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### **Sarıgh Yoghur (Yellow Uyghur) and Salar dictionaries**

In Turkology, Salar and Sarı Yoghur have always possessed a certain exotic allure: situated on the easternmost periphery of the Turkic language family, these two languages are both extremely conservative and strikingly innovative. Yet the amount of scholarship on these languages is quite sparse. Particularly in the area of lexicography, only word lists have been available. At present both groups officially lack a written language, and linguistic material is almost entirely derived from oral sources.

Fortunately, within the last two years two important (if condensed) bilingual dictionaries have appeared in the People's Republic of China. While these works are not meant to be comprehensive, they each offer the comparativist a lexicon of high-frequency words, as well as a brief morphological sketch.

Lin Lianyun, ed. 1992. *Sālā—Hàn, Hàn—Sālā cǐhuì*. (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Nationalities Research Institute, eds. *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yuyan xilie cidian congshu*.) Chengdu: Sichuan Minzu. ISBN 7—5409—0303—1. 255pp. Hardcover, 5.60 yuan.

Lei Xuanchun, ed. 1992. *Xibu Yugu—Han cidian*. (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Nationalities Research Institute, eds. *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu yuyan xilie cidian congshu*.) Chengdu: Sichuan Minzu. ISBN 7—5409—0457—7. 377pp. Hardcover, 6.95 yuan.

Both works share certain Chinese typographic conventions. Each entry is recorded in a semi-phonemic I.P.A. broad transcription. The idiosyncratic aspiration distinction found in Salar and Yoghur stops is transcribed as a voicing distinction. Thus, the I.P.A. symbols for voiced and voiceless obstruents are used to represent unaspirated and aspirated obstruents, respectively. (e.g. Salar *godər* 'a little, slightly', conventionally transcribed as [kotər], vs. *kutər* 'to have (s.o.) shepherd' conventionally [k'ut'tər]). Velar and uvular fricatives are not distinguished in the transcription; thus, *x* generally represents [χ], except in Chinese loan words, where it is the velar [x]. *y* represents uvular [ɣ] in back-vocalic words, and [ɣ] in front-vocalic.

In both dictionaries, the entries are inconveniently arranged, not alphabetically, but rather by type and place of articulation. Vowels appear first, followed by consonants from front to back articulatory position. However, as if to further test the reader's patience, the two dictionaries follow a slightly *different* ordering scheme: the Salar lexicon has: i, e, ə, a, o, u, ö, y, b, p, m, f, v, d, t, n..., while the Yoghur dictionary has: a, ə, e, i, o, u, ö, y, b,.... In the latter half of the Salar lexicon, however, the Chinese headwords *are* arranged alphabetically.

Phonological variants are accorded two separate entries. These regional and idiolectal variants include (1) the free alternation of initial retroflex spirants (ʂ, ʐ, tʂ, tʂ', etc.) with their alveo-palatal counterparts (ʃ, r, tʃ, tʃ', etc); and (2) alternations between front and back

Dwyer 1995, Salar & Sarıgh Yoghur materials  
(preprint)

vowels, and between yodhized and non-yodhized initial vowels, such as Yoghur *örek~jörek* 'heart', and Salar *juвur~juвur* 'to knead'.

In Sarī Yoghur alone, the alternation of native Turkic with metathesized forms, such as *dər~dro* [tər]~[tro] 'to be' are listed separately. Derived forms (e.g. causative verbs) and compound words with the same headword are also accorded separate entries.

In both works, reduplicated forms are generally hyphenated. Binomes are hyphenated in the Salar *Lexicon* (*ada-ana* 'parents'), but are not hyphenated in the Yoghur *Dictionary* (*gəzaga* 'elder sister'). In the latter work, occasionally an apostrophe is employed when syllabification is ambiguous, e.g. *tio'arəm* 'the middle of the night'.

Example sentences and phrases in both works have been drawn from a variety of sources, from ordinary conversation to more formal oral literary discourse.

### 1. A Salar-Chinese, Chinese-Salar Lexicon

The Salar and Chinese lexicon was completed in 1984 but unpublished for nearly a decade. The book is prefaced by the briefest of morphological sketches (5 pp.). The first section consists of a Salar-Chinese lexicon of 4000-5000 entries; the second, a Chinese-Salar lexicon of about 7000 items. Both contain a smattering of sample phrases and sentences in Salar. Personal names and some local toponyms have been included. (Most women's names misleadingly appear with the diminutive suffix *-agu* ('girl'), even though this is a less commonly-used 'marked' form; e.g. the name Zibida appears as *zibidagu*, Aysha as *ajfagu*, etc.

The range of entries in this lexicon is representative of basic Salar vocabulary in current use. However, a disproportionate number of the Turkic and Perso-Arabic lexical items included are actually obsolete in modern colloquial Salar. For example, Turkic *jer* 'ground, earth; place' is included, while the much more commonly-used Chinese loans *ǰi* 'ground, earth' and *ǰifoŋ* 'place' are omitted.

Most of the Persian and Arabic vocabulary in this slim volume is obsolete in the modern colloquial Salar lexicon (except for religious vocabulary). Perso-Arabic nouns such as *hejzi* 'menses', *hejvan* 'animal', *hikayed* 'story', *dzovap* 'answer' rarely if ever occur in colloquial Eastern (Amdo) Salar. However, these words do appear in pre-modern Salar documents, and most are also extremely common in modern Uyghur. For example, many deverbal nouns in -ʃ appear in the Salar *Lexicon* (*orəʃ* 'method of cutting' < or- 'scythe', *atʃiʃ* 'method of opening' < atʃi- 'to open'), yet are no longer in common use in Salar. In modern Uyghur, by contrast, -ʃ is a high-frequency and highly productive suffix.

The "standard language" on which this book is actually based is an amalgam of pre-modern and modern Salar, as well as an Uyghur-influenced modern variant such as Western (Xinjiang) Salar. Although this lexicon is said to be based on the Gaizi vernacular (spoken in western Xunhua county, Qinghai), the author in effect establishes a "literary standard Salar" (if there is such a form) at the expense of the modern colloquial language.

Lexical items of Tibetan origin are under-represented, e.g. [ksart'ɔŋ~saft'ən] 'youth, strapping young man' is omitted in favor of Turkic *jixit~jiyit* (its cognate [jiyit~dʒigit] is commonly used in Uyghur and Qazaq, but appears only as a fossilized literary form in Salar).

By and large, the author has chosen to minimize abstraction in phonetic representation. Allophonic variants are accorded separate entries (e.g. *tah-* 'to pull', *tat-* 'id.'; ɢuʃɢun 'crupper'; ɢuʃɢun 'id.').

Where diachronic changes have been consistent and nongradient, the modern forms are represented, eg: syllable-internal consonant weakening: *ahla-* (< at-la-) 'to step across', *ahra* (< /afra/ < /arfa/) 'barley', *jexmuʃ* '70', *jexle-* 'to lead'(actually [je<sup>h</sup>le-]).

Where phonological change has been gradient and inconsistently applied (i.e. varies from area to area and speaker to speaker), the *Lexicon's* transcription reflects only one of several local variants: e.g. in front vowel derounding: *gun* ([kyn]~[kun] < /kyn/) 'day, sun'; but *jyr-* 'go' ([jyr]~[jur-]); *zyjlan-* ([zujlan-]~[zyjlan-] < Ch. zuì) 'to become drunk', but *sujla-* ([sujla-]~[syjla-] < Ch. cui) 'to urge, to hasten'.

Phonological changes which may be gradient but have been consistently applied are not variously transcribed in the Salar *Lexicon*. For example, Salar (and many other Turkic languages) has a rule de-aspirating (historically, devoicing) obstruents in coda position. In this *Lexicon*, when those obstruents appear word-finally, they are generally represented more phonemically as unaspirated-devoiced (e.g. *kidab* [k'itap] 'religious book'); yet when appearing medially in coda position, these obstruents are represented inconsistently (e.g. 'grass' (</ot/, cf. *öd* 'gallbladder') appears variously as *t* [t'] and as *d* [t]: *otəχ* 'short grass', but *otəχ* oda- 'to scythe the grass'.

Ultimately, these inconsistencies reflect the largely gradient nature of these phonological changes, and the resultant difficulty of establishing a standard transcription. Thus, lexemes with final voiced (aspirated) obstruents may be only partially devoiced: *sus* [siuzs~s(i)us] 'talk, word(s)' but *Xoz* [χus~χos] 'walnut'. Furthermore, unvoiced unaspirated obstruents may be semi-voiced in initial position and are often voiced intervocally. Finally, the operation of certain secondary phonological rules such as "vowel spirantization" is reflected inconsistently in the *Lexicon*: *id* [i't] 'dog'(< /id/) but *i'di-* [i'də-] 'to listen'(< /idi-).

## 2. A Sarigh Yoghur-Chinese Dictionary

The Sarigh Yoghur-Chinese dictionary was compiled in 1987, and contains approximately 7000 entries. In addition to the dictionary itself, the work contains three very useful appendices: a list of common toponyms, a comprehensive grammatical sketch (31 pp.), and a chart of common suffixes with examples. An introduction thoroughly explains the dictionary's conventions.

One of the most oft-noted features of Sarigh Yoghur is the presence of so-called pharyngealized or spirantized vowels. This is actually consonantal preaspiration. Where this spreading of consonantal features onto a preceding vowel is optional, this dictionary shows

Dwyer 1995, Salar & Sarigh Yoghur materials  
(preprint)

two separate entries: *tək-* and *dəhk-* 'to sew'. Occasionally, the rule operation is distinctive and obligatory, e.g. *aht* 'horse' and *at* 'name'. Sarī Yoghur is far from being the only language with such an assimilatory rule (cf. Salar and Kälpin Uyghur). Consonant preaspiration is a feature of both Salar and Sarīgh Yoghur. Since this rule operates more globally in Sarī Yoghur, both 'standard' and variant lexemes with V-*h*-C strings are consistently recorded in this dictionary. In contrast, although *aht* is a common variant of *at* 'horse' in Salar, the former does not appear in the Salar *Lexicon*. Subsequent secondary rules such as metathesis and vowel devoicing is not reflected in the entries of either work: Yoghur [hətʰ] 'horse' appears as *aht*. Lexical items with an epenthetic initial *h* appear as such, e.g. *hudʒon* (< uʃon) 'thirty', but *uʃ* 'three'.

Two regional variants of Sarīgh Yoghur have been identified, based on slight differences in lexicon and phonology: the Dàhé and Míng huā area vernaculars. According to scholarly convention within China, the Míng huā area vernacular is taken as standard, while that of the Dàhé area is considered variant. All entries in the present dictionary are based on the vernacular of the Míng huā plains, unless the entry or sub-entry is followed by the character ( ), indicating an item or usage idiosyncratic to the mountainous Dàhé area.