor of Urumqi Xinhua Bookstore’s office building to its newly bought Atlan Education Building, across the street from the Education Bureau of Xinjiang Autonomous Region in Urumqi. It now has 3000 square meters of office and classroom space. The total number of

students has reached ten thousand students annually. Like other Uyghur entrepreneurs, Atlan also rides the tide of new media technology. In July 2014, the mobile phone platform of the English online courses was released. In March 2015, the official website of Atlan Education launched in Uyghur, Chinese and English languages. Atlan has also taken advantage of the WeChat, a cross-platform instant messaging service developed by Tencent in China, and Weibo, a Chinese microblogging site (a combination of Twitter and Facebook functions), to send trilingual information on programs, classes, events at Atlan and tips on learning English and Chinese and studying abroad. Atlan also opened a new line of VIP courses in Chinese language, Vitamin Chinese, with similar teaching methods used in Vitamin English as discussed in Chapter 4. In 2016 Atlan Education opened its own café on Shengli Road in Urumqi near its business building, called Sevda Coffee, which hires professional baristas and serves coffee and western style pastries and meals.

Violence committed by small groups of terrorists/separatists/radical Islamists/Uyghur nationalist insurgents (depending on one's perspective) continues to disrupt the lives of people in Xinjiang and other parts of China and draw the world's attention to this region. On the evening of March 1, 2014, a knife attack occurred inside the Kunming Railway Station in Yunnan province in southwest China. A group of eight men and women attacked passengers at the railway station. Attackers pulled out long-bladed knives and stabbed and slashed people. At the scene, police killed four assailants and captured one injured female. The incident left 29 civilians and 4 perpetrators dead with more than 140 others injured. On the morning of 22 May 2014, two sport utility vehicles (SUVs) carrying five assailants were driven into a busy morning street market in Urumqi. Up to a dozen explosives were thrown at vendors and shoppers from the windows of the SUVs. The SUVs crashed into people, collided with each other and exploded. 43

people were killed, including 4 of the assailants, and more than 90 wounded, making it the deadliest attack since the 2009 July 5th Incident. In December 2015, the new People Republic of China Anti-Terrorism Law was passed. It was discussed by the Xinjiang Standing Committee of the People's Congress and effective on August 1, 2016.

What the Chinese state tolerates and even encourages is Uyghur entrepreneurship. *Global Times*, a daily Chinese newspaper that focuses on international issues under the auspices of the *People's Daily*, CCP's official newspaper, reports on how Xinjiang's millennial entrepreneurs make the most of the Internet age (Yin and Zhang, 2016). Besides a young man named Abdulhabir Muhammad, an MBA graduate from SUNY Binghamton, who uses the Internet to promote his E-commerce A.B.U Education, there are also men and women selling scarves, traditional Uyghur nut cakes, naan and other halal foods on the Internet. Abudulhabir offers online courses in English, Chinese and Uyghur and other Turkic languages taught by professors both in China and overseas to students in Xinjiang who can't afford to study abroad. His biggest goal is to serve overseas returnees who are from Xinjiang and other western regions of China, build connections among them, collect and share information on job hunting. Nureli Abliz, a Peking University English department graduate, star instructor from the New Oriental Corporation and second-place winner of the 2010 CCTV Star of Outlook English Teaching Competition, promoted his online video teaching courses program "Ku Ai English" with the sponsorship of New Oriental and is rated one of the most popular among New Oriental instructors.

Kahar, a 22-year-old male Uyghur student from Aksu, Xinjiang, representing the Beifang University of Nationalities in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, attended the CCTV Cup semifinal in 2003 (Appendix 1). He didn't perform very well. The commentator Sue Kay

critiqued his impromptu speech as “lacking structure and examples” and his main message “confused”. His voice sounds “rather strained” and this makes him sound “overly emotional,” complained Sue Kay. Thirteen years later, in 2016, Kahar was featured in *I’m From Xinjiang on the Silk Road* a documentary TV series show on Central China Television Channel 1 (the main channel) and Channel 4 (the international channel) and other major Internet Protocol TV stations. Kahar had used his linguistic capital in English to open an English training center called Kid’s Harbor English Club in Jinhua, a prefecture-level city in central Zhejiang province on the east coast of China. This English club targets children 3 to 12 years old and hires a multi-racial teaching team from both China and English-speaking countries, which is promoted as a major strength of the center in the documentary and on his website. He looked very confident in the documentary and the children seemed to like his gentle and cheerful manner very much. Kahar’s dream is to spread his business to the whole country and open one hundred Kids’ Harbor clubs.

The 2016 TV documentary *I’m from Xinjiang on Silk Road* is based on the photographic documentary album of a similar title *I’m from Xinjiang* published in 2014, by a Beijing-based Uyghur photographer Kurbanjan Samat. Kurbanjan, born and brought up in Hotan in southern Xinjiang, taught himself photography and later studied as an audit student at Communication University of China in Beijing. Now he is a cameraman at the CCTV Documentary Channel and an independent photographer. He has participated in several national documentary projects, including the popular show *A Bite of China* on the histories and cultures of cuisines in China. After violent attacks from 2009 to 2014 blamed on Uyghurs, especially the mass stabbing in the Kunming Railway Station in 2014, "Uyghur separatists" has become a hated term. Kurbanjan found that many Chinese outside of Xinjiang increasingly associate the province with terrorism and do not trust Uyghurs and people from Xinjiang in general. He faced intensified

discrimination in daily life because he has an appearance that is typically associated with a Uyghur person and an ID card that shows his birthplace as Xinjiang, with which he couldn't even get in a hotel when he traveled.

Kurbanjan decided to start a photography project to show the Chinese who are not from Xinjiang that people from Xinjiang are not just fruit vendors, kebab sellers, and pickpockets, they are just ordinary people who try to survive and hope to improve their lives, no different from other people. He traveled to more than twenty cities to interview and photograph more than five hundred people and eventually selected one hundred people's portraits and stories to feature in his final album. The one hundred people are individuals of different ethnicities from Xinjiang who now work and live all over China and even overseas and represent different socioeconomic backgrounds and work a variety of jobs: architects, fashion designers, lawyers, doctors, graduate students, businessmen, vendors, small eatery owners, singers, dancers, actors and actresses, teachers, company managers, etc. The Chinese state and the celebrities seem to all support Kurbanjan's stereotype-dispelling project. Yu Zhengsheng, the Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and a Chinese Communist Party Politburo member who is responsible for Xinjiang, Tibet and Taiwan issues, attended the press conference and opening ceremony of the album, had an interview with representatives featured in the album and encouraged Kurbanjan to carry on his plan to make the album into a TV documentary. Previous vice-Chair of China Writers Association (CWA) and writer Wang Meng, who spent fifteen years in Xinjiang as a sent-down "rightist" and taught himself Uyghur, Peking University sociologist Ma Rong, a scholar on ethnic minorities in China, and Wang Hui, Tsinghua University professor of modern Chinese literature and intellectual history, all participated in the press conference and praised Kurbanjan's work. Music industry new star Perhat Khaliq, a pop-rock composer and

musician who emerged popular from his performances at the 2014 reality show *The Voice of China*, sang at the press conference with his band Qetiq⁸².

In the following one and half years of TV documentary production, Kurbanjan, the chief producer and director, was joined by other social celebrities who are related to Xinjiang but now work in major metropolises in China. Li Yapeng, a Han Chinese actor who is from Urumqi and Tong Yali, a Sibe dancer and actress from Qapqal Xibe Autonomous County in northern Xinjiang, provided financial support through their foundation and studio respectively. Chen Jianxin, a Hui actor from Urumqi, worked as the art director. Wang Meng, the previously mentioned writer and CWA chair worked as the cultural consultant. Negmat Rahman, a famous CCTV host sang the theme song and co-hosted the press conference of the TV documentary with Uyghur news anchor Ai Kezhu (Aynurgul Hasan) from Southeast Television in Fujian province. The six episodes tell the stories of eighteen people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and different locations. Each episode consists of three characters, loosely connected with each other under one subtheme. For instance, in Episode 4, three very successful career women of Han, Uyghur and half-Uyghur-half-Han ethnic backgrounds talked about their will to keep living an independent life, yet yearning for romantic love with a life partner and hoping to get married soon, under much family pressure. Episode 5 features three “unsuccessful” artists or art-related people who either tried a life outside of Xinjiang and went back home or are still struggling to look for a stable job.

In both his photo album and TV documentary, Kurbanjan tries to send a message that his work “has nothing to do with religious and political agenda,” but “tells the most common, most humble, yet most moving stories of the ordinary ‘Xinjiangers’ (*xinjiang ren*).” He wants to challenge the alienation of the label “Xinjianger” that is often associated with “terrorism” and

⁸² Qetiq means yogurt in Uyghur language.

“separatism” and certain stereotypes in the media and people’s minds. He intends to explore the complexity and possibilities of the connotations of the concept “Xinjianger.” “People from Xinjiang, are only labeled as ‘Xinjianger’ when they get out of Xinjiang. At home, we don’t feel we are the minority.....When we come to China Proper, we passively become the representatives of Xinjiang, our ethnic group and have become the real ‘minorities.’ Here (in China Proper) from our appearance to language, from our life styles to our religion, we move from the ordinary to the special. And this has bothered us. This is largely due to the ignorance of Xinjiang from the people in China Proper,” said Kurbanjan in the New York Times interview (Kunkun, March 26, 2014). Kurbanjan also seemed to believe in a humanistic ideal of hybridity and equity: “How do we define ‘Xinjiangers’? This is not a concept of ethnicity. Not a single ethnicity from the 13 ethnic groups can represent Xinjiang. Even for the Uyghurs, we look different depending on where we live.” In his works, although the majority of the characters are Uyghur, there are also several ethnically and culturally in-between “Xinjiangers”: the fifteen-year-old second-generation “Xinjianger” Okhat Eni who was born and grew up in Shanghai and speaks Shanghainese and calls himself a “sanghaining” (the Shanghainese pronunciation of “Shanghai person”); the Han Chinese businessman Zhang Zhiqiang who spent most of his childhood in his Uyghur neighbor’s home and considered himself having four parents (biological Han and the foster Uyghur) and converted to Islam when he was doing business in Kazakhstan; Hong Qi, the Uyghur boy who was deserted by his poor biological parents and raised by a Han couple, who later became a ballad singer in Urumqi; and then Ai Kezhu (Aynurgul Hasan), born in Kashgar to a Uyghur father and Han “sent-down youth” mother (during the Cultural Revolution) and married to a Taiwanese businessman.

Despite the apolitical message that Kurbanjan wants to send, when the TV series was released on CCTV 1 and CCTV 4 in June 2016, it was promoted as the “Chinese Dream of the Xinjiangers.” “The Chinese Dream” is a term popularized after 2013 within Chinese socialist thought that describes a set of personal and national ideals in China and the Chinese Communist Party. The phrase is closely associated with Xi Jinping, China’s President and General Secretary of the CCP. The use of the phrase has become widespread in official announcements and has become routine party lexicon as the embodiment of the political ideology of the leadership under Xi. Xi said that young people should “dare to dream, work assiduously to fulfill the dreams and contribute to the revitalization of the nation.” Like the catchphrase “Harmonious Society” discussed in Chapter 3, the “Chinese Dream” has become a new popular term used in state propaganda and daily life, only to replace the previous “Harmonious Society” that was used during Hu Jintao’s rule.

However, Kurbanjan in the New York Times interview pointed out that although in the early stage of his project, he wanted his interviewees to answer the question what their “Chinese Dream” is, he found out their answers were far from “dreams.” They were very realistic: an expecting couple wanted their child to be born healthy; a college graduate wanted to find a job without being discriminated against; a restaurant owner selling kebabs in Beijing wanted his son with cerebral palsy to recover. “To survive and to have small hopes for the future” is the humble “dream” of the Xinjiangers, as well as other common Chinese folks. It is hard to tell if Kurbanjan’s original message is co-opted by the state’s propaganda, or Kurbanjan managed to use the state’s agenda “Chinese Dream” to squeeze in his little critique of the state politics and social discrimination against the “Xinjiangers,” mostly Uyghurs.

Within Xinjiang, middle-class Uyghurs find their ethnic pride through participating in the global economy, though looking not eastward to China, but westward to Central Asia and the Middle-east. Uyghur-American Arfiya Eri (2008) observes that despite the growing influence of Han Chinese culture, the economic and social forces of globalization have empowered the Uyghurs of Urumqi with new ways to express and preserve their Turkic identity. Additionally, the evolving economic and cultural interdependencies between the Uyghurs of Xinjiang and Turkic peoples to the West have shifted efforts to preserve Uyghur identity away from political and violent means toward cultural and economic means. Modern Uyghur consumer culture in foodstuffs, entertainment and real estate shows the rise of distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic popular Uyghur culture that thrives and expands with the aid of globalization and development.

Although the northern part of Urumqi is predominantly Han populated, the southern area around the three connected streets of Shangxihanza, Dongkoruk (Chinese: Erdaoqiao) and Yan An Road compose a neighborhood with a distinctly Uyghur atmosphere unique to this area of Urumqi. Music stores sell CDs and DVDs from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkey rather than other regions of China, with Uzbek music as the most popular⁸³. Many Uyghur supermarket chains such as Arman and Ihlas sell halal foodstuffs from Turkey and Central Asia, all of which are difficult to find in Chinese markets. The newly constructed apartment complexes on Yan An Road attract middle and upper-class Uyghurs and Central Asian expatriates. According to the interview with Uyghur real estate agents by Arfiya Eri (2008), there are two areas of real estate in Urumqi: the “ethnic area” and the “Han area.” Many residents of the

⁸³ Uzbek music is popular because it is considered close to Uyghur music and Uzbek language similar to Uyghur by the Uyghur community in Xinjiang.

“ethnic area,” or what the locals call the *milli*⁸⁴ area, listed its live music, lively crowds, and cosmopolitan nature – aspects seen as undesirable just a few years ago – as the biggest reasons why they had moved to the neighborhood. The real estate agents attributed Yan An Road’s draw among Uyghurs and Central Asian merchants to its well-established Uyghur consumer culture, the high ratio of minority residents, and the area’s proximity to schools with large Uyghur students and faculty populations, including Xinjiang University. I also observed the same phenomenon during my fieldwork, when one Uyghur student from a private English school I worked with invited me and other students to her apartment in the “*milli* area” in south Urumqi. Her business family from Atush bought her a spacious three-bedroom apartment so she and her sister could study English in Urumqi and go abroad in the future.

Similar to the young Han Chinese in Xinjiang and other parts of China, Turkic speaking youth embrace the neoliberal values of efficient self-management, productivity and excellence, diversification, and global competition, as is witnessed by the Uyghur-run English training schools that mushroomed in the past ten years and offer prep courses from domestic Mandarin Chinese tests and graduate school qualifying English tests to international tests such as IELTS, TOEFL, and GRE. But unlike the Han students, their sense of globalization and cosmopolitanism is oriented not eastward to China, but westward to Central Asia and the Middle East, or Euro-America. And it is through this west-oriented participation in globalization that the Turkic speaking students maintain their Turkic identities. Secondly, although the privatization of the English education theoretically provides equal opportunity to the Turkic students, English education is an ethnicized, classed and gendered market. Students in Xinjiang attend private English schools based on their ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds, which direct students to different jobs of various levels of prestige and economic gain. Female students actively

⁸⁴ *Milli* is the Uyghur word for *minzu*, ethnic minorities.

participate in English learning, but their career is limited by family pressure to marry and their social mobility strategies tend to orient towards staying within the province rather than going abroad. Thirdly, Turkic students' pursuit of cosmopolitanism is often interrupted by political events and changing state policies. When the political situation was unstable, the private English education market was closed down in Xinjiang, as was shown through past examples. All the rapid economic, social and political changes in Xinjiang reaffirm the importance of the research on the English education in Xinjiang as a thermometer of the complex language politics, ideologies, and practices in China's Eurasian crossroads.

Appendix 1 Xinjiang Participants (college students level) who entered national contests (2003 to 2011)

Year	Name and University represented	Gender	Ethnicity	Speaking Contest	Ranking/Award	Speech topics
2002	Teng Yun (滕芸) Xinjiang University	Female	Han	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	Unknown
2002	Li Kaihua (李凯华) Xinjiang University	Male	Han	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	Unknown
2002	Zhang Wenjuan (张文娟) Xinjiang University	Female	Han	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	Unknown
2003	Azizmehmat (艾则买提) Possibly Xinjiang Medical University	Male	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“The Future is Now – The Prospect of the New Century”
2003	Kahaer (卡哈尔) University unknown	Male	Uyghur?	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“ <i>Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the only thing- Albert Schweitzer</i> ”
2004	Kasim Abdurehim (卡斯木江 阿不都热依木) Xinjiang University	Male	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal and Final	Audience Choice Award. Participated in the “Australasian Intersarsity Debating Championship” in Australia.	“Confronting myself” “Is there a need for a national film classification system in China?”
2005	Maerhaba Ishakh (玛尔哈吧 依沙克) University unknown	Female	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal and final	Unknown/Top 23 finalists	“The Greatest Invention in My Eyes – Numeral”
2005	Adiljan Abdukelim (阿地里江 阿布都克力木)	Male	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Second Prize category (finalists who ranked between 7 th and 23 rd).	“The Greatest Invention in My Eyes -- Electricity” “People, like trees, need storm to reveal

	A university in Shanghai or Xinjiang University?			and Final	Participated in the ESU International Relations Conference.	their strength.”
2005	Gulzar Mehmat (古丽扎买买提) Northwestern Normal University	Female	Uyghur	CCTV Semifinal	Unknown	“Should China Introduce a Complete Ban on Smoking in Restaurants and Bars?”
2006	Dildar Dushan (迪丽达尔 对山) Xinjiang Medical University	Female	Kazakh	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“Global Unity and Diversity”
2006	Xiaohong Liu (刘晓红) Xinjiang University	Female	Han	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“Diversity within Unity”
2006	Mirajgul Osman (米拉吉古丽 吾斯曼) Xinjiang University	Female	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal and Final	Unknown/Top 23 finalists/Participated in the “Asia Intersivity Debating Championship” in Korea	“Cultural Assimilation and National Identity” “A strategy for saving the world – save the water” “Could we really expect a more peaceful world, if more women leaders were elected?”
2006	Shabahat (沙巴海提) Tianjin Foreign Languages College. Represented Tianjin, not Xinjiang	Female	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal and Final	Judges’ Special Award/Top 23 finalists/ Participated in the “All-Asian Intersivity Debating Championship” in Korea	“A Uyghur Girl Can be Different and the Same” “A strategy for saving the world – Save the languages, Save the World Cultures” “Should local authorities where migrant workers are employed be responsible for the children’s education?”
2007	Chugulliq Batur (楚古丽克 巴吐尔) Xinjiang Medical University	Female	Kazakh?	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“The Global Citizenship Begins at Home – Global Citizen Consciousness”
2007	Mutallip Askar (木台力甫 艾斯开尔)	Male	Uyghur	CCTV Cup	Unknown	“Global Citizenship Begins at Home – Global Citizenship is a Journey Toward

	Xinjiang Kashgar Normal College			Semifinal		Greater Awareness”
2007	Dilshat Bolat (迪里夏提 波拉提) Xinjiang Medical University	Male	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“Global Citizenship Begins at Home – All We Need is Passion”
2008	Qian Zuo (左倩) Xinjiang Agricultural University	Female	Han	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“1+1=2?”
2008	Gulmira Abdurahman (古米拉 阿布都热合曼) Xinjiang University	Female	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Unknown	“1+1=2? -- The Invisible Third Element”
2008	Faruk Mardan (法鲁克 买尔旦) Xinjiang Medical University	Male	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal and Final	Second Prize Category (ranked 7 th to 23 rd among finalists)/Final Group 2 Audience Award/ Participated in the “All-Asian Intersarsity Debating Championship” in Malaysia	“1+1=2? – Simplify Your Life” “Olympian and Paralympian, Man and Superman” “Should celebrities who endorse shoddy products be punished”
2009	Ying Li (李颖) Xinjiang Finance and Economics University	Female	Han	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Ranked 34 th	“Culture Smart or Science Intelligent? – On Culture and Science”
2009	Umit Haji (玉买提 阿吉) Xinjiang Finance and Economics University	Male	Uyghur	CCTV Cup Semifinal	Ranked 58 th	“Culture Smart or Science Intelligent? – Culture vs. Science”
2009	Mutallip Askar (木)	Male	Uyghur	CCTV	Finalists Honorary Award	“Culture Smart or Science Intelligent?”

	台力甫 艾斯开尔) Xinjiang Kashgar Normal College			Cup Semifinal	(semi-finalists who didn't make to the final but ranked the first among the three finalists from that province)	
2010	Ershat Borat (伊尔 夏提 波拉提) Xinjiang University	Male	Uyghur	FLTRP Cup Final	Final Second Prize Award (ranked 43 rd among 89 finalists)	" <u>Being abnormal</u> is my top concern" "If you were in charge of a local library, what changes would you make to attract more people to visit your library to borrow books?"
2010	Zuklar Turhun (祖 克拉吐尔洪) Xinjiang Medical University	Female	Uyghur	FLTRP Cup Final	Final Third Prize Award (ranked 63 rd among 89 national finalists)	"___ is my top concern"
2010	Umit Haji (玉买提 阿吉) Xinjiang University of Finance and Economics	Male	Uyghur	Star of Outlook Final	Champion	"My time to Shine" "My Time to Persuade" "Please Vote for Me"
2011	Mamateli Yasan (买 买买艾力玉山) Xinjiang Medical University	Male	Uyghur	FLTRP Cup Final	Final Second Prize Award (ranked 45 th among 89 national finalists)	"A Word That Has Changed the World – Innovation"
2011	Saisai Song (宋塞 塞) Xinjiang University	Female	Han	FLTRP Cup Final	Final Third Prize Award (ranked 77 th among 89 national finalists)	"A Word That Has Changed the World --
2011	Anwar Abudursul (艾尼瓦尔江 阿布 都肉苏力) Xinjiang University	Male	Uyghur	FLTRP Cup Final	Final Second Prize Award (ranked 23 rd among 89 national finalists)	"A Word That Has Changed the World – Imagination"

Appendix 2 A partial list of topics in English Public Speaking Contests

Note: Topics with an * were topics drawn by the Xinjiang Contestants

**“FLTRP Cup” English Public Speaking Contest (Since 2010)
(Formerly called “CCTV Cup” English Speaking Contest 2002-2009)**

Prepared Speech (National Level)

2002 Final

My Virtual University

2003 Semifinal and Final

The Future is Now

2004 Semifinal

Confronting Myself

2005 Semifinal

The Greatest Invention in My Eyes ____

2005 Final

Testing Myself to the Limit

Making My Voice Heard

Year Unknown (within 2002-2005 period)

Man and the Internet

2006 Semifinal

Unity and Diversity

2006 Final

Group 1: *A Choice Between Love and Duty*

Group 2: *The Importance of Being Different*

Group 3: *A Strategy for Saving the World*

2007 Semifinal

Global Citizenship Begins at Home

2007 Final

Group 1: *The Global Me*

Group 2: *Taking on My Challenges*

Group 3: *My Other Self*

2008 Semifinal

1+1=2?

2008 Final

Group 1: *Changed by the Earthquake*

Group 2: *Olympian and Paralympian, Man and Superman*

Group 3: *Knowing Our Place in the Universe*

2009 Semifinal

Culture Smart or Science Intelligent?

2009 Final

Group 1: *The Simple Things in Life*

Group 2: *When Green isn't Good*

Group 3: *What's Right with the World?*

2010

___ *is My Top Concern*

2011

A Word that has Changed the World: _____

2012

Unknown

2013

Unknown

2014

Change the Unchangeable

2015

Unknown

2016

Communication is Wonderful

Impromptu Speech (National Level)

2002-2005 Semifinals and Finals (partial list)

- 1*. [Video] Should China introduce a complete ban on smoking in restaurants and bars?
2. [Video] Who should be the focus of investment in sport, the general population or potential Olympic champions?
3. [Video] Is a dependent husband a role model or a cause of embarrassment?
4. [Video] Should linguistic diversity be preserved, even at the expense of effective communication?
- 5*. [Statement] People, like trees, need storm to reveal their strength.

6. [Quotation] It is the eye which makes the horizon.
7. [Situation] A graduation Speech at the Commencement Ceremony.
8. [Words] “Wolf” and “Lamb”
9. [Statement] It is better to be a dissatisfied Socrates than a satisfied pig.
10. [Pictures] Letter and E-mail
11. [Proverb] Go often to the house of thy friend for weeds soon choke the unused path.
12. [Statement] God never made an ordinary human being.
- 13*. [Video] Is there a need for a national film classification system in China?
14. [Proverb] The tongue is boneless but it breaks bones.
15. [Statement] The most pressing affair for us now is how to prevent intellectual crime in all its forms.
16. [Quotation] The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it.
17. [Video] On Girls Playing Soccer
18. [Statement] Peace on earth begins at home.
19. [Quotation] A knowledgeable fool is a greater fool than an ignorant fool.
20. [Video] About Unconscious Gestures accompanying Speech
21. [Video] About Online Dating
22. [Video] On DNA
23. [Video] About the Close Relationship Between Dr. Paterson and Coco, a Chimpanzee that Comes to be able to Use Sign Language and Understand Spoken English after Her Training
24. [Quotation] We all live under the same sky, but we don't all have the same horizon.
25. [Quotation] He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches.
26. [Cartoon] What do you think of cosmetic surgery? Is it a good thing or a bad thing?
27. [Video] Is it necessary to restore the Old Summer Palace also known as Yuan Ming Yuan Garden?
28. [Video] Do you think AA style or Go Dutch is a positive or a negative development in your life?
29. [Video] Is it better for Beijing to protect its traditional buildings and historical landmarks or build more modern high-rises?
30. [Statement] If you take too long in deciding what to do with your life, you'll find you've done it.
31. [Statement] Tourist trade contributes absolutely nothing to increasing understanding between nations.
32. [Video] About a Monet Painting Being Sold at Auction for a Record Price
- 33*. [Quotation] Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the only thing.
34. [Statement] Parents should be sent to school.
35. [Quotation] A nation that forgets its past can function no better than an individual with amnesia.
36. [Pictures] It's yours. We treat you equally.
37. [Quotation] Winter is a time for study; and the colder it is, the more studious you are.
38. [Video] About the Great Wall and Mengjiangnu Temple with the Voiceover Telling Qinshihuang Having the Great Wall Build and the Story of Mengjiangnu.
39. [Proverb] Wisdom in the mind is better than money in the hand.
40. [Video] Has the Internet narrowed or increased the distance between peoples? Why?
41. [Video] Do you think that you can buy good health?
42. [Video] How has TV changed your way of life?

43. [Video] Should women do the same things as men to be their equals?
44. [Video] As an old Chinese saying goes: “Three monks, no water.” So if you were one of the monks, what would you do to ensure drinking water for you and the others?
45. [Video] The story of the mouse and the ox in the 12 symbolic animals. Do you think that is the right way to get ahead?
46. [Quotation] Never argue with a fool; someone watching may not be able to tell the difference.
47. [Quotation] Content makes poor men rich; discontentment makes rich men poor.
48. [Quotation] Every man I meet is in some way my superior.
49. [Quotation] Life is nothing but a competition to be the criminal rather than the victim.
50. [Quotation] If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain.

2006 Semifinal

1. A recent “Charming Teacher” Contest launched in Xuzhou, aimed to select the “Top 10 Charming Teachers.” What, in your opinion, are the charms of a teacher?
2. Please make a speech on the object in front of you. (postcards)
3. By the end of September 2006, more than 200,000 people had applied to the Beijing Olympic Games Organizing Committee for voluntary work. What different kinds of work do you believe a volunteer could do, and how important could this work be?
4. Recently, the Beijing Bus Corporation has announced plans to reward people who offer their seats to the old, the ill or the disabled. Please comment on this.
5. Many employers tend to favour applicants with relevant work experience over those with little or no experience. If you were a new graduate without any work experience, how would you convince a prospective employer to make you an offer of a job?
6. Watch the video and make comments: “the past 200 years in the West have seen staggering increases in wealth and economic opportunity. And yet there have been no comparable increases in our level of happiness. Despite of being so much richer than the few generations ago, we are often more anxious about our own importance and achievements than our grand parents were. I call this modern state of restlessness and dissatisfaction, state of anxiety. I want to explain where I think much of it comes from, how it affects our lives, and what I believe we can do about it.”
7. Please make a speech on the object in front of you. (An umbrella)
8. Please comment on this quotation: “We are all something, but none of us are everything.” – Blaise Pascal.
9. Please comment on this picture. (A picture of a terra cotta warrior figure with a robot figure growing out of his body)
10. Digital media such as E-papers and E-books are flourishing around the world. Do you think that one day the new forms of media will completely replace the traditional print books?

11. Please comment on this quotation: Youth has no age. – Pablo Picasso.
12. Please comment on the quotation: No one has ever become poor by giving. – Anne Frank
13. Please comment on the quotation: Time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time. – Bertrand Russell.

2006 Final (Preparation time: 15 seconds; Speech: 1 minute)

1. Which should be the priority in higher education—quality or accessibility?
2. Which is the greater threat to the world, war or poverty?
3. Is it morally justified to reveal people’s private affairs on the Internet?
4. Has the adoption of euro promoted or restricted international trade?
5. Are such reality shows as “Super Voice Girls” a triumph of talent or of commercialism?
6. Are luxury foreign goods anything more than expensive status symbols?
7. Should full-time undergraduate students be allowed to start their own business?
8. Is globalization narrowing or widening the gap between the rich and poor countries?
9. Do big-budget movies represent the best future for the Chinese movie industry?
10. Who bears the main responsibility for combating piracy – the government or the consumer?
11. Which is the way forward for sports in China – more sponsorship or more government funding?
12. Should marriage be a lifelong commitment?
13. Should developing countries pursue an alternative development path, in the light of environmental considerations?
14. Are Internet forums effective as an indicator of public opinion?
15. Do you think there is a limit to human physical attainment?
- 16*. Could we really expect a more peaceful world, if more women leaders were elected?
17. Should journalists ever intervene in the news they are reporting?
18. Is it time for the government to stop the preferential treatment for Peking and Tsinghua Universities?
19. Should China’s wealthier citizens maintain a lower profile, out of consideration for the country’s poor?
20. Do you support the idea of Asia adopting a single currency?
21. Are publishers right to offer a wide choice of reading, or should they concentrate on quality?
22. Should local authorities where migrant workers are employed be responsible for the children’s education?
23. Is the Olympic ideal still relevant in an increasingly competitive world?

2007 Semifinal

1. Watch the video and make comments: Will online shopping replace the traditional shopping?
2. Please comment on the picture: (a person with “public school” printed on the back of her jacket and a child standing in front of a group of famous scholars, saints, and scientists, including Shakespeare, Aristotle, Jesus, Lincoln, Franklin, Einstein, etc. The caption is “We’re looking for a few good people to teach out kids here! Do any of you have a teaching certificate?”)
3. Handwriting has traditionally been seen to reflect a person’s personality and ability. Now, in the computer age, many people type instead of writing. Do you think this a worrying trend?

4. Please comment on this quotation: “The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend. – Abraham Lincoln.”

5. Some people made great efforts in investigating and reporting the sales of fake and shoddy products. They have been accused of just trying to make money for themselves but also applauded as heroes for protecting consumer rights. What is your opinion?

6. Please comment on this quotation: “Do not confuse motion and progress. A rocking horse keeps moving but does not make any progress. – Alfred A. Montapert.”

7. It is common for university teachers to set group-work tasks to develop students’ teamwork skills. However some students think studying with other only results in low efficiency and it is a waste of time. Which do you prefer, studying alone or with a team?

8. Please comment on the picture: (father standing by the bedside of his son and son lying in bed)
Caption: Father: Get up, son. When Lincoln was your age, do you know what he was doing?
Son: No, Dad. I don’t. But I do know what he was doing when he was your age.

9. Please comment on this quotation: One flower is beautiful; a surfeit is vulgar. – Ludwig van Beethoven”

2007 Final

1. Which presents the better image of China to the world, Confucius Institutes or made-in-China products?
2. Should the next coach of the national football team come from China or abroad?
3. Are foreign films a positive or a negative influence on the development of China’s own film industry?
4. Should college students be offered more elective courses at the expense of mandatory courses?
5. Does any country have the right to exploit the resources at the North Pole?
6. Is being self-employed a waste of talent or a practical solution for graduates?
7. Do unconventional interpretations of history ever serve a useful purpose?
8. Which is the better means of helping developing countries: technical support or financial assistance?
9. Are people educated overseas entitled to a higher salary?
10. Should Beijing introduce the measures to reduce number of private cars using its streets?
11. Are children today growing up too fast?
12. Is it wise for a family to save or to invest?
13. Is the human-animal hybrid embryo a step too far by science?
14. Is the revival of traditional values the best hope for creating a better society today?
15. What’s more important in a leader: specialist knowledge or people management skills?
16. Do you think the earth will ever witness another world war?
17. Which is the real key to success: ability or opportunity?
18. Is work experience a necessary supplement to a college education?
19. Should our cities be expanding outwards or upwards?
20. Should space exploration be conducted as an international effort, or by individual countries?
21. Should students be provided with more rigorous training in character development?

22. Is globalization widening the gap between the rich and the poor?
23. Which is happier, to love or to be loved?

2008 Semifinal

1. The Ministry of Education has launched a pilot program to introduce Peking Opera into 20 elementary and middle schools in 10 provinces. The program teaches 15 arias with the aim of promoting and revitalizing traditional Chinese culture. This plan, however, has aroused heated debate. Some people believe that the course will further burden already busy students. Others doubt whether music teachers today are up to the task of teaching the art. What is your opinion?
2. Please comment on this quotation: “Happiness is a very small desk and a very big wastebasket. – Robert Orben.”
3. Please comment on this quotation: “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read the write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn. – Alvin Toffler.”
4. Suppose Liu Xiang had walked his way through the 110 meter hurdles in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. You are a Chinese official interviewed at a press conference after the race. What would you say?
5. It is common for universities to invite renowned scholars or entrepreneurs to give speeches to their students. This March, Xu Xiyuan and Xuxidi, the Taiwanese sisters and TV stars, were invited to give a presentation about fashion in Peking University’s famous Centennial Lecture Hall. What do you think of this form of education?
6. There is an old saying, “A fall in a pit, a gain in wit.” Do all the falls we experience in life lead to an increase in wisdom?
7. A new word is creeping into the English language: discomgoogolation. The term comes from “discombobulate” (which means to confuse or frustrate) and Google. A survey shows that 44% of Britons suffer from stress or discomgoogolation if they are unable to access information easily on the Internet. What is your opinion of this situation?
8. Watch the video and make comments: What smells trigger memories for you?
9. Upon graduation, many college students try to leave their mark on the campus in some way. Some organize parties and activities, some take beautiful pictures, and some plant trees around the campus. When you graduate, what would you like to do to mark your college life before leaving?

2008 Final

1. Should publicity be given to charitable donations?
2. Should using public transport in Beijing be free of charge?
3. Do we care too much about what the rest of the world thinks about our country?
4. Should China’s universities adopt their own entrance examinations?
5. Who should answer for the increase in gratuitous violence in the cinema: film makers or film goers?
6. Should advertisement designed to influence children be banned?
7. Will new media be the death of television?
8. Is an athlete justified in changing nationality in order to take part in the Olympics?
9. Should a complete ban be imposed on smoking in all public places?
10. Does a global financial crisis accelerate or slow the globalization process?
11. Should Olympic champions enjoy preferential treatment when applying to universities?

12. Would rebuilding the Old Summer Palace be a celebration of past glory or a betrayal of history?
13. Is the Internet a reliable gauge of public opinion?
14. To create a harmonious society which is the key: a sense of social responsibility or legal sanctions?
- 15*. Should celebrities who endorse shoddy products be punished?
16. Should we expect celebrities to be the role models in their private lives?
17. Is it time to reform the United Nations Security Council?
18. Is *Fengshui* superstition or science?
19. Which is the more important international relationship: a multilateral one or a bilateral one?
20. Is it time to give up funding the national men's football team?
21. Which is the way forward for traditional opera: reform or education?
22. Is force the most effective response to terrorism?
23. Is silence the best defense against malicious gossip?

2009 Semifinal

1. Watch the video and make comments: What's your magic to help you achieve your goals?

2. Celebrities often find that the tabloid press writes inaccurate and distorted stories about them in order to publish sensational stories. Some celebrities have had to resort to the law for protection; a few have even been driven to suicide. While some people blame the journalists for having no morals, it is the general public who buy the newspapers that print scandal and sensational news. Who is most to blame for the media's behavior: the journalists or the general public? What's your opinion?

3. Though the Ministry of Education has repeatedly urged primary and secondary schools across the country to ease the academic burden on students, including ensuring they get enough time to sleep and rest, avoiding holding extra classes, or reducing the number of exams, the problem continues. The load on students, experts say, is not just a problem of education, but as social ill. In your view, is reducing study load a "mission impossible" in the Chinese context?

4. This year, a wave of plagiarism in research papers among college students and professors has raised public concern. Some critics place the blame on students' lack of academic discipline, professors' ignorance, or universities' loose supervision, while others see the core problem as a lack of emphasis on creative and critical thinking throughout our country's educational system. What do you think is the main reason?

5. Watch the video and make comments: What suggestions would you give Mia or other young people in the same situation?

6. Please comment on this quotation: "The wise enjoy the waters; the benevolent enjoy the mountains (智者乐水, 仁者乐山). – Confucius"

7. In recent years, China has made great efforts to have a number of cultural events and art forms enlisted as World Cultural Heritages. This September, 22 Chinese cultural traditions, including the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, seal engraving, calligraphy, and paper-cutting, final won

UNESCO's recognition. Suppose you were a member of the Chinese bidding committee, make a speech to persuade the UNESCO committee to enlist one of the above cultural traditions.

8. Recently, the liberal education project at Sun Yat-sen University has attracted great interest. The 35 freshmen taking part in this project will follow a general curriculum providing broad learning in multiple disciplines rather than the usual in-depth study of on particular major. Students taking part in the project may benefit a lot by broadening their knowledge, but will they lose out when it comes to job-hunting in four years' time? What is your opinion about this liberal education project?

9. To promote a healthy lifestyle, we have World "No Tobacco Day;" to encourage environmental protection, we have World "Car Free Day;" to remind people of the value of peace, we have World "Cease-Fire Day;" If you were given a chance to name a day for the world, what theme would you suggest and why?

10. Suppose you were a member of the Public Speaking Association of your university and were invited to attend a symposium on university education. Please give a speech to persuade your audience (which includes administrators, researchers, teachers and students from different universities) to include public speaking as a compulsory course for all the students in their university's curriculum.

11. Earth Hour is a global event organized by the World Wildlife Fund and is held on the last Saturday of March every year. Households and businesses are asked to turn off all non-essential lights for one hour to raise awareness of the need for action on climate change. The Earth Hour 2010 will take place on March 27 from 8:30pm to 9:30pm, local time. Suppose you were the President of the Student Union of your university, make a speech to persuade all the students to participate in this event.

2009 Final

1. Should a ban be imposed on unsolicited advertisements sent to mobile phones?
2. Wouldn't it be fairer if men were to retire earlier than women?
3. Is it patriotic to pay to recover artifacts that have been stolen from your country?
4. Are people who own more than one home being selfish?
5. Does an all-star cast enhance or detract from a film's message?
6. Should a pedestrian injured crossing a road in the wrong place face prosecution?
7. Are pre-university students too young to live on their own in a foreign country?
8. Are criticisms leveled against China's post-80s generation justified?
9. Chinese names for Chinese things: narrow-minded or common sense?
10. Can responsible Internet users object to being obliged to use their real names?
11. In times of global economic crisis, are countries justified in putting their own interests first?
12. Which should come first: loyalty to family or respect for the rules of society?
13. Should salary caps be imposed on senior managers of state-owned enterprises?
14. Should state institutions be obliged to purchase green vehicles?
15. Does Internet dating mark the death of romance?
16. Is the time right for China to introduce a two-child policy?
17. Does the growth of online shopping herald the end of the high-street shops?

18. What is the future of domestic travel in China: train or plane?
19. Does the breakdown in gender stereotyping represent progress by society?
20. Are we surrendering our privacy to technology?
21. Should higher education in China be less academic and more job-oriented?
22. Should Internet addiction be treated as a genuine health problem or irresponsible behavior?
23. Do we spend too much time learning foreign languages?

2010 Final Second Stage (Preparation time: 20 minutes; Speech length: 3 minutes)

1. This picture shows passengers waiting for security checks at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport outside Washington D.C. The scanners, which produce outlines of the human body, can detect potentially dangerous non-metallic materials that cannot be detected by traditional metal detectors. However, outraged by the new security measures, advocates of personal privacy planned to boycott the full-body scan at the airport on October 24th. Suppose you were the duty manager at the airport at that day, how would you handle this difficult situation?
2. At a subway in Washington D.C., a street musician played the violin for 45 minutes during the morning rush hour. Among all the people hurrying to and fro, only six people stopped for a few seconds to listen to the music. At that time, nobody knew this street musician whose name is Joshua Bell. He is in fact one of the world's top musicians and he was playing violin worth 35 million dollars. Only two days ago, his concert tickets in Boston were sold at an average price of 100 dollars each. What do you think of the story?
3. With the hope that someday human kind will receive signals from extraterrestrials, it is suggested that the United Nations might appoint a space ambassador. This person would be the first point of contact for aliens trying to communicate with people on earth. Supposed you were appointed as the space ambassador, how would you introduce to our guests the planet we live on?
4. With the release of the second last Harry Potter film, many young people who have grown up with the characters from J.K. Rowling's seven Harry Potter books may feel that a chapter in their lives is coming to an end. Having been inspired by the series for more than ten years, Harry Potter fans are now facing a new future. Why do you think stories like Harry Potter have such an influence on young people?
- 5*. Watch the video and make comments: if you were in charge of a local library, what changes would you make to attract more people to visit your library to borrow books?
6. Please comment on the quotation: "We have not the reverent feeling for the rainbow that a savage has, because we know how it's made. We have lost as much as we gained by prying into that matter. – Mark Twain."
7. Please comment on the quotation: "The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live. – Flora Whittemore"
8. Please comment on the quotation: "You grow up the day you have your first real laugh – at yourself. – Ethel Barrymore"

9. On 18th, October, the Yuanmingyuan Park Administration issued a proposal to regain its lost cultural relics. At a memorial to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the looting of the Imperial Garden, the proposal urged the owners of Yuanmingyuan relics to resist the temptations of the antique trade and to return them to Beijing. Suppose you were representing the Yuanmingyuan Park Administration and are giving a speech about the return of the relics which will be broadcast abroad, what would you say?

10. The 2010 Summer Davos Forum held in Tianjin was opened to ordinary citizens via online video submissions. After going through a series of tests and interviews, five citizens were selected to take part in the forum and were even able to talk directly with senior officials at the forum about their opinions on sustainable development. If you were given the chance to participate in the forum, what suggestions would you make for sustainable development in China?

11. In May, 2010, the Social Research Center for The China Youth Daily conducted a web survey among 4,488 respondents, which showed that 58.8 percent of the respondents believe China has no world-class university, 18.6 percent think it has, while 21.6 percent said, “hard to say.” As a college student, what criteria would you use when judging a world-class university?

12. Watch the videos and make comments: Sometimes in our lives, we need to disconnect to connect. What is your understanding of this?

13. Please comment on the quotation: “Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. – Sir Winston Churchill”

14. The fast-changing world today has made it harder for fashion designers to create classic designs that will last for years. At one fashion show, Pierre Cardin, the 88-year-old French designer, said: “There are lots of designs that are very beautiful, crazy, fantastic on the eyes, but they are not making fashion for tomorrow. You can find it everywhere... but four or five years later, it has gone. This is not fashion!” What is your understanding of what should be considered fashionable?

15. A student, Sun Jiankun, who showed considerable talent in the study of Chinese Culture in a composition contest held by Fudan University, failed in his application to study at Fudan. Despite recommendations by a professor at Fudan, the Admission Office in Shanxi Province refused to transfer Sun’s file to the university because his overall score in the college entrance exam didn’t reach the required standards. In cases like this, do you think students like Sun should be given special consideration and admitted to university on account of their specialized talent?

16. Despite the print media, worldwide, facing serious challenges from the Internet and devices like Apple’s iPad, magazines have experienced rapid growth in recent years in China. For example, *Sanlian Lifeweek* has seen distribution increase 15-20% every year since 2005, while *Chinese National Geography* has maintained an annual growth of 30-40%. The imaginative design and relevant articles, according to analysts, have helped periodicals thrive in a digital age. What do you think the future of the print media will be? Will it continue to be innovative and survive or will it eventually be overtaken by the e-media?

17. Statutory holidays associated with the celebration of the Dragon Boat Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival and several other festivals have brought greater attention to these traditional festivals. While some people think such holidays can help young people learn more about their traditional culture, others think they merely provide more opportunities for business and tourism. In your opinion, where does the real value of these traditional statutory holidays lie?
18. Watch the video and make comments: If you had the opportunity, what would you write to put into the time capsule for your schoolmates to read 50 years later?
19. Please comment on the quotation: “You see things’ and you say, ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say, ‘Why not?’ – George Bernard Shaw”
20. Watch the video and make comments: how do you interpret the slogan “Made in China, made with the world”?
21. Please comment on the quotation: “Life is never fair, and perhaps it is a good thing for most of us that it is not. – Oscar Wilde”
22. Please comment on the quotation: “When it is dark enough, you can see the stars. – Ralph Waldo Emerson”
23. It is reported that Britain will introduce a “happiness index” to gauge its population’s psychological and environmental well-being. The Office of National Statistics has been asked to prepare methods to measure “general well-being,” which includes objective measurements, such as how much recycling is done and more subjective measures of psychology and attitudes. What is your opinion about this “happiness index” as a method of assessing a country’s progress?
24. Watch the video and make comments: What is your interpretation of a “journey” in life?
25. Chen Guangbiao, a Chinese entrepreneur who has been recognized as a national model of morality for his devotion to charitable works, said, “Philanthropy has a low barrier in that people just need to do their bit to show their hearts.” Despite having made donations totaling hundreds million yuan himself, he has said that the size of a donation is not the most important factor. What do you understand about Chen’s comments on donations to charity?
26. For many people in China, a certificate of higher education from a top university is a magic key to a successful career. This emphasis on degrees and diplomas causes a lot of stress and some people even cheat in order to compete. After a former President of Microsoft China was exposed for having a fake diploma, it is reported that many other officials and business executives have quietly revised their educational attainments as published on the Internet. What do you think of the relationship between one’s success and paper qualifications?
27. Please comment on the quotation: “Life is like walking over a seesaw.”

28. The Chinese character “He” (和) was selected as the most Chinese of Chinese ideograms, according to an article in The Wall Street Journal on October 15th. A committee of historians and linguists have suggested that “He,” which was culled from 374 characters, carries “the most meaning for Chinese culture.” Do you agree with the opinion? If not, could you tell us which other Chinese character you think best represents Chinese culture?

29. Watch the video and make comments: have you ever encountered a moment in your life where although you don’t have a decent shirt, you have still “had on some really nice pants”?

30. The search for success in today’s fast-changing and highly competitive environment requires companies to be more innovative. Instead of developing new products, many companies nowadays attempt to create “a winning concept.” For example, Starbucks is not just a cafe selling cups of coffee. It has created a concept where coffee is provided in a relaxed, comfortable environment along with magazines and Internet access so that people can meet for business as well as socially. The concept is more than just a product; it involves a complete package of solutions, new behavior, culture or even community. What is your view of this “concept” economy?

2011 Final Second Stage (Preparation time: 20 minutes; Speech length: 3 minutes)

1. Recently, reports about mountain climbers missing or injured whilst exploring remote areas have aroused public concern, as outdoor adventures have gained in popularity among young Chinese people. Many resources have to be mobilized to help rescue mountain climbers when accidents occur. Although it is the government’s responsibility to protect and rescue people in danger, many netizens suggest that there should be a curb on risky adventures or that climbers should pay the cost of their search and rescue. What is your view about this issue?

2. In July, 2011, Yao Ming, China’s best-known basketball player, announced his retirement. In his retirement speech, Yao said “I believe life is like a guide. If you follow him faithfully, he will open doors to wonder worlds for you. Today I’m retired from basketball, and one of those doors is closed. But elsewhere, another door is opening and outside that door is a new world waiting for me to experience and explore.” Have you ever encountered a moment in your life when one door closed but a new door opened, allowing you to “experience and explore”?

3. Please comment on the quotation: “The window to the world can be covered by a newspaper. – Stanislaw J. Lec”

4. For decades, the Miss World competition has gained a lot of attention around the world. The eye-catching beauty pageant attracts an ever-enlarging audience and now boasts an audience of over a billion. But few people know that there is also a Mr. World competition run by the same organization. Some people think the difference in the popularity of the two competitions reflects the gender inequality suffered by women who are often considered to be no more than decorations to be displayed. What is your view about this?

5. Recently, suggestions to rebuild Yuanmingyuan, which was ransacked and razed by Western invading forces 151 years ago, were raised again. While some people think the reconstruction

might help recover the glory of the Palace, some other disagree with the rebuilding plan, suggesting the ruins should be protected as a reflection of historical truth and a painful reminder of the ills that China has suffered. What is your understanding on this issue?

6. A draft amendment to China's Elderly law requiring people to visit their aging parents regularly has sparked a heated debate. Under the amendment, elderly people could go to court to claim their right to be physically and mentally looked after by their children. While some people think the law could be used to instill a sense of responsibility, a reminder to love and care for parents, some think there is no need to make a Chinese cultural tradition into law. What is your opinion about this?

7. Whilst modern technology has made our lives and work easier and more comfortable, it is often blamed when something goes wrong or breaks down. However, investigations into several train accidents this year have actually revealed the cause to be human error and a lack of effective and conscientious work practices. What do you think should be done to solve the problems of human error and inefficiency in order to prevent accidents?

8. In many Chinese cities there has been a sudden upsurge in the numbers of theme parks in recent years. These theme parks, with their distinctive features, have become one of the major attractions for city tourists. For example, Happy Valley is now among the top choices for tourists to Beijing, and visiting the Window of the World is a must for those travelling to Shenzhen. The world-renowned Disney has also targeted Shanghai where its sixth theme park will soon open. If you were going to design a theme park, what would be its theme? Why?

9. Many Chinese people believe that we understand the West better than the West understands China. But experts have pointed out that a nation's culture is about more than movies, food and games. Culture is a multi-layered and rich concept. For example, many Chinese youngsters can recognize the US one-dollar bill, but few of them truly understand the motto printed on it, "IN GOD WE TRUST." What, do you think, is involved in understanding a nation's culture?

10. Watch the video and make comments: How do you understand Lu Xun's spirit in today's society?

11. Please comment on this picture: (a cartoon in which two travellers are crossing a stone bridge above a cliff. One who is hesitating said to the other: "I'm scared of heights." The other said: "Relax... That's depth.")

12. According to the United Nations, the world population smashed through the seven billion barrier in November 2011. Experts say the pace of growth poses an increasing challenge to citizens and the world's resources are under greater strain than ever before. According to the chief executive of the United Nations Population Fund, the rise to seven billion people is a "challenge and a call to action." What action do you think we should call for to cope with the growing world population?

13. A parody of the Nobel Prizes, the Ig Nobel prizes are given each year for unusual academic achievements that "first make people laugh, and then make them think." For instance, a Japanese

research group was awarded the Ig prize in chemistry for the invention of a wasabi alarm which awakens people when there is a fire. Apparently funny, all the awarded achievements are actually the results of serious academic research. What is your opinion about the Ig Nobel Prize?

14. Please make comment son the video clip: a small change in oneself, a big change in how others treat you.

15. There has long been a battle between copyright holders and content-providing websites in China. One latest example is the row between Baidu and a group of about 50 Chinese writers and publishers. The largest Chinese search engine has been accused of providing the writer’s work for free download from its library, Baidu Wenku, without their permission. For the benefit of the writers and the development of the Internet industry, could you suggest a solution to this problem?

16. Watch the video and make comments: In your opinion, what can we do to help reduce the culture deficit and promote Chinese culture overseas?

17. A Belgian magazine conducted a survey among people over the age of 60 on the topic: What is your greatest regret? More than 72% said they regretted having not worked hard when they were young; about 67% regretted having chosen the wrong career path; 63% regretted having not educated their children well; 41% regretted having not married the right person; 32% regretted having a plain and eventless life... What do you hope you will not regret when you are 60?

18. Please make comments on the video clip: (a video showing a sequence of angry and violent reactions)

19. Renowned blogger Luo Yonghao smashed three Siemens refrigerators in front of the company’s Chinese headquarters in Beijing one Sunday morning. The act was a protest against the German company’s negative attitude towards rectifying the design flaws of its products, according to Luo. For many people, what Luo did was an awakening call to customers to better protect their rights. What do you think about the “rationality” and the “irrationality” of Luo’s behavior?

20. Watch the video and make comments: What is your opinion of these “moving and talking versions” of classical artworks?

Impromptu Speech Practice Questions for Xinjiang Normal University Team when I was a co-coach

September 17, 2010 Training session

1. Is marking western holidays a sign of a modern China or of traditions sacrificed to commercial interests?

2. Some people hold the belief that in China today women should go back home to be full-time housewives so as to give more opportunities to men. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

3. Some people believe that the Earth is being harmed by human activities. Others feel that human activity makes the Earth a better place to live. What is your opinion?

4. It is common for universities to invite renowned scholars or entrepreneurs to give speeches to their students. What do you think of this form of education?
5. There is an old saying, “A fall in a pit, a gain in wit.” Do all the falls we experience in life lead to an increase in wisdom?
6. Upon graduation, many college students try to leave their mark on the campus in some way. Some organize parties and activities, some take beautiful pictures, and some plant trees around the campus. When you graduate, what would you like to do to mark your college life before leaving?
7. The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn. – Alvin Toffler.
Please comment on this quotation.
8. Now in the age of the Internet, reading books does not seem as important as it once was. Do you think people can learn as much as the Internet as they can by reading books? Which method do you prefer?
9. It is easy to get the impression that many of China’s ancient philosophies and traditions are becoming less and less relevant in the new world? Do you agree that old traditions are irrelevant? And do all successful nations need to let the past go and welcome change to its culture?

Q&A Practice Questions

1. If you could know the future, what would you choose to know? And why?
2. What advice would you like to give to somebody who is addicted to the Internet?
3. Do you think university education should be more open-minded?
4. Which qualities do you look for in a boyfriend/girlfriend?
5. If you were one representative of People’s Congress, what advice would you give the government?
6. How do you interpret “low-carbon lifestyle – the new concept of life”?
7. Is silence the best defense against malicious gossip?
8. To create a harmonious society, which is the key: a sense of social responsibility, or legal sanctions?
9. Does a global financial crisis accelerate or slow the globalization process?
10. Will new media be the death of television?
11. Do we care too much about what the rest of the world thinks about our country?
12. Should using public transport Urumqi be free of charge?
13. Should China’s universities adopt their own entrance examinations?
14. More and more couples around the world and in China are choosing to live together instead of getting married. Why do you think this is and do you think it’s a good thing?
15. Euthanasia is a way of relieving ill people’s pain and saving them from the tortures of their illness. Do we have the right to take people’s lives for this reason? Or should the right to die be considered a “right” for terminally ill patients?

October 8, 2010 Practice Session

Impromptu Speech Topics

1. Should marriage be a lifelong commitment?
2. If you could live in a different time and place, what time and place would you choose?
3. Please tell us your understanding of the spirits of sports.

4. In today's technological society, we are becoming busier and busier, but the primary goal of technological advancement is to increase people's efficiency so that everyone has more leisure time. How do you evaluate this situation? How can we improve it?
5. It is often asserted that the purpose of education is to free the mind and the spirit. However, formal education tends to restrain our minds and spirits rather than set them free. Do you think university education should be more open-minded and free? And what aspect of your university life should be improved?
6. It has been said that technology creates more problems that it solves and may threaten or damage the quality of life. Is this statement reasonable? What problem does technology bring us? Use specific examples in your answer, please.

Q&A

1. Many young people nowadays are not very satisfied with just acquiring a bachelor degree, but go on to do graduate studies. What in your view, I mean how important is it to acquire more degrees?
2. How do you understand the statement, "God helps those who helps themselves"?
3. Why do you think Valentine's Day has become so popular in China?
4. Do you think that married couples have a better life without children?
5. What's your view on public display of affection such as kissing on campus?
6. Could you please tell us, in your opinion, what makes life worthwhile?

October 11, 2010 Training Session

Impromptu Speech Topics

1. Nowadays western festivals are increasingly welcome in China. Sometimes Chinese people, especially those teenagers are more familiar with western festivals than with our own festivals. And a large number of merchants are glad to accept western festivals. Please express your opinion on the above phenomenon.
2. In China, many young couples choose to live together without having a child, and this kind of family is called "DINK" – Double Income No Kid. Could you talk about the reasons why there are so many "DINK" families continually appearing in our society?
3. Euthanasia has been legislated in several countries. However, many doctors in those countries still refuse to carry out the law. If you were a doctor, would you agree to carry out euthanasia? Please give your reasons, too.

Q&A

1. People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, increased knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Parents are the best teachers?
3. It has been said, "not everything that is learned is contained in books" Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books. In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?
4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Television has destroyed communication among friends and family.
5. Some people prefer to live in a small town. Others prefer to live in a big city. Which place would you prefer to live in?

6. Some people like to travel with a companion. Other people prefer to travel alone. Which do you prefer?

Appendix 3 Atlan Instructors

Position	Name	Gender	Courses	Education	Interests
President (Chinese Instructor)	*KasimAbdurehim	M	Chinese training class	Xinjiang University	Reading, exercising, traveling
Managing vice- president (English instructor)	*Abdukadirjan Rozi	M	English cet 4 training classes; CET 4 training class; English four levels of comprehensive training classes; English grammar training classes Intermediate English Vocabulary;	Suzhou University	Playing soccer, reading, traveling
Vice-president (English instructor)	*Semetjan Ababekr	M	IELTS training class IELTS basic class	Xinjiang University	Reading, watching movie, traveling
Vice-president (Computer Instructor)	*Mahmutjan Abduquyum	M		Xinjiang University	Science, science fiction, movie
Vice-president	Mirkamil Ahmat	M		Kashghar College of Education	Playing soccer, watching movies, reading
English instructor	Kaysar Rahman	M		Xinjiang University	Playing soccer, watching movie, guitar
English instructor	Kaysar Hesén	M		Jiangxi Ganjiang University	Sports, playing soccer, watching soccer game
English instructor	Emam Ayup	M	New Concept English 2 New Concept English 3 Atlan English 2	Xinjiang University	Reading, exercising, watching movie
English instructor	Irpan Mamat	M	Atlan English 3 Atlan English 2 Atlan English 1	Xinjiang Medical University	Traveling, reading , watching movie
English instructor	Michael Snow	M		Michigan State University, U.S.A.	Playing soccer, traveling, learning languages
English instructor	Tursunjan Yasin	M		Sichuan University	
English instructor	Nurmuhammad Muhtar	M	College English 1 Atlan English 3	Xinjiang University	Reading, learning language and teaching

			Atlan English 1		language, solving problems
English instructor	Miladil Muhammad	M	Atlan English 3	Xinjiang College of Education	
Foreign teacher (English instructor)	James S. Wallace	M		Makerere University	Swimming, skiing, watching movie
Foreign teacher (English instructor)	Jean Gasset	F		Oklahoma Baptist University & World Learning Inc.	Traveling, reading, sports therapy
English instructor	Ershat Abliz	M		Xinjiang University	Drag racing, watching movie, making friends
English instructor	Elyar Mamat	M		Xinjiang University	Exercising, ancient culture, playing boat
English instructor	Matsherif Jelil	M	Rapid breakthroughs in English vocabulary 5000 New Concept English 3	Xinjiang Uni.	Playing basketball, learning languages, reading
English instructor	Mehmud Abdureshid	M	English grammar training classes New Concept English 3 Atlan English 4	Xinjiang Uni.	Traveling, reading, sports
English instructor	Abdusalam Semet	M	Atlan English 5 Atlan English 1 Atlan English 4 Atlan English 1 New Concept English 1	Kashghar Normal Uni.	Song and dance , playing soccer, traveling
English instructor	Metyusuf Metrejep	M	College English 2 College English 1 IELTS reading + vocabulary	Xinjiang Uni.	Reading, playing soccer, communicating with friends
English instructor	Aynure Ali	F	New Concept English (A) New Concept English	Xinjiang Medical Uni.	Reading, watching movies, swimming
English instructor	Nurshatjan Sheripidin	M	English CET 4	Xinjiang Uni.	Reading, cooking, exercising
English instructor	Medine Keram	F	New Concept English (A)	Shanghai International studies University	Reading, listening music, traveling
English instructor	Dilmire Abdureshid	F		Xinjiang Normal Uni.	Reading, cooking, traveling
English instructor	Amine Kasim	F		Hangzhou Normal Uni.	Exercising, reading,

					traveling
English instructor	Reshide Alim	F		University of International Business and Economics	Watching movies, playing basketball, reading
English instructor	Mahinur Dilxat	F	College English 2 Atlan English 7 Atlan English 2	Xinjiang Uni. of Finance and Economics	Traveling, reading, organizing and attending events
English instructor	Mewlude Dilxat	F	Atlan English 4	Xinjiang Medical Uni.	Learning foreign languages, singing, watching movie
English instructor	Rahile Abdugeni	F	New Concept English A New Concept English	Xinjiang Uni. of Finance and Economics	Cooking, traveling, watching movie
English instructor	Nilofar Yarmuhammat	F	New Concept English	Xinjiang Vocational Uni.	Reading, traveling, cooking
English instructor	Sabiya Adil	F	Children's English?	Xinjiang Normal University	Listening national music, learning English, teaching
English instructor	Meryemgul Zunun	F	New Concept English	Xinjiang Normal University	Reading, listening music, watching movies
English instructor	Ilminur Halmurat	F	Atlan English 3&4 New Concept English (A) New Concept English	Xinjiang Normal University	Traveling, watching movies, climbing mountain
English instructor	Nursiman Obulkasim	F		Xinjiang Uni.	Learning languages, watch movies, cooking
English instructor	Dilnur Ismayil	F		University of Shanghai for Science and Technology	Reading novels, photographing, watching movies
English instructor	Pazihat Nurmhammat	F		Xinjiang Normal Uni.	Speech, dancing, traveling
English instructor	Kilare Abdurxit	F	New Concept English	Xinjiang Agricultural University	Reading, watching movie, traveling
English instructor	Merhaba Muhtar	F	Atlan English 1&2 New Concept English	Xinjiang Medical Uni.	Singing, reading novels, playing badminton
English instructor	Sabira Tursun	F	Atlan adult VIP training class	Xinjiang College of	Music, learning

				Education	languages
English instructor	Mustafa Akber	M	Atlan English 1 English Vocabulary Training Class	University of Groningen, Netherlands	Reading, watching movies, playing guitar, singing
English instructor	Sidiq Abdureyim	M		Central South Uni. (Changsha, Hunan)	Watching movies, traveling, exercising
English instructor	Adil Omar	M	Atlan English 4	South China University of Technology (Guangzhou)	Playing soccer and basketball, reading.
English instructor	Miradil Tursun	M		Xinjiang Uni.	Playing basketball, reading, listening music
English instructor	Mihriban Tursun	F	Atlan English 1	Liaoning Uni. of Technology	Dancing, traveling
English instructor	Kuddus Yakup	M	?	Dalian University of Technology	Reading
English instructor	Ghulamjan Ghenizat	M		Xinjiang University	Listening to music, watching movies, learning languages
English instructor	Almire Hudaberdi	F	Cambridge International children's English New Concept English (A) New Concept English	Shanghai International Studies University	Traveling, reading, cooking
English instructor	Samira Sabit	F	Annual VIP children's English class New concept English 1 Oxford elementary school English book 1 Children's English?	Xinjiang College of Education	Learning foreign languages, watching cartoons, yoga
English instructor	Amangul Mamatimin	F		Chongqing University	Reading, watching movies, yoga, traveling
Chinese instructor	Ablimkin Yalkun	M	Chinese training class 8 Chinese training class 4 Chinese training class 9 MHK training classes Intensive training class	Xinjiang Normal University	Teaching, sports, traveling
Chinese instructor	Furqet Ablet	M	Chinese training class 6	Xinjiang College of Education	Exercising, playing basketball, playing

					snooker
Chinese instructor	Parida Eziz	F	Chinese training class 1 Business Chinese 5 Chinese training class 10	Xinjiang University	Traveling, singing, walking
Chinese instructor	Tutigul Reyim	F	Chinese training class 4 Oral Chinese training class 4	Kashghar Normal College	Learning languages, traveling, reading
Chinese instructor	Raxida Abliz	F	Chinese training class 4	Xinjiang University	Drawing, traveling, making friends
Chinese instructor	Aliye Abdughopur	F		Northeastern University	Reading, traveling, listening to music
Chinese instructor	Dilhumar Memetimin	F		Xinjiang Normal University	Speech, traveling, cooking
Chinese instructor	Mukerrem Zipar	F	Chinese training class 6 Uighur junior Uighur junior	Xinjiang Normal University	Reading, watching movies, playing badminton
Chinese instructor	Gulzire Talat	F	Chinese speaking training class Chinese training class 5	Beifang University of Nationalities (Yinchuan, Ningxia)	Traveling, photographing, watching movie
Chinese instructor	Mayira Omar	F	The third volume of children's Chinese Chinese training class 4		Writing, directing, reading
Chinese instructor	Hislat Pazil	F	Chinese Training Class 3 Chinese training 3		
Chinese instructor	Rayila Mamut	F	Chinese Training class 1 Chinese Training Class 3		
Computer instructor	Ipbal Ilham	M	Computer national level special training class Photoshop	Xinjiang Normal University	Playing soccer, playing basketball, listening to music
Computer instructor	Zunnaji Omer	M		Xinjiang University	Playing soccer, project design, watching a comedy
Uyghur language instructor (Course consultant)	*Guzelay Qahar	F		Urumqi Vocational University	Exercising, reading, listening to music
Uyghur language instructor	*Meryemgul Zunun	F		Xinjiang Normal University	Reading, listening music, watching

(Course consultant)					movies
Other languages instructor	Mahire Abdusupur	F			
Other languages instructor	Rena Ablet	F			
Course consultant	Kelfer Muhter	M		Urumqi No. 11 Middle School	Dancing, high technology, sports
Course consultant	Nuramina Mamtawlla	F		Xinjiang University	Travelling, watching movies, helping others
Course consultant	Aysadat Samat	F		Xinjiang University	Reading, shopping, helping others
Course consultant	Muyassar Rozi	F		Xinjiang University of Finance & Economics	Watching movies, listening to songs
Course consultant	Hawagul Osman	F		Xinjiang University	Travelling, watching movies, reading
Course consultant	Kerimjan Hasan	M		Xinjiang University of Finance & Economics	Watching movies, travelling, bowling
Finance supervisor	Ayshemgul Ablikim	F		Xinjiang University	
Finance personnel	Parizat Qahar	F		Xinjiang University of Finance & Economics	
Secretary	Dilnaz Dilshat			Beijing Institute of Technology	Drawing, dancing, cooking, running
Secretary	Ramila Turgun	F		Xinjiang University	Watching movies, cooking, learning foreign languages
Secretary	Perhat Turgun	M		Sichuan University	Playing computer games, listening to songs, technotonic dance
Written in Uyghur	Resuhngul Ghupur	F		Xinjiang University	Reading, learning languages, travelling
Written in Uyghur	Memettursun Mamat	M		Yingjisha No. 3 Middle School	Exercising, travelling, photographing
Written in Uyghur	Halide Dawut	F		Urumqi City Vocational Education Center	Travelling

The Propaganda Department staff	Eli Heyrullah	M		Xinjiang University	Playing basketball
Not specified	Rayila Reshit	F			
Not specified	Shahimerdan Mehmud	M		Xinjiang Railway Vocational & Technical College	Gym, playing basketball, travelling, learning a foreign language
Not specified	Xadiya Xawket	F		Donghua University (Shanghai)	Long-distance running, hiking, swimming, singing, reading a book
Not specified	Mihirgul Habibul	F		China University of Mining and Technology	Playing tennis, hiking
Not specified	Gulbostan Abliz	F		Xinjiang University of Finance & Economics	Travelling, going to the movies,
Not specified	Akber Hesén	M			
Not specified	Sadik Satar	M		Fudan University	

Appendix 4 Atlan Courses Price List

<i>Course title</i>	<i>Course hours</i>	<i>Original price</i>	<i>Price per hour</i>
Atlan English 2	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Photoshop	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
New Concept English 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 5	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 2	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training class 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
New Concept English 1	30	¥499.00	¥16.63
Chinese Training Class 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
English Four Levels of Comprehensive Training Classes	36	¥580.00	¥16.11
English CET 4 Training classes	36	¥580.00	¥16.11
Oxford elementary school English book 1	30	¥499.00	¥16.63
Computer National Level Special Training Class	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training class 5	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Oral Chinese Training Class 9	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Business Chinese 5	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
The Third Volume of Children's Chinese	30	¥499.00	¥16.63
English Vocabulary Training Classes	20	¥349.00	¥17.45
Atlan English 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
New Concept English (A)	30	¥480.00	¥16.00
Atlan English 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
English CET 4 class	90	¥1180.00	¥13.11
Intensive Training Class	48	¥499.00	¥10.39
New Concept English (A)	30	¥499.00	¥16.63
Atlan English 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Intermediate English Vocabulary	20	¥299.00	¥14.95
New Concept English	30	¥499.00	¥16.63
College English 1	72	¥580.00	¥8.05
New Concept English 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
College English 2	72	¥580.00	¥8.05
New Concept English 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training class 10	50	¥499.00	¥9.98

Chinese Training Class 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training Class 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training Class 6	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training Class 8	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
IELTS Training Class	48	¥1980.00	¥41.25
Photoshop	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
IELTS Basic Class	48	¥1980.00	¥41.25
New Concept English 2	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training Class 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
The Chinese Training Classes	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 2	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 3	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 6	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Atlan English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training Class 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
New Concept English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Oral Chinese Training class 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
Chinese Training Class 4	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
English Grammar Training Classes	20	¥299.00	¥14.95
Atlan English 1	50	¥499.00	¥9.98
IELTS Training Classes	48	¥1980.00	¥41.25
CET 4 Training class	36	¥580.00	¥16.11
Prestigious Universities			
Excursion Camp	336	¥12000.00	¥35.71
Science Camp	336	¥13500.00	¥40.17
Useful English Camp	336	¥15000.00	¥44.64
Annual Special English for Children	120	¥4800.00	¥40.00

Note: ¥ stands for RMB

Appendix 5: A Brief Introduction of Atlan English Books

The introduction of Atlan English student book 1:

The knowledge of alphabets and phonic symbols、 Basic daily dialogue、 All kinds of simple readings、 800 basic vocabularies、 Present continuous tense and present simple tense.

Atlan English student book1 is suitable for icebreakers.

The introduction of Atlan English student book 2:

Most common daily dialogue、 A vast variety of readings、 900 basic vocabularies、 Future simple tense、 Past simple tense as well as present perfect tense、 Most common verbs.

Atlan English student book 2 is suitable for students who are familiar with around 600 words.

The introduction of Atlan English student book 3:

Intermediate level of readings based on daily subjects、 900 proper vocabularies、 future continuous tense、 past continuous tense、 present perfect continuous tense as well as past perfect tense、 most common grammar focus.

Atlan English Student book 3 is suitable for students who are familiar with around 1200 words.

The introduction of Atlan English students book 4:

A vast variety of high leveled readings、 Proper language for CET-4、 800 proper vocabularies、 Past future tense、 Past future perfect tense、 Past perfect continuous tense and complicated sentence structures.

Atlan English Student book 4 is suitable for students who are familiar with around 1800 words.

The introduction of Atlan English student book 5:

A vast variety of high leveled readings、 Proper language for CET-4 and CET-6、 800 proper vocabularies、 Future perfect tense、 Future perfect continuous tense and complicated sentence structures.

Atlan English Student book 5 is suitable for students who are familiar with around 2400 words.

The introduction of Atlan English student book 6:

A vast variety of high leveled readings、 Proper language for CET-6、 800 proper vocabularies、 Past future continuous tense、 Past future perfect continuous tense and complicated subordinate clauses.

Atlan English Student book 6 is suitable for students who are familiar with around 3000 words.

The introduction of Atlan English student book 7 :

A vast variety of advance readings、 Proper language for TOFEL and ILTES tests、 800 proper vocabularies、 All tense in English and complicated subordinate clauses.

Atlan English Student book 7 is suitable for students who are familiar with around 3500 words.

The introduction of Atlan English student book 8:

A vast variety of advance readings、 Proper language for TOFEL and ILTES tests、 800 proper vocabularies、 All tense in English and complicated subordinate clauses.

Atlan English Student book 8 is suitable for students who are familiar with around 4000 words.

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