

A Grammar of Mangghuer

A Mongolic language of China's Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund



Keith W. Slater

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A GRAMMAR OF MANGGHUER

Mangghuer is a Mongolic language spoken by approximately 35,000 people in China's northwestern Qinghai Province. No grammar of Mangghuer has ever been published in any language. This book is a systematic, typologically-oriented grammatical description, based primarily on narrative text data. Historical discussions emphasize the extensive effects of language contact on Mangghuer, which has been heavily influenced by neighboring Chinese and Tibetan languages.

The book's primary importance is as a typologically-oriented grammatical description of a little-known language. It also makes a significant contribution to comparative Mongolic studies and to the characterization of language contact processes in the Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund.

Keith W. Slater is a member of SIL International's East Asia Group. He holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ABL	Ablative case	LOC	Locative case
ACC	Accusative case	NEG	Negative
ADV	Adverb	NF	Nonfinite
Affr	Affricate	NOM	Nominative case
ASP	Aspirated or: Aspect marker	NOMLZR	Nominalizer
ASSOC	Associative	NP	Noun phrase
AUX	Auxiliary verb	OBJ	Objective
C	Consonant	ONOM	Onomatopoeia
CAUSE	Causative	ORD	Ordinal enumerator
c/d	Conjunct/disjunct	PERF	Perfective aspect
CH	Chinese	PL	Plural number
CL	Classifier	POSS	Possessive
COLL	Collective	PP	Postpositional phrase
COMP	Comparative or: Complementizer	PROG	Progressive aspect
COND	Conditional	PROHIB	Prohibitive
COP	Copula	PRT	Final particle
CP	Conjunctive participle	PURP	Purpose
DAT	Dative case	QGS	Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund
DIR	Directive case	QUEST	Question
EMPH	Emphatic	QUOTE	Quotative
ERG	Ergative case	REFLPOSS	Reflexive possessive
EV	Evidential	SEQ	Sequential actions
EXCL	Exclamatory interjection	SG	Singular number
FUT	Future tense	SOV	Subject-object-verb
GEN	Genitive case	SUBJ	Subjective
HEARSAY	Hearsay evidential	Syll	Syllabic
HORT	Hortative	V	Vowel
IMPER	Imperative	VBLZR	Verbalizer
IMPERF	Imperfective aspect	Vc	Voicing
INDEF	Indefinite	VOL	Voluntative
INDIR	Indirect	1	First person
INSTR	Instrumental case	2	Second person
		3	Third person

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

*	Reconstructed form; or: Ungrammatical form	: (in gloss)	Multiple semantic or grammatical meanings included in a single form
\$	Syllable boundary		
()	Optional element or: (in gloss) Meaning inferred from context	~ Ø	Alternate forms Zero morpheme
[]	Phonetic transcription	- =	Morpheme boundary Clitic boundary

BACKGROUND

This book is a descriptive study of the Mangghuer language. Referred to in previous linguistic literature as the Minhe County dialect of the *Monguor*, *Tu*, or *Tuzu* language, Mangghuer is spoken primarily in Qinghai Province, in northwest China.

The study is primarily synchronic, detailing aspects of the Mangghuer phonological, morphological and syntactic systems, with much attention given to the patterns of natural discourse. However, I have also tried to set the synchronic structures of Mangghuer against the backdrop of history, examining the relationship between Mangghuer and related Mongolic languages, as well as the profound influences of non-Mongolic languages, which have led to some dramatic shifts from Mongolic features to those of other language families. These effects of language contact will constitute a secondary thrust of the description and analysis, and will be explicitly examined in Chapter 8, where I consider the relationship of Mangghuer to other Mongolic languages.

The book is a substantially revised version of my 1998 University of California, Santa Barbara doctoral dissertation, *Minhe Mangghuer: A Mixed Language of the Inner Asian Frontier*. Since the former version has not been widely circulated, I will not elaborate here on the nature of the revisions, except to point out that I now see Mangghuer not as a mixed language, but as a clear member of the Mongolic language family, albeit one which has undergone extensive contact-induced change, as the current title suggests. The reasons for this conclusion should be apparent throughout the book's historical sections, and particularly in the discussion of the final chapter.

To begin the book, this initial chapter serves to describe some of the background factors which have shaped the Mangghuer language and my description of it. Before launching into a description of the structures of Mangghuer, and an account of their historical development, I want to begin by describing the scholarly context into which this account falls, as well as the linguistic and sociocultural context in which Mangghuer speakers have developed their language.

Section 1.1 presents background of a linguistic nature, including an introduction to the structural features of Mangghuer and some discussion of the history of scholarly work on Mangghuer and closely related languages, as well as some introduction to the Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund, in which Mangghuer is one of several participating languages. Section 1.2 outlines sociocultural and geographical factors relevant to the development of the Mangghuer language. Finally, section 1.3 gives some brief orientation to the goals, philosophy and methods of this study, as well as a description of the sources of data which I have used.

1.1 LINGUISTIC OVERVIEW

1.1.1 Typological summary

Morphosyntactically, Mangghuer shares most of the typical characteristics of Mongolic languages. It is an agglutinative, exclusively suffixing language with SOV basic word order.

Mangghuer exhibits generally head-final morphosyntactic behavior: objects always precede the verb; most nominal modifiers, including relative clauses, precede their head noun; and the language has postpositions.

Phonologically, though, Mangghuer most strongly resembles Sinitic. It has simple syllable structure, with a very restricted set of coda consonants and few onset clusters, and its inventory of phonemes and syllable types almost exactly mirrors that of nearby Chinese dialects. However, Mangghuer has a stress system, rather than the tone system typical of Sinitic.

An informal frequency count found 15 percent of the lexical items in a narrative text to be Sinitic borrowings, with the vast majority of the remainder being of Mongolic extraction. In a wordlist, however, the percentage of Sinitic loans rises considerably, perhaps to over 50 percent; once again, the remainder are overwhelmingly Mongolic.

1.1.2 Genetic classification

Mangghuer has always been considered to fall within the Mongolic language family. While one focus of this book is to demonstrate that a genetic classification of Mangghuer must acknowledge and exclude many non-inherited features, it is nonetheless fairly clear that many features of the language have indeed been inherited in direct fashion from Mongolic.

A recent statement on Mongolic family relatedness is that of Binnick (1987). Binnick notes two conflicting models of genetic affiliation within earlier Mongolic studies: one promoted by Poppe (1955, 1965) and Doerfer (1964); and another developed by scholars in the former Soviet Union. The differences between these two models need not concern us here (but see Chapter 8). One thing that they share, however, is the inclusion of Monguor as one language of the Mongolic family.

The same may be said of linguists working in China, where the term *Tuzuyu* (土族语) is used with approximately the same range of meaning as Monguor has in the West. Chinese linguists referring to the language of the Tuzu usually note that this language has two major dialects, spoken in geographically distinct locations. For instance, Zhaonasi (1981:2, my translation) says:

There are significant differences within the *Tuzu* language, but it is divided into two dialect regions. The *Tuzu* speech of Huzhu, Ledu and Tianzhu belongs to one dialect, and the *Tuzu* speech of Minhe belongs to a different dialect. We differentiate by calling them the Huzhu dialect and the Minhe dialect. There are many differences between the two dialects; most of these differences appear in the phonology, and secondarily also in lexicon and grammar.

It turns out that these “differences” are quite fundamental, and that native speakers of the two Monguor varieties actually report being unable to communicate with each other (without resorting to, for example, Chinese). I will point out many formal differences between these two linguistic systems in this book; the reader is also referred to Slater (forthcoming) and Georg (forthcoming); a comparison of these two articles will reveal some of the more obvious systematic differences.

Why, then, have the two “dialects” of Monguor been considered a single language? Without doubt, the two linguistic systems share a great number of features, and I will conclude in Chapter 8 that these two Mongolic varieties constitute a valid genetic subgroup within the family. However, it appears that the major reasons for the assumption that these two varieties constitute a single language are sociocultural, rather than linguistic. In fact, I have never seen a linguistically-based argument for their unity as a single language. Rather, it appears that previous analysts have followed the lead of the political and social groupings generally recognized in eastern Qinghai, where the Monguor (Tuzu) of Minhe County and those of Huzhu County are considered members of a single ethnic group, and where the two communities have apparently been subsumed under identical political classifications since (at least) the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (see the historical discussion below, from section 1.2.1 onwards). This is understandable, since until now there has been very little published description of Minhe Monguor, and comparison was therefore impossible.

The only previously published claim (of which I am aware) that the Minhe and Huzhu varieties of Monguor in fact constitute separate languages is Sinor (1952:373), where “Monguor” and “San-ch’uan” (三川| ‘three rivers’ or ‘three plains,’ a geographic feature and place name of southern Minhe County) are listed as two separate languages; the author, however, does not explain how this conclusion was reached.

As I have already noted, the linguistic evidence supports the claim that Huzhu Monguor and Minhe Monguor are in fact distinct languages. In this book, I will refer to the two “Monguor” varieties by the local pronunciations of the names these groups use for themselves. The name *Mangghuer* will be used to refer to what has previously been called Minhe Monguor, while the Huzhu Monguor variety will be referred to as *Mongghul*. Further discussion of these names is given in 1.2.1, below.

Both *Mangghuer* and *Mongghul* belong fairly clearly to the Mongolic language family, as previous authors have claimed. In Chapter 8, we will make some initial exploration of the issue of the genetic subgroupings into which these two Mongolic languages fall.

The book has two separate indexes: an index of *Mangghuer* forms discussed in the book; and an index of subjects.

1.1.3 Previous linguistic studies

1.1.3.1 *Mangghuer*

Aside from this book, the only work to date which attempts to provide a substantial characterization of *Mangghuer* linguistic structures is Slater (forthcoming). The most ambitious previous investigation into *Mangghuer* grammar was that of Qinggeertai (1991b); this work is actually a grammar of the *Mongghul* language, but the author

1.1.3 PREVIOUS LINGUISTIC STUDIES

frequently closes discussion of a particular linguistic feature by presenting a few Mangghuer equivalents for the Mongghul examples he has given. Similarly, a brief phonological and morphological comparison is given by Zhaonasiu and Li (1982). Zhaonasiu (1981:86–92) also alludes to a few of the differences between the two varieties, but this treatment is extremely brief. Additionally, Zhu, Üjiyediin and Stuart (1999) examine a few morphological features of Mangghuer.

Another work of relevance is Zhu, Üjiyediin and Stuart (1995), which presents a Mangghuer folktale, translated and parsed to the morpheme level. This work provides some helpful insights, but the brevity of the text presented results in the appearance of only a fairly narrow range of syntactic phenomena.

Another, somewhat more detailed analysis of Mangghuer syntax and morphology, is presented in Zhu et al. (1997). Here, as with Qinggeertai (1991b), the discussion is arranged around the structures of another language, to which Mangghuer is simply compared. Nonetheless, the analysis of Mangghuer presented in this paper is couched in terms which are more familiar to linguists working outside of China, and it thus represents a more accessible introduction to the language than does most previous work.¹

These few works represent the whole of the linguistic analysis that has been published for Mangghuer, as far as I am aware. Clearly, much work remains to be done in adequately characterizing this language.

In addition to these examples of linguistic analysis, there have recently appeared several works which include Mangghuer texts. Most important among these is Dpalldan-bkra-shis et al. (1996), which includes a large corpus of Mangghuer sentences, mostly translated from English, with Mongghul and English equivalents. Wang, Zhu and Stuart (1995), Wang and Stuart (1995), and Zhu and Stuart (1996) give the texts of several Mangghuer songs. Zhu, Üjiyediin and Stuart (1995), mentioned above, gives the text of a folktale, with English glossing.

A large collection of Mangghuer folklore texts will appear, with English translations and morpheme-by-morpheme glossing, in Z. Chen et al. (forthcoming); it is from this body of folktale materials that most of the examples used in this book will be drawn. Finally, Wang (forthcoming) will be the first published dictionary of Mangghuer.

1.1.3.2 Other Qinghai-Gansu Mongolic languages

A brief summary of publications concerning other Mongolic languages of the Qinghai-Gansu region is in order here. I will not summarize work on all Mongolic languages, but only on those which are also spoken in the Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund (see section 1.1.4 for discussion of this Sprachbund), to which I will frequently make reference for purposes of comparative historical study. These languages, which share many linguistic features with Mangghuer and are near geographic neighbors, include Mongghul, Baonan and Santa.

1.1.3.2.1 Mongghul

The primary structural descriptions of Mongghul are Qinggeertai (1991b), Smedt and Mostaert (1964), Üjiyediin (1994), and Zhaonasiu (1981).² Of these, Qinggeertai (1991b)

is the most ambitious and valuable, providing systematic description and examples of a fairly wide range of construction types.

Sméd and Mostaert (1964) is primarily a morphological description. Zhaonasi (1981) goes somewhat beyond this to the level of syntactic constructions, but is a work of limited goals and does not provide much detailed analysis. Üjjiyediin (1994) is essentially a translation of Qinggeertai's works, and represents the first general description of the Mongghul dialect in English.

Hasibate (1986) is a valuable lexicon, providing a wealth of material for etymological and phonological studies of Mongghul. Another important Mongghul lexicon is K. Li (1988), presenting Mongghul lexical items in the Pinyin-based Mongghul orthographic system, which has been approved for testing in Qinghai Province, and is intended for use by native speakers of the language.

Further lexical studies have been presented by Róna-Tas (1966) and Hua (1994). These two scholars of Amdo Tibetan independently examined Mongghul lexical lists, identifying and classifying items which seem to be Tibetan borrowings.

A number of volumes have provided texts of Mongghul. Heissig (1980) presents a remarkable 12,000 verse transcription by Dominik Schröder of the Amdo epic of Geser. (According to Schröder's notes, this text represents only two-thirds of the entire epic. Translations of only a few lines are provided.) Prior to his death, Schröder himself had published two earlier volumes of Mongghul folktales, Schröder (1959, 1970), including translations. Further text materials are presented by Qinggeertai (1988).

A large collection of Mongghul sentences appears in Dpal-ldan-bkra-shis et al. (1996). Limusishiden and Stuart (1998) provide a collection of Mongghul texts with English translations, and Limusishiden, Jugui and Stuart (forthcoming) presents some 800 pages of Mongghul materials which have been previously distributed in China.

1.1.3.2.2 *Baonan*

The term "Baonan" (Chinese: *baó'an* 保安) is used among linguists in China to refer to a language spoken in two distinct geographic locations: the Tongren region of Qinghai Province and Jishishan County of Gansu Province. This name is based on a town called *Bao'an* in the vicinity of Tongren, which is thought to be the original home area of both groups. Some linguistic publications describe the speech of the Tongren community, while others describe the speech of the Gansu group.

The Chinese government classifies the Tongren population of Baonan speakers as Monguor (*Tuzu* 土族), while the Gansu group is recognized as a distinct minority, Baonan (保安 *baó'an*). Apparently, however, the speech varieties used in these two communities differ in only minor ways, and they may be considered to constitute a single language, according to all linguistic analysts (see, for example, H. Wu, forthcoming). One scholar does note, however, that Qinghai Baonan differs from Gansu Baonan "in that the former is primarily influenced by Tibetan, whereas the latter are heavily sinicized" (C. Li 1983:39). It is also clear from the available descriptions that the Baonan language differs substantially from Mangghuer and other Mongolic languages of the region.

One major cultural difference between the two Baonan groups is that the Qinghai population are Tibetan Buddhists, while the Gansu population are Muslims; apparently

this factor contributed to their being assigned to different minority classifications by the government.

The primary structural description based on the speech of Tongren Baonan is N. Chen (1987a). A dictionary is provided by N. Chen (1986), and N. Chen (1987b) contains text materials for this Baonan variety. H. Wu (forthcoming) is a summary based primarily on these works. Recent English publications which refer to the Baonan language generally seem to follow the work of C. Li (1983, 1984, 1985, 1986), which examines the speech variety of the Islamic group in Gansu province, immediately across the Yellow River from where the Mangghuer live. The other major study of this variety of which I am aware is C. Li's (MS) *A Dictionary of Baonan*, which remains unpublished at this writing.

1.1.3.2.3 *Santa*

Santa is known in China as *Dongxiang* (东乡). The linguistic structures of this language have been described quite extensively in Field (1994, 1997), Jin (1998), Buhe (1986), and Kim (forthcoming). Buhe (1983) is a valuable lexicon, and Field (1991) describes the extensive borrowing of Hui Chinese lexical items into this language. An additional lexicon is Ma and Chen (2000), which employs a pinyin-based orthography and is designed for use by Santa native speakers.

A significant corpus of Santa texts can be found in Buhe (1987).

1.1.4 The Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund

Practically any structural description of any language within the Qinghai-Gansu border area makes at least passing mention of language contact phenomena, and most focus primarily on this topic. The region is such a hotbed of cultural and linguistic diffusion that no language seems to be immune from undergoing significant changes, brought on by influences from the speech of neighboring groups. Thus, one of the first impressions that strikes the linguist is that *this* language—whichever language one happens to be studying—resembles in dramatic ways the surrounding languages of different language families.

The weakness of most previous linguistic work in this region (including my own) is that each study tends to treat in isolation the relationship between two language varieties. My colleagues and I did this in Zhu et al. (1997), for example, comparing the Chinese variety of Gangou Township to the Mongolic language spoken by many Gangou residents, Mangghuer. This has led to the overlooking of significant area-wide processes.

It certainly is true that intense two-language contact situations have resulted in many instances of localized contact-induced language change, and I do not mean to suggest that two-language comparisons should not be made in the Qinghai-Gansu region. However, what has often been lacking is an overview of the regional processes of linguistic feature diffusion. Such an overview, it turns out, helps quite a lot in promoting an understanding of the specific linguistic features found in local language varieties.

The Qinghai-Gansu border region contains languages descended from (at least) four different language families: Sinitic, Bodic, Mongolic, and Turkic. If we look at

the linguistic features of the region as a whole, we find that what is happening diachronically is not simply the outworking of the normal tendency of any pair of languages in intense contact to influence each other, but, rather, an overall pattern of structural convergence among all the languages.

Taken individually, most of the region's languages do not seem typologically coherent. Each has a set of linguistic features which seem to be drawn from more than one historical source. However, if we compare the structural features of languages throughout the region, we find that there is a bundle of features which is shared by most of the region's local language varieties. There is, thus, a sort of regional typological coherence, and this phenomenon is the hallmark of a prototypical *Sprachbund*, or *linguistic area*. Thomason and Kaufman (1988:96) characterize a Sprachbund as an area in which long-term multilingualism promotes "the gradual development of isomorphism (equivalence of form) in all areas of structure except the phonological shapes of morphemes."

Comparison of many studies of individual languages, and their contact-induced changes, in the Qinghai-Gansu border area suggests that precisely this phenomenon is occurring here. Taken together, the many two-language comparisons which have been made in the area show that an overall process of structural convergence is affecting all of the regional languages, such that all currently share essentially the same grammatical system, as well as many other structural features. Not all of the languages are being affected to the same degree, but the overall pattern is one of significant structural convergence. I will therefore refer to the area as the *Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund*, or *QGS*.

As far as I know, the term *Sprachbund* was first applied to the Qinghai-Gansu region by Dwyer (1995). In an earlier paper (Dwyer 1992), the same author gives an initial outline of some of the sociocultural factors which must have led to the formation of the QGS. I have developed elsewhere a more detailed expansion of this account of the social formation and structural feature bundle which characterizes the QGS (Slater MS), and I will not repeat all of those details here. However, a brief sketch is in order, to indicate both the nature of feature diffusion in the area and also something of the range of features which are currently shared by most QGS languages.

As I see it, QGS structural convergence has proceeded in two more or less independent (but probably overlapping) stages, corresponding to two different sets of social circumstances. In the earlier stage, which probably began no earlier than the mid-thirteenth century, when Mongolic speakers likely first settled in the region in significant numbers, small groups of Sinitic speakers came into sustained social contact with Mongols and Tibetans (and possibly also speakers of Turkic languages) who were farming in the region's river valleys. In this stage, the outnumbered Sinitic speakers maintained their Sinitic languages, but they gradually adopted the morphosyntactic strategies of their neighbors. The primary motivation for this was probably that large numbers of Mongolic and Bodic speakers learned Chinese, imperfectly, in order to trade with the Sinitic speakers, who had economic and political ties to the dominant Han community to the East. There was probably also significant intermarriage of Sinitic-speaking men, many of whom came to the region for military or other political reasons, to local women, which would have led to language shift on the part of many of the women, and perhaps to bilingualism on the part of their children.

In fact, it is likely that the non-native speakers of Chinese outnumbered the native speakers during much of this earlier period, since the Sinitic-speaking communities tended to be small, isolated settlements in river valleys, which certainly required significant economic interaction with their immediate neighbors. Since the Han had access to trade routes leading into the region, other local inhabitants would have had significant motivation to learn enough Chinese to carry out economic negotiations with them. As a result, the grammar of the non-native speakers' first languages gradually became the regional standard, even for Sinitic language varieties.

In the earliest part of this first stage, eastern China was under the control of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. However, it should be pointed out that although the Mongols were the ultimate rulers of the empire, they exercised local political control in outlying areas primarily by relying on the established Chinese bureaucracy, and did so primarily through Chinese-speaking officials (although they did also post Mongolian-speaking garrisons to such regions for defense, as will be shown below). The important point here is to note that, although for several decades the Mongols had political control of the empire, even during this period the primary language of government and trade in the Qinghai-Gansu border region was Chinese; this has certainly continued pretty much up through modern times.

The second stage of language contact is more recent. In the last few generations, Han Chinese influence has grown tremendously in the region, and the population of Sinitic speakers has swelled massively, through successive waves of settlement from eastern China. As Sinitic speakers have spread out from their earlier small settlements in the river valleys and gained more pervasive social influence, entire populations of neighboring groups have become highly bilingual in Chinese, which is by now the language not only of government and trade, but also of increasingly available education and mass media. In this later stage, the speakers of Mongolic and Tibetan (as well as the speakers of Salar, currently the region's only Turkic language) have borrowed massively from Sinitic in lexicon and structure.

Throughout this book, we will see evidence especially of this second stage of feature spreading, since Mangghuer is one of the languages which has adopted many Sinitic features. Here, without going into much detail, let us simply list a few of the structural features which have spread in the two waves of diffusion. The interested reader is referred to Slater (MS) for further illustration and discussion.

In the first stage, verb-final word order and other head-final morphosyntax (postpositions, suffixes, etc.) spread into Sinitic from neighboring languages. Native Sinitic morphemes were reanalyzed to perform casemarking and other Mongolic and Bodic grammatical functions. A clause-combining strategy that resembles clause chaining developed in the Sinitic varieties. There was significant borrowing of lexical items, especially of Bodic items into the languages of groups who had adopted Tibetan Buddhism—including many of the Mongolic groups. The Bodic evidential system also spread widely.

In the second stage, as Sinitic-language speakers became more socially dominant, we find massive borrowing from the Sinitic lexicon by other languages. This is accompanied by extreme phonological accommodation—so extreme that some Mongolic languages (Mangghuer, Baonan, and Santa) now have essentially Sinitic phonological systems (though without full-fledged tone systems). Many Sinitic syntactic constructions

1.2 SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CONTEXT

have also spread, such as the resultative construction and the use of a medial copula in equational clauses.

These are just a few of the features which characterize the QGS, but they should serve to illustrate the complex nature of feature diffusion in the formation of this linguistic area. After completing our study of Mangghuer, we will return in the final chapter (section 8.2) to some discussion of feature diffusion in this Sprachbund.

1.2 SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CONTEXT

In this section, I will give some further details about the environment in which Mangghuer is spoken. Aspects of both the social and physical environment will be considered, because both have been relevant to the creation and maintenance of the Mangghuer language in its current form.

The QGS area belongs to the Amdo region, at the northeastern edge of the Tibetan cultural area; Tibetan groups have lived for centuries in this area, as well as in the regions to the west and southwest. To the south and east, as the land falls in elevation, are traditional areas of Han Chinese inhabitation. To the north and northeast are lands of Mongol tribes. Finally, in the arid lands which stretch away to the northwest, Turkic groups such as the Uygur (维吾尔) are found.

The region has been referred to by various names, depending on whose perspective is being adopted. From the Tibetan perspective, it is the northeastern region named Amdo (Tibetan: *a mdo*; Chinese: *anduo* 安多). From the Chinese perspective, it is both the frontier with Inner Asia and the border with Tibetan tribes. The modern Chinese provincial name *Qinghai* (青海) translates the Mongolian word *Kökönor* (“blue lake”), which names perhaps the most prominent geologic feature of the area.

In the following sections, I will give some brief description of the historical and current sociocultural diversity of the region, emphasizing factors which are most obviously relevant to an understanding of the development of Mangghuer language. One recurrent point which will be made is this: historical documents do not seem to permit us to draw clear conclusions about the history of the Mangghuer themselves. While much speculation is possible, there is little documentary evidence which would allow definite statements about where the Mangghuer came from, what language(s) they originally spoke, whether they represent descendants of a particular group or the results of a complex intermingling of various groups, and so on. In fact, it may be that the linguistic conclusions which we can draw from this study will prove to be the strongest available evidence about Mangghuer origins.

Nonetheless, an outline may be given of some of the factors which historical studies must take into account. The beginnings of such an outline are the subject of the remainder of this section.

1.2.1 On the names *Mangghuer* and *Mongghul*

The ethnonym *Mangghuer* has been selected for the Monguor of Minhe County because that is what they generally call themselves (see Z. Chen et al. (forthcoming) for discussion). Similarly, the term *Mongghul* reflects the pronunciation of Huzhu Monguor people's

name for themselves. The first writer to begin using one of these terms appears to have been the Mongghul linguist Li Keyu, who developed and popularized, to some extent, a pinyin-based Roman orthography for Huzhu Monguor (see, for example, K. Li 1988), and began to use the spelling *Mongghul* to refer to this group and its language. At present, a large number of materials are beginning to be produced representing the Minhe Monguor language, and a similar Roman orthography has been developed. Thus, it is now possible to represent Minhe Monguor pronunciation in a standardized way, and the spelling of *Mangghuer* adopted here conforms to this newly-developed system.

My decision to use the name *Mangghuer* has been made in consultation with Zhu Yongzhong, Hu Jun, Wang Xianzhen, and Kevin Stuart. These scholars (the first three of whom are themselves Mangghuer) are currently the most prolific writers about Mangghuer language and culture, and we hope that this orthographic change will also be adopted by others who join us in our ongoing efforts to promote awareness of Mangghuer language and culture.

1.2.2 Ethnicity, population, and language use in Qinghai

At present, Mangghuer speakers live in close proximity to members of many of the cultural groups mentioned so far. Cultural and linguistic diversity go hand in hand in the region; languages from four language families are spoken in this immediate area.

Although the name of the county where most Mangghuer live—Minhe Huizu and Tuzu Autonomous County—suggests that all of Minhe County is inhabited by Mangghuer speakers (referred to in Chinese as members of the *Tu* minority), in fact, nearly all speakers of the language live in the county's southernmost areas, near the Yellow River. Zhu, Üjjiyediin, and Stuart (1995:199), citing "county records" give population figures for Minhe County in 1993. A summary for only the southern regions of the county, where most Mangghuer speakers live, is given in Table 1.1.

Members of the Hui group are Islamic, but they share the language of their Han neighbors. In these areas, then, about 36 percent of the total residents (the Han and Hui combined) may be expected to be primarily speakers of the region's northwest Mandarin dialect.

Mangghuer constitute about 56 percent of the residents of these areas. Zhu, Üjjiyediin, and Stuart (1995:198) estimate that 98 percent of all persons classified as Mangghuer can speak the Mangghuer language.

Table 1.1 Population of southern Minhe County regions

<i>Area</i>	<i>Han</i>	<i>Hui</i>	<i>Mangghuer</i>	<i>Tibetan</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Qianhe	3,739	4,106	3,746	11	11,602
Gangou	4,582	4,703	2,581	1,372	13,238
Guanting region	198	1,276	13,266	16	14,756
Zhongchuan	60	4,288	12,790	18	17,156
Xing'er	388	—	781	2,436	3,605
Xiakou	267	328	3,847	944	5,386
Totals	9,234	14,701	37,011	4,797	65,743

Tibetans are a smaller minority in this area, constituting only about 7 percent of the total population. They are primarily concentrated in Gangou and Xing'er, on the western edge of the county, and in Xiakou, at its eastern border with Gansu. Both of these regions are generally more mountainous than the Guanting and Zhongchuan areas. In Gangou and Xing'er, respectively, Tibetans constitute 10 percent and 68 percent of the population; in Xiakou, 18 percent.

Since this is the Amdo region of Tibet, the Tibetan language used by Minhe county Tibetans is an Amdo dialect. Zhu, Üjyiediin, and Stuart (1995:198) comment on language use among the Tibetan groups, saying:

Tibetans living in Xing'er Township strongly retain the Tibetan language, which is used in daily life. However, in Tibetan areas in Gangou Township, Tibetan is used mostly by people over seventy years old. Younger Tibetans generally are not able to speak Tibetan.

I have omitted from Table 1.1 a small number of members of “other” groups, including a few from the Muslim group called Salar (撒拉 *Sala*), whose language is of the Turkic family. Very few members of this latter group live in Minhe County, but to the west of the county, across a high mountain range and on the opposite side of the Yellow River, is the Xunhua Salar Autonomous County. According to Lin (1985:1), 49,000 Salar live in the Xunhua area.

Also close by, just across the Yellow River from the Mangghuer, is land inhabited by the Gansu Baonan group (保安 *Bao'an*). And just to the east of the Gansu Baonan, beyond the city Linxia, live the Santa or Dongxiang (东乡 *Dongxiang*). The Gansu Baonan number about 3,500 (C. Li 1986:174) and the Santa number about 370,000 (Field 1997). Both of these latter two groups speak languages which are similar in many ways to Mangghuer, with Mongolic basic vocabulary and morphosyntax, but with evidence of heavy influence from nearby languages, especially Chinese.

Zhu, Üjyiediin, and Stuart (1995:200) note that a number of Mangghuer also reside in nearby villages across the Yellow River in Gansu Province. They estimate that 30 percent of these speak the Mangghuer language, usually in versions closely resembling those of Minhe County.

Members of the Monguor nationality living in several nearby areas are often grouped together as “Huzhu Monguor” (at least by linguists). These areas are Huzhu, Datong, and Ledu Counties of Qinghai Province, and Tianzhu County of Gansu Province. The Monguor populations of these areas total approximately 98,250, according to Zhu and Stuart (1999:343). The vast majority of these Monguor (approximately 91,650) are concentrated in just Huzhu and Datong Counties.

Tongren County, approximately 75 km to the southwest of the Mangghuer areas, is reported by N. Chen (1987a:9–10) to have about 10,000 Monguor residents. He suggests that about three-quarters of these people use the Baonan language. Another small portion of these Tongren Monguor speak a mixed language known as Wutun.

There are also a number of Qinghai residents who are classed as members of the Mongolian nationality, though no concentration of these individuals is found in the near vicinity of Minhe County. In the Henan region (河南), to the south, a government publication reports a significant population of Mongolians, all of whom speak

Tibetan and not Mongolian (*A Brief Account of the Henan Mongolian Autonomous County* 1985:30). It is likely that this group once spoke a Mongolic language, but this is far from clear at present. In any case, residents of Qinghai report that some Qinghai Mongolians do still speak Mongolian (Kevin Stuart, personal communication (p.c.)). Unfortunately, I do not currently have access to detailed reports about language use among Mongolians in eastern Qinghai.

To the west of Qinghai Lake is another large Mongolian population; the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Chinese Linguistics* (1991:581) reports that this group speaks a Mongolic language belonging to the Oirat dialect group. Once again, I have no access to any historical discussion of their movements, nor to any description of their language.

In any case, it does seem apparent that significant numbers of Mongols have resided in the region, and that at least some of them brought Mongolic languages. It is not clear whether these languages have ever been spoken by residents of Minhe County, so we cannot say what role these Mongolic varieties might have played in the historical development of Mangghuer.

We will see in section 1.2.4 that historical records of the area do not permit definite conclusions about how long the present makeup of the area has existed. Historical reports about the region refer to many different groups, but generally do not make explicit whether ethnic, political, geographic, or linguistic criteria are used to delineate group membership. It is probable that different individuals have made reports based on different combinations of these criteria.

Additionally, many statements about the area have a sort of caricatured feel about them, which perhaps results from their being based on stereotyping reports by particular individuals. For example, Rockhill (1891:44) reports being told that “there are no Chinese living in the San-ch'uan.” In contrast, during a second trip just a few years later, Rockhill reports: “speaking to some muleteers here, I heard that in the San-ch'uan there live Chinese, T'u-jen and Mongols, the two latter races predominating” (1894:63–4).

Schram (1954:25) cites the Russian explorer Potanin (1893), writing at nearly the same time as Rockhill, as having stated:

that there are many groups of Shirongols [Monguor], some of whom live in communities of their own while others live in mixed communities. Among the Shirongols of San Ch'uan there are families of Tibetan and Chinese origin, while on the other hand some of the Shirongols have become Tibetanized.

Schram himself states that during his residence in Xining, 1911–22, he observed that “in enclaves within the Chinese population lived the Monguors, in well-defined valleys where there was little Chinese population” (1954:21).

Schram's conception of the term *Monguor* is clearly delimited by political affiliation; he refers to Monguor “clans” and notes (1954:22) that he means the term “to describe a group of people ruled by the same chief, all people born into the clan bearing the same surname as the chief of the clan and living on territory belonging to the chief.” Citing “the *Annals* of Kansu,” he mentions sixteen such clans among the Monguor, noting one as being “of Chinese extraction,” others as Turkic in origin, and some as “of Monguor extraction” (1954:31–2). One clan is described (1954:32) as

being “a small clan of 70 Muslim families of Turkish stock originating from Sinkiang [Xinjiang].” This group, Schram says, had lost its Monguor political status around 1890 and had become “ordinary Chinese subjects.”

Elsewhere, Schram cites an incident in which a particular member of a Monguor clan “enrolled in the Tibetan tribe of Waza” (1954:69), and that “in a very few years” this whole family was “already speaking Tibetan.” This account is particularly noteworthy because it accompanies a photograph of this family’s summer camp, with Schram’s own tent alongside, suggesting that his knowledge of the event was first-hand and potentially fairly detailed. Clearly, the “Monguor” category was at that time defined in a political sense which had only a limited relationship to linguistic affiliation.

In summary, then, we can conclude that substantial confusion surrounds the ethnographic history of the Monguor areas in general, and of the Mangghuer region in particular. Nonetheless, it is abundantly clear that a wide variety of groups have passed through and resided in the area, and that languages from several language families have been, and remain, in use.

In describing the complex intergroup relations which have characterized the Qinghai-Gansu region for many generations, many authors have noted the high degree of multilingualism which characterizes this interaction. In the remainder of this section, I will briefly summarize the use of multiple languages by Mangghuer and some of their near neighbors, since an understanding of this use is critical to an understanding of many language contact phenomena which we will examine in the structural and historical description of Mangghuer.

The most obvious situation of bilingualism among the Mangghuer at present is the high degree of competence in the local Mandarin dialect (usually called Qinghai dialect), and, to a lesser degree, in Standard Mandarin. Zhu, Üjiyediin, and Stuart (1995:198–9) mention several factors contributing to the continued rise in competence in Mandarin. They note:

education in Chinese, improved transportation permitting greater access to the outside world, increased availability of printed materials in the Chinese language, and greater availability of electricity, which has brought Chinese radio and television broadcasts into many Minhe Monguor homes.

However, use of Chinese differs among the members of Mangghuer society. Those with greater social mobility tend to attain higher levels of Mandarin ability. Zhu, Üjiyediin, and Stuart note, for instance, that “Tibetan and Monguor females, particularly those over the age of thirty, may not speak Chinese. This is explained by a lack of formal education and considerably less contact with the Chinese-speaking world” (1995:198).

In contrast to this, many Mangghuer have considerable contact with the Chinese-speaking world. For example, my colleagues Dr. Wang Xianzhen and Mr. Zhu Yongzhong attended colleges in Xining, where they spoke Standard Mandarin. Dr. Wang continues to practice medicine in this setting. Mr. Qing Yongzhang, another Mangghuer speaker with whom I consulted, was then a full-time instructor at the Qinghai Minorities Institute, also in Xining, where Mandarin is also the mode of interaction.

Z. Chen et al. (forthcoming) give brief ethnographic sketches of the contributors to this volume. Zhu Shanzhong, one of the Mangghuer storytellers, is described thus: “since 1984, he has traveled about once a year to work in Tibet, Xinjiang and western Qinghai mining gold, doing road work, carpentry and other jobs.” Clearly, Mangghuer such as Zhu Shanzhong, who travel extensively, must have fairly high functional ability at least in some form of Mandarin Chinese.

Historically, Mangghuer men living in the area’s important Yellow Sect lamaseries must certainly have attained significant competence in Amdo Tibetan. They also would have learned to read, with varying levels of skill, Written Tibetan. Some may also have learned some competence in speaking Central (Lhasa) Tibetan (and perhaps other dialects) as a result of contact with Yellow Sect adherents from other Tibetan areas.

It is not only the Mangghuer who are bilingual at present. Just as there are many Mangghuer who learn the language(s) of their neighbors, so do many of their neighbors learn Mangghuer; for example, Zhu, Üjyediin, and Stuart (1995:198) note: “many Hui living in close proximity to Minhe Monguor have considerable competence in Monguor.”

Other neighbors of the Mangghuer have clearly had a similar history of multilingual interaction. Concerning the Salar, for example, Rockhill gives the following report in a diary of his second trip to the area (1894:66):

To my delight I found a party of Salar muleteers stopping in the inn, and we were soon on friendly terms, especially after I had read them the few Salar words I had taken down at Hsiang-t'ang . . . They were dressed in Chinese garb, but had nothing else Chinese about them. They all spoke fluently Chinese, Mongol and Tibetan. This knowledge they said is indispensable, as nearly the whole male population is occupied driving mules from Salar pa kun to Luser [Kumbum] or Labrang gomba and the neighboring country, either carrying freight or pilgrims (chiefly Mongols) of whom large numbers visit yearly the numerous lamaist sanctuaries scattered through the mountains.

Even if this report overstates the facts, or lends too strong an impression of linguistic competence, it nonetheless may be taken as evidence of an extremely high degree of interaction among various groups at the time of Rockhill’s visit. And this seems to be consistent with most descriptions of the area’s patterns of intergroup relations.³

Regarding the current situation among Salar speakers, Kevin Stuart (p.c.) reports “a well-informed Tibetan living in Xunhua County told me in 1997 that 90 percent of Salar men over the age of 50 speak very good Amdo.” Similarly, Arienne Dwyer reports (forthcoming:59):

Most all Salar children grow up speaking Salar in the home, but may use other languages in multilingual contexts outside the home. An interesting example of this is the Eastern Salar (formerly Tibetan) village of Tángsigang (Gandu, Huàlóng county) on the north side of the Yellow River. There, children playing outside use Tibetan, even when no Tibetans are present. What once served the demands of bicultural communication now serves as a children’s jargon.

1.2.3 GEOGRAPHY

There is considerable additional evidence of such situations of bilingualism and language shift in the history of this area. For example, I have already referred to a large population in the Henan Mongolian Autonomous County, south of Minhe, near the Gansu-Qinghai-Sichuan border, who are described in an official publication as ethnic Mongolians who speak no Mongolian, but rather, speak Amdo Tibetan (*A Brief Account of the Henan Mongolian Autonomous County* 1985:30). This suggests that a large-scale shift occurred at some point in the past.

Schram's (1954:69) report, cited above, of a Monguor clan member who enrolled in a Tibetan group and was "already speaking Tibetan" quite possibly implies some sort of bilingual situation—the family may already have spoken both languages at some level of proficiency before making the political switch.

Finally, Schram (1954:23) also mentions a clan of Salars which "has lost its Turkish language and now speaks Tibetan." Reports of language shifts like this abound throughout the region.

The few comments which have been presented here by no means exhaust the available descriptions of widely-varied multilingual competence and practice in the QGS region. All the available evidence points to the conclusion that multilingualism has been the regional norm for quite a long time, as it continues to be today.

1.2.3 Geography

Minhe County lies just north of the Yellow River, about half-way between the major cities of Xining (capital of Qinghai province) and Lanzhou (capital of Gansu province). According to a county publication (*A Brief Account of the Minhe Huizu and Tuzu Autonomous County* 1986:1), the county lies between 102° 6' and 103° 4' East and between 35° 45' and 36° 26' North.

On most maps produced in China, the Yellow River forms the boundary between Qinghai and Gansu provinces at this point, so that Minhe County, on the river's northern bank, lies in Qinghai, while the opposite shore belongs to Gansu. The county also shares its eastern border with Gansu; it is thus the easternmost part of Qinghai.

This region represents a transition spot in elevation, as the steppes of north-central China give way to the mountain ranges, cut with river valleys, which rise toward the Tibetan plateau. According to U.S. Defense Mapping Agency Aerospace Center Maps (dated 1983, 1988), Lanzhou, in the Yellow River valley, lies at about 5,320 feet (1,623 meters) elevation, and Xining, in the valley of the Huangshui river, is at 7,205 feet (2,198 meters). Guanting, in the Yellow River valley at the southern edge of Minhe County, is the low spot in the county, at about 6,000 feet (1,830 meters). Immediately to the west, the mountains rise precipitously toward the highlands of Tibet, with some nearby peaks over 13,000 feet (3,965 meters) high.

Climate is in transition here, too. Blunden and Elvin (1983:11) identify four major climatic zones which intersect in this region. To the west and southwest, in the Tibetan highlands, the climate is called "high mountain and polar." Not far to the north lies a "desert" region. Stretching to the east and northeast is the dry climate of the "steppes." And, just to the south, there is a "cold temperate" region of "dry winters" and "cool summers."

A Brief Account of the Minhe Huizu and Tuzu Autonomous County (1986:1) lists the population as 95 percent agricultural in occupation. The county's major crops are highland barley, barley, spring wheat, peas, broom corn millet, millet, buckwheat, potatoes, and rapeseed (1986:67). Primary livestock (1986:80) are oxen, donkeys, mules, and horses. Pigs, sheep, and chickens are also raised by many households.

1.2.4 Monguor origins

In spite of a dearth of clear historical records, (or perhaps due to this dearth), there has been quite a bit of scholarly speculation regarding the origins of the Monguor. A recent statement on the question is K. Li (1993). The author presents three major theories of Monguor origins, but proposes no simple solution for their evaluation. Here, I will review briefly the theories and some related issues.

The first theory (K. Li 1993:7) is that the Monguor are descended from the Tuyuhun (吐谷浑). This group is mentioned in historical accounts of the region before and during the time of the Xi Xia kingdom (see below), and is thought to have spoken an Altaic language.

K. Li (1993:11–29) points out a number of problems with this theory, including these: the similarity of the names Tuyuhun and Tuzu is probably due simply to accident, since the syllable *tu* of Tuzu (土族) is used simply to mean a local native; the neighboring Tibetans, who presumably would have retained an older name for their neighbors than would the more recently-arrived Han Chinese, refer to the Monguor as *Hor*; and the Monguor themselves retain no stories about the Tuyuhun.

The second major theory is that the Monguor are descended from Mongols. This accords best with the accounts which the Mangghuer and Mongghul themselves tell. K. Li (1993:29–34) details several variations on this theory which are current among Mongghul. One variation, reported in a 1953 survey, is that the Monguor ancestors came from a place called Husijing (胡斯井) in northeastern China. Another variation, reportedly current among Mongghul of Baiya (白崖), Huzhu County, in a 1979 survey, is that their ancestors came from Alashan (啊拉善), in Inner Mongolia. A third variation, which itself has at least two versions, is that the Monguor came from Ganzhou (甘州), somewhat north of the current Monguor territory, in Gansu province.

The third theory connects the Monguor with the Shato Turks, a group frequently mentioned in historical documents from this area. K. Li (1993:10–11) points out that commentators agree on the presence of some Shato Turks among the Monguor clans, but does not give much elaboration here.

We should note, however, that K. Li does mention accounts among the Mangghuer of Minhe which suggest a Turkic connection in their past. He cites a 1953 survey which reported being told by Mangghuer that they had already been in their current location for 800 years and that their ancestors were Tartars (鞑鞞), whom K. Li connects with the Shato Turks.

The other significant commentator on Monguor origins is Schram (1954). Citing local historical documents, Schram (1954:29) writes:

During the whole Mongol period [the Yuan Dynasty] we find no references in the *Annals* concerning the presence of the Monguors in Hsining [Xining];

the first historical data available are encountered during the Ming (1368–1643) and they prove that the Monguor groups were already living in Hsining during the Mongol period, under the ancestors of their later T'u-ssu.

The “T'u-ssu” referred to here are *tusi* (土司), local officials empowered by the Ming dynasty emperors with control of the various clans in the area. When the Yuan dynasty was overthrown by popular rebellion, local clan chiefs are recorded as submitting formally to the new Ming rulers—these chiefs were named *tusi* by the Ming.

Schram's comment that there is no reference to the Monguor before the Ming means that these local chiefs who submitted to the Ming are not mentioned in Yuan or pre-Yuan records. He concludes from this that they were not present before the Yuan, and must therefore represent settlers of the Yuan era (1954:29–30). But the lack of earlier explicit reference is certainly no guarantee of lack of earlier presence.

There are some records, however, since the beginning of the Ming dynasty. Monguor clans preserved records indicating that they have been continuously present, as political entities, since the first *tusi* submitted to the Ming. Schram (1961:70–115) presents one such record, the preserved history of the Lu clan, in two volumes, both of which “start with the accession of the Ming dynasty in 1368 and end in 1850 on the death of the fifteenth ancestor of the clan” (1961:70).

As we have seen, the ethnographic history of the area is far from clear, and we cannot conclude simply that Yuan settlers moved into the area, their descendants remaining there until the present. However, it does seem plausible that such settlers form at least some part of the ancestral history of today's Monguor, both Mongghul and Mangghuer.

Of course, there were already some local residents when the Mongolians came to the frontier, though little can be deduced about their language, culture, or ethnic affiliations. Nonetheless, it seems quite likely that they, too, may have become part of the makeup of today's Mangghuer. The fact that no independent local group remains may suggest assimilation of earlier inhabitants by later settlers.

One final note that should be made here regards another theory of the origin of the Chinese name *Tuzu*. Some have speculated that this represents an extension of the designation *tusi* (the clan leader) to the members of the clan as a group, while others, as I mentioned above, have related it to the Tuyuhun. Unfortunately, there is apparently no real evidence to support either claim.

The predominantly Mongolic structures of the Mangghuer language, which will be illustrated many times throughout this book, prove that Mongolian speakers played a significant role in the historical development of this group. The language has clearly been heavily influenced by languages of other families, but this influence can be primarily attributed to a combination of intense borrowing and interference through shift, as speakers of other languages came into the Mangghuer community, which seems to have been basically preserving a form of a Mongolic language, perhaps brought to the region as early as the first years of the Yuan dynasty.

In the remainder of this section, we turn to an outline of this important period when, as far as historical documentation allows us to tell, Mongols seem to have first taken up residence in the Qinghai-Gansu area.

In the 1220s A.D., the Mongol armies of Genghis Khan conquered the Tangut Xi Xia Kingdom (西夏), to which much of present-day Gansu and Ningxia then belonged. Genghis himself is said to have died in this region, in 1227, “while subduing the last remnants of Tangut resistance” (Buell 1993a:20).

Already at that time, there was a complex mixture of groups residing in and passing through this area; yet surviving records suggest names of multiple groups without providing much evidence about any particular one. Genghis Khan’s great general Sübötei took part in the invasion of Xi Xia, and Buell (1993a:20) records his role with some uncertainty as to just whom he encountered during the campaign: “First objectives of Sübötei’s advance were the Saryġ Uighurs and other groups of the Kōkōnor area, possibly including nomadic Tibetan and Tangut tribesmen.” In another article in the same volume, Buell (1993b:473) adds:

In the mid-1220s, Sübötei, charged with advancing on Hsi-hsia [Xi Xia] from the west . . . subdued various tribes in the Kōkōnor area, including, we must assume, many of the Altaic-speaking Hor groups. Those were descendants of the Hsien-pei tribesmen of the T’u-yü-hun and other groups involved in north-south trade, who had gained the first Mongol foothold in the region.

The fact that this area has traditionally been home to nomadic groups is one natural reason for uncertainty as to which groups were here at any particular time, and the historical records do little to clear up such problems. We will see more of this below.

After the Mongols established the Yuan dynasty in China, the Amdo region remained a site of conflict. Portions of Tibet came nominally under Mongol control, but resistance remained; Petech (1993:649) notes that, for example, in 1264 “an imperial army under General Qongridar had to crush the resistance of the clans in T’u-fan, the Yüan name for Amdo.” This was not the only such event. K. Li (1993:174, my translation) reports that all of the Yuan emperors, from the first to the last

sent massive troops and important officials to occupy Hezhou [Linxia] and Xining, in order to put down disturbances among the unruly Tibetan peoples. In the sixth year of the emperor Zhiyuan (1269) Aoluchi was given the title Western Pacifying King and occupied the Lanzhou-Xining region.

The author then goes on to cite a succession of Western Pacifying Kings, ruling in this area on behalf of the Yuan emperors.

The Yuan armies most likely included no small proportion of Mongol soldiers. In addition, however, there were quite probably also conscripts from other areas under Mongol control. It was the custom of the Khan’s armies to draft into service a large number of locals when an area was conquered, and these draftees might find themselves stationed wherever the army happened to go later on. Buell (1993a:19) describes this practice during Sübötei’s campaign in Russia in about 1224:

Sübötei requested the permission of the qan to use chiliarchies levied from the various defeated groups, such as the Merkit, Naiman, Bulgar (?), Qangli and Qipčaq, to form an army under his command to hold the Qipčaq Steppe.

[Genghis] accepted this request and the proposed army was established. This event must be taken as the first instance in Russia of the Mongol *tamma*, a structure that was both a nomadic garrison force and the nucleus of a regional tribal federation in conquered domains.

In fact, this request by Sübötei immediately preceded his return to aid in the invasion of Xi Xia, mentioned above. So even the first Mongol armies to campaign in Kōkōnor quite possibly included significant numbers of Central Asians; and the later Yuan-occupying forces almost certainly did not consist solely of Mongol soldiers, since the Mongols continued to use this conscription strategy for enlarging their armies.⁴

The ethnographic history of the Qinghai-Gansu border area is extremely complex, and remains unclear even where historical records exist. This cursory discussion of just a single period intends mainly to point out that a myriad of groups have passed through, or resided in, this highly strategic area. The history of intergroup relations, which obviously has contributed much to the makeup of today's Monguor people, is clearly quite complex, and many of its details are lost. In the next section, we will see some of the current effects of this complex history, in the form of Mangghuer cultural practice, which show evidence of tremendous cultural interchange. This may serve as an indication of the range of linguistic interchange which can be expected to emerge in the remainder of this book.

1.2.5 Mangghuer cultural practices

Until recently, publications describing cultural practices among the Monguor did not generally distinguish various Monguor groups. This is true of Schram (1954, 1957, 1961), and also of Schröder (1952), although both of these authors give some indications that they are describing customs of the Mongghul area, and that they simply assume that Mangghuer customs are similar.

Since about 1991, a highly productive group of researchers in Qinghai has published a number of studies of specific Mangghuer cultural practices. Many of these papers illustrate the intense degree of cultural intermingling in which the Mangghuer have participated. Specifically, elements shared with Tibetan, Mongolian, and Han Chinese cultures have been identified. A few notes will be given here about several cultural aspects, in order to demonstrate this mixing of elements from a variety of cultural traditions.

One of these scholars, Kevin Stuart, reports (p.c.) that there are wide dissimilarities between the cultural practices of Mangghuer areas and those of Mongghul areas. Thus, we would not be justified in considering descriptions of either to be representative of the other. Here, then, I will consider only descriptions specific to the Mangghuer areas.

1.2.5.1 Wedding customs

In an article about Mangghuer weddings, Hu and Stuart (1992a:110) write:

A couple should be 'well-matched,' i.e., more or less equal in terms of education and other attributes. Nationality is also important. Tu cultural

1.2.5 MANGGHUER CULTURAL PRACTICES

traditions are complex and difficult for non-Tu to adapt to. In the event of cross-cultural marriages, Han-Tu is the most common, though rare. Qinghai Han and Tu are compatible because of a shared language (the local Qinghai Han dialect) and common cultural elements (both eat pork and share many common religious beliefs). Balancing the concept of equality are such factors as wealth and education.

Zhu et al. (1997:435) report a higher degree of intermarriage in Gangou Township: “there is much intermarriage between Gangou Monguor, Tibetan, and Han residents. In fact, ethnic classification does not mean a great deal in Gangou because an individual may have ancestors of various ethnicities.”

Wang and Stuart (1995) and Wang, Zhu, and Stuart (1995) present songs sung at Mangghuer weddings. These studies note that singing among Mangghuer males is usually in Chinese, with some Mangghuer words included, but that Mangghuer females sing some songs in Mangghuer.

1.2.5.2 Medical practices

Hu and Stuart (1992b:113–14) note medical practices stemming from several different sources. These include “local hospitals/clinics (where both traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine doctors practice)” and also local healers of several types. Some of these are the *Mamba*, who practices “traditional Tibetan medicine,” the *Fala*, who enters a trance to become a medium for a spirit (“most commonly the Daoist deity Erlang,”) and the *Yangjiangui*, a type of healer of whom the authors learned of only one individual—“a Han woman in her fifties.”

1.2.5.3 Religion

The religious practices of the Mangghuer also show influences from a variety of sources. Hu and Stuart (1992b:112) comment that

In terms of religion, the Tu have been much influenced by the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism (founded by Tsongkapa in the late 14th century), but also retain many elements of Daoism, shamanism, and animism.

In the same article, these authors further note (1992b:125): “Two types of temples are common in the region—Daoist and that of the Yellow Sect, and many villages have both.”

Stuart and Hu (1992) discuss Mangghuer death and funeral practices, again making reference to religious traditions drawn from several sources.

Louis M.J. Schram lived in the Xining area from 1911 to 1922, and reports (1957:6) on the importance of Tibetan lamaseries in Monguor life at that time: “nearly every Monguor family has one of its members, a son or an uncle, enrolled in the lamaseries.” Schram’s description is probably of the Huzhu area, so we cannot conclude that Mangghuer were enrolled in lamaseries in the same proportions. However, Zhu and Stuart (1999:369) confirm that a large number of Mangghuer males historically entered

the lamaseries. In addition to exemption from military conscription, the authors mention several economic motivations for this pattern: monks earned money and had food provided for them, and “parents were relieved of the worry of providing for a son’s marriage” or of including him as an heir, which could mean splitting up a small land inheritance among multiple sons. Although no overall percentage is estimated, the authors conclude: “typically, if a family had four sons, one stayed home to do fieldwork, while the other three became monks.”

1.2.5.4 *A festival*

An important festival in the Mangghuer calendar is the *nadun*, which Stuart and Hu (1993:15) describe as “a village-level harvest festival held from the twelfth of the seventh moon to the fifteenth of the ninth moon.” The origins of this festival, they suggest, “may be in the festival nomadic Mongolians observe entitled *na:dam*” though the authors point out that this origin is far from certain.

Further description of the *nadun* festival can be found in Stuart and Hu (1991), which describes the role of the *Fala* trance medium in course of the *nadun*.

1.2.5.5 *Literacy and education*

Only a small handful of Mangghuer speakers—perhaps half a dozen—have attempted to work with a written form of this language. Among other Mangghuer, there is no literacy at all in the Mangghuer language.

Formal education is conducted in Chinese, although Zhu and Stuart (1999:372) report that some local teachers speak Mangghuer in the first three grades. The goal of formal education is to produce literacy in Written Chinese, and to enable students to advance to higher educational levels through the entrance examination system.

Formal education is not available to all Mangghuer, for a variety of reasons, though many do live within walking distance of at least a primary school. The current and historical educational situation has been described in some detail by Zhu and Stuart (1999), and I will not repeat their observations here, except to highlight a few salient points.

First, although the Monguor (as they are politically defined) have the highest educational levels among Qinghai’s minority groups, only 45 percent of them are reported to have received at least some formal schooling (Zhu and Stuart 1999:345).

The situation has improved somewhat in recent years. Zhu and Stuart (1999:364–5) report that in 1985, 91 percent of elementary-aged children in Minhe County were enrolled in school. However, local school conditions are extremely poor, and long-term achievement is generally not high, so that many Mangghuer children do not continue in school for very long. Zhu and Stuart note (1999:370) “many parents reason that if there is little chance for children to pass the higher education entrance examination, the long-term investment needed to sustain a child through upper secondary school provides no more advantages in life than the basic literacy obtained through attending elementary school for a few years.”

Thus, while there is basic literacy in Written Chinese among many younger Mangghuer, this skill is by no means universal.

1.3 THE PRESENT STUDY

1.2.6 Discussion

The discussion of the social and physical context presented in this section has intended to show that the environment in which the Mangghuer live is linguistically, culturally, and ethnically complex. Furthermore, this complexity has been a lasting feature of the entire region, at least since the earliest detailed historical records.

Thus, it is impossible to describe in much detail just what the history of the Mangghuer themselves has been. Most accounts suggest that Mongolians played a significant part in the formation of the Mangghuer, and the linguistic study of this book will be seen to support this. However, it seems inescapable that significant intermingling between various ethnic groups has been a feature of the region for centuries, as it remains today. The ancestors of the Mangghuer probably included members of many other groups besides Mongolians, even from an early date. These groups may have included some of the earliest residents of the area, whose ethnic and linguistic affiliations have only been guessed at by historical commentators.

It is clear, though, that cultural practices among the Mangghuer today are drawn from at least these traditions: Tibetan, Han Chinese, and Mongolian. There may be other cultural traditions represented in current practices, as well. For example, since so little is known about the prehistory of the area, we should not rule out the possibility that some practices survive from pre-Yuan inhabitants.

A linguistic study of the sort undertaken in this book can certainly not be expected to clear up the historical issues raised here. However, the linguistic evidence which we will see in the following chapters does in fact seem to support the account which I have given (section 1.1.4) of a two-stage diffusion of linguistic features in the QGS region, and thus serves as evidence for evaluating some of the historical proposals which have been reviewed in this discussion.

1.3 THE PRESENT STUDY

1.3.1 Goals, philosophy, and methods

Descriptive and historical discussions in this book are framed, to the extent possible, in the terms used in typological studies of language. My basic perspective is similar to that of, for example, Croft (1990), whose work falls into the typological tradition founded by Joseph Greenberg (see especially Greenberg 1966; 1978). A broad approach to language typology can also be found in Shopen (1985). The basic philosophy of these works and their approach to terminology and description have heavily influenced my own work.

My perspective on syntactic and morphological change has been influenced significantly by the study of grammaticalization, and this perspective shapes many parts of the historical discussion. Grammaticalization theory is introduced well in Hopper and Traugott (1993) and in Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer (1991).

An adequate account of the formal structures of a language entails, in my opinion, a description of the functions for which those structures are used. Similarly, an adequate account of the synchronic state of a language entails a description of the factors, both external and internal, which influenced the language's development in