

Reading China's "Other" through Learning Chinese: The Portrayal of Minorities in Chinese as a Second Language Textbooks

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This paper looks at a group of thirteen Chinese language (CSL) textbooks for foreign students. It focuses on analyzing the representation of Chinese ethnic minority groups, revealing that when present in CSL texts, they present the foreign student with a picture of minorities that sing and dance, are rural, and have unique traditional customs and festivals. This paper also reviews much of the discourse regarding stereotypes and changes in ESL/EFL and other language textbooks and relates this to the case of minorities in CSL texts. It concludes that similar to the concern for political correctness in other language texts, the portrayal of minorities in CSL texts is also politically correct, but in a different sense. Currently, attitudes about minorities in China, unlike the compulsive assimilation policies of the Cultural Revolution, emphasizes minority characteristics and celebrates the diversity they add to China and this is seen in the presentation of minorities in CSL texts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The post-Mao rise of China as a world power has also witnessed the rise of the Chinese language as a sought-after commodity and the teaching of Chinese to foreign students as a rapidly growing industry. Statistics show that presently more foreign students are studying in the PRC than Chinese students studying abroad (Johnson 2005). Realizing that Chinese as a second language (CSL)¹ students of today are tomorrow's business partners, diplomats, or academicians, the Chinese state is obviously and justifiably concerned with the image of China in the eyes of these students. One aspect of this image is the representation of China as a multi-national state with numerous ethnic minority groups.² This present research combines aspects of official attitudes toward foreign students in China and perceptions of these ethnic groups through looking at how minorities are portrayed in CSL textbooks.

This paper is unique in at least two regards. First of all, very little research in English has been carried out on the social or cultural content of CSL texts. The US-based *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association* focuses on teaching Chinese to non-native speakers, but it rarely mentions the non-linguistic aspects of CSL texts. There is a literature within China (in Chinese) which discusses CSL texts (usually focusing on CSL as an industry), but within these articles and volumes, I could find no reference addressing issues of minorities in CSL texts.³ This paper, then, hopes to address this gap by presenting an analysis of one socio-cultural aspect in CSL texts, that of the representation of Chinese minorities.

The second way this study differs from others is that it focuses on the presentation of minorities to foreign students. Many western anthropologists have researched issues of ethnicity

¹ The CSL moniker is derived from ESL or EFL (English as a second/foreign language). Since the majority of texts discussed in this paper were produced within China and are mostly used there, I have chosen to refer to them as CSL texts. Potentially, if these texts were employed in language classes outside of China, they could be referred to as CFL texts, but for matters of simplicity, this paper will rely on terming them CSL.

² The issue of how to translate the Chinese term *minzu* or *shaoshu minzu* is contentious and debated by Western anthropologists (for example, see Gladney 2004: 35-7). The intricacies of this debate are outside the scope of this paper. Throughout this paper, I use "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" to refer to *minzu* and "minority," "minorities," or "ethnic minority" to represent *shaoshu minzu*.

³ However, there is discussion regarding the teaching of Chinese "culture" to foreign students, more focusing on the classroom, but also mentioning how this should be included in CSL texts [for example, see Chen (2000), Li (2005), and Piao (2005)].

and what this means within China, both for minorities themselves and also for the majority Han. Some even mention efforts to present minorities to foreigners,⁴ but this is usually a side issue, complimenting their greater interest in ethnicity within China's borders. Very few have focused their analysis on how minorities are presented to foreigners. This analysis will provide another angle in the understanding of Chinese reproduction of minority identities through looking at how these are portrayed to the foreign student as audience.

This paper will first offer a background on official views of the foreign student in China. Next, it will look at some analysis of ESL/EFL and other language textbooks before presenting the finding of minorities in CSL texts. By looking at how issues of stereotypes and ethnicity in these other textbooks are investigated, one can begin to understand how to approach minorities in CSL texts. However, this paper will argue that merely applying the existing framework for ESL/EFL and other language textbook analysis is not sufficient for gaining a balanced understanding of CSL texts. Instead, knowledge of minorities in China and Chinese society as a whole can aid in generating a more nuanced view of minorities in CSL texts. For this reason, section six will incorporate how minorities in China are represented both today and in the past with possible interpretations of the findings from section five. Finally, before the conclusion, one chapter of a CSL text will be looked at in greater detail in order to apply some of the interpretations given in the preceding section.

2. THE CHINESE STATE AND THE FOREIGN STUDENT

The first CSL texts produced in the PRC were written in 1950 when the state appointed teachers, who were assigned the task of teaching a group of Eastern European students studying in Beijing, to create textbooks for these students (Zhao 1993: 131). A more formal set of CSL texts was compiled by Beijing University and issued later in the decade (*ibid*). The content in these early texts was markedly political in nature (*ibid*: 132). In the early 1980s, as China's reforms began to open up the country, attracting more foreign students, CSL texts began to change, diversifying their contents in order to seem more appealing (Du 1993: 124-5). Today's texts are

⁴ For example, Gladney (2004) talks about art depicting minority women that has become popular outside of China and Oaks (1997) discusses tourism in minority areas, which are also frequented by foreign tourists.

much more practical and less overt in their politics. However, as with many ESL/EFL (or other) textbooks (discussed below), modern CSL texts have been criticized for presenting a sanitized version of society. Hodge and Louie (1998: 27) describe CSL texts as constructing

a world of courteous friends, helpful shopkeepers and polite bus conductors. There is no desire or fear, alienation or attraction, no death, no sex, no crime, no suffering, no conflict.... There is no one who says anything with which anyone could disagree, nothing therefore with which one could even really be interested or engaged.

While state involvement in CSL teaching existed from the beginning of the PRC, the relationship became even more intimate in 1987 when, under the auspices of China's Education Bureau, the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (often referred to as the *hanban*) was established.⁵ This office, composed of the leaders of many departments of the State Council, intended to standardize CSL teaching and help promote Chinese as a world language. Lü Bisong (1993: 187) explains that “the establishment of the *hanban* office reflect[ed] the increasing emphasis the government [placed] on the development of the CSL industry.” The office was entrusted with promoting CSL as an industry and specifically with fostering new teaching materials.⁶

Today, the *hanban* office has grown in importance and function as more foreign students are studying in China. Concern for the teaching materials is still a major aspect of this office. According to stated objectives, a main responsibility (listed first) involves “editing and compiling teaching materials and promoting their application.”⁷ Recently, the *hanban* has commissioned a new undertaking—establishing “Confucius Institutes” in strategically selected cities throughout the world. Like the *hanban* as a whole, a specified goal of these centers is “promoting Chinese teaching materials.”⁸ The importance the central government places on the teaching of CSL is seen in the remarks of former vice premier, Qian Qichen, who described fostering CSL students as “an important component of our country's diplomacy” (quoted in Liu, et al. 2000: 98). Other official speeches talk of using CSL to shape foreign students into “friends

⁵ 国家对外汉语教学领导小组办公室（汉办）。

⁶ For example, soon after its creation, the *hanban* convened a conference which drafted “1988-1990 CSL Teaching Materials Plan” (“1988-1990 年对外汉语教材规划”).

⁷ As seen on the *hanban* website: <http://english.hanban.edu.cn/market/HanBanE/412336.htm>.

⁸ <http://english.hanban.edu.cn/market/HanBanE/412360.htm>.

of China” who “correctly understand China.”⁹ As the above demonstrates, official policy holds foreign students in high regard.¹⁰

3. PREVIOUS LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS

In this section, I will offer a brief background on language textbook analysis, specifically looking at how stereotypes have been examined and criticized in language texts. In the 1960s, a feminist rethinking of societal power relations led researchers, fearing dominant stereotypes were being reinforced through the education system, to begin to analyze textbook contents (U’Ren 1971; Saario, *et al.* 1973; O’Donnell 1973). Textbook authors, editors, and publishers began to consciously consider how women, minorities, disabled, or other marginalized groups were shown (or if they were shown) in the texts they produced. Sleeter and Grant (1991: 101) claim this rethinking led to “a flurry of activity to ‘multiculturalize’ textbooks during the late 1960s and early 1970s.”

This type of analysis soon prodded researchers to look specifically at English language textbooks for non-native speakers. Hartman and Judd (1978) conducted one of the first of such studies, looking at sexism in ESL texts. Their research results showed that male characters were used more often in textual dialogues, illustrated more often, and that overall, these texts perpetuated stereotyped roles for both males and females. Other studies followed, most focusing on gender to show inequality in the texts. Porreca (1984) collected empirical evidence, by carrying out a quantitative and qualitative analysis through evaluating the number of times females spoke, which characters (male or female) spoke first in dialogues, the omission of females, etc, in the 15 most widely used ESL texts.¹¹ Clarke and Clarke (1990) furthered the

⁹ For example, see *duiwai hanyu yanjiu zhongxin gaikuang* (n.d.) and *jiaoyubu guanyu yinfa....* (2000). State concern regarding the instruction of foreign students is also demonstrated in Hayden’s review of the American-published Chinese text *All Things Considered*. Here he explains that an American school’s language program in China was forced to change its choice of text because it “put China and the Chinese people in an unfavorable light” (2003: 80).

¹⁰ The hanban office, in its promotion of Chinese, is in many ways not unlike the British Council, but on a lesser scale. For a discussion of the role the British Council has played (and does play) in promoting English worldwide, see Phillipson (1992).

¹¹ Although this is not mentioned in Porreca’s article, it seems that the claim that the ESL texts she investigated were the 15 most widely used should be qualified—limited to the US.

analysis by including race and class, along with gender, in their critique of power imbalances in ESL/EFL texts. They claimed that often times non-white ethnic groups were represented “tokenistically” and found that the texts had numerous “discrepancies with social reality” (1990: 37 and 41).

As was the case with general education textbooks, the imbalance found in ESL/EFL texts¹² has led those involved with creating these texts to be more conscious of how women, minorities, handicapped, or other groups often stereotyped were portrayed. For example, British EFL teachers organized the “Women in EFL Materials” committee,¹³ which established guidelines for authors/editors/publishers to follow with the goal of producing less bias in EFL texts. Van Zante claims that a British author of EFL material was required by the publisher to have “a quota of characters of different races on each page” (quoted in Stanley 2001). Likewise, in the US, many states have tried to legislate textbook content to be more multi-cultural and less biased. For example, Adams (1996: 11) reports that California requires ESL texts to represent “ethnic and cultural groups...roughly in proportion to their numbers in the general population.” Paulston anecdotally tells of a publisher who, according to official (publisher) policy, made her “desex” a chapter in an ESL book that depicted an Ohio farm with a mother cooking dinner and a father working in the fields (1992: 72).

Current scholars analyzing ESL/EFL texts, while still at times critical and not completely satisfied with the voice or visibility these groups receive, do concede that publishers and writers are at least consciously aware of how their texts demographically represent the society they are depicting. For example, one scholar claims that “sexism has been eliminated to a great extent in [ESL] materials...in the past 15 years” (Firsten, quoted in Stanley 2001). The review of legislative action and political pressure presented in Adams’s (1996) article also suggests that much attention has been given to this topic.

Briefly looking at examples of three texts from different periods may help illustrate how ESL/EFL texts have evolved. In 1956, Taylor published *Mastering American English*, an early ESL text. This book includes 92 different characters, but none of them are African-American (Adams, 1996). Two decades later, Samelson’s (1975) *English as a Second Language, Phase*

¹² For further studies of ESL/EFL imbalances, see Hellinger (1980), Jones, et al. (1997), Ansary and Babaii (2003), and Méndez García (2005).

¹³ This committee is a subgroup of “Women in TEFL,” established in 1986. For more information see Jones, et al. (1997) and Florent and Walter (1989).

Two: Let's Read includes a story of a black teenager, Curtis Smith, and his white friend Mike Campbell. Curtis's family had nine children and lived on "the wrong side of the tracks,' as the saying goes" (1975: 50). The text tells of how Curtis was arrested for breaking into stores and stealing money. Mike's father, a lawyer, defends Curtis in court and wins his release when it is shown that Curtis was donating the stolen money to his football team's charity program.

The final example, taken from the *Reach Out* series (Addes 1982), demonstrates a heightened awareness of being culturally inclusive in textbooks. Adams (1996: 11) describes an illustration from this book:

The setting is an urban street corner. A medical doctor is crossing the street at the intersection. A police officer is directing traffic. A pharmacist is talking to a butcher. A carpenter is talking to a gardener. A mail carrier is delivering letters. Two children are playing softball. Another child is riding a bicycle. The MD, the carpenter, and the biker are females: two are Asian and one is Caucasian. The police officer, the pharmacist, the mail carrier, and the butcher are males: three are Black and one is Caucasian. One of the children playing ball is a Black female; the other is a Caucasian male.

These three examples demonstrate the growing concern felt by authors and publishers to attempt to be less biased in the textbooks they produce.

Soon after researchers began critically looking at stereotypes in ESL/EFL texts, others took up the charge by branching out into analysis of texts for students studying other languages.¹⁴ Freudenstein's (1978) edited volume was an early work discussing instances of sexism and gender bias found in foreign language texts.¹⁵ Poulou (1997), focusing on Greek language texts, also uncovered examples of textual sexism. Schmitz, who reviewed French language textbooks, diagnosed the problem: "Women in real life travel, engage in sports, have serious conversations, solve major and minor problems, use initiative, and fix things." She then critically asks, "Why can't we see this in textbooks?" (1975: 127). Starkey and Osler, also looking at French language materials, argue that racism was reinforced through the texts they analyzed. Although they found that creators of the material tried to include an "ethnic minority perspective," the language used did not encourage the students to "challenge the fact that [the] terms are racialized" (2001: 318).

¹⁴ For an overall review of the literature on analysis of bias in foreign language texts up through the 1980s, see Graci (1989).

¹⁵ This volume contains analysis of English, German, Spanish, French, Italian, and Dutch language texts.

Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) investigated identity options in Russian language texts and discovered oversimplified identities “imposed” on the learners through these texts. In referencing Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, they claim that “those in power oftentimes do the imagining for the rest of their fellow citizens [by] offering them certain identity options and leaving other options ‘unimaginable’” (2004: 29).

In recent analyses of Japanese, Thomas and Otsuji found that texts for non-native speakers present the student with Japanese biases that reinforce “dominant cultural and social representations” (2003: 187).¹⁶ They claim that male-dominance is inordinately acute in Japanese business texts for foreigners, leading them to pose the question: How can texts such as these be appropriate for female foreign students?

However, as we saw with analysis of ESL/EFL texts, researchers are reporting that other language materials are also attempting to be more sensitive to identities of those presented in the texts (Kramsch and von Hoene 1998; Shardakova and Pavlenko 2004). For example, Starkey and Osler (2001) report on a French language program for English speakers. Materials for this course include discussion of Algerian immigrants to France and students are encouraged to consider “who are these immigrants and how do they feel about and adapt their lives to living in France?” (translated from the text by Starkey and Osler 2001: 318). They conclude that “there is, then, a specific attempt to provide an ethnic minority perspective in the course materials” (*ibid*).

Despite the noted changes, overall, the framework constructed in these analyses of ESL/EFL and other language texts often criticize the texts for presenting the student with “a mightily idealized voice, ostensibly unaffected by all the vagaries of race, gender, or class” (Kramsch and von Hoene 1998: 335). All too often, it seems, the assumptions these criticism rest upon are not questioned. Here, I would like to investigate some (but not necessarily all) of these assumptions. This, then, may help us in interpreting the findings of minority representation in CSL texts in a more nuanced way.

First of all, criticism of biases or stereotypes found in language texts assumes that these texts should adhere to a different standard than that found in the texts. For example, Thomson and Otsuji (2003) are quite critical of Japanese business texts for foreign students because they provide a biased view toward females—those in higher business positions in these Japanese texts

¹⁶ Armour (1998) also analyzed Japanese texts, finding they only present the student with ideal situations.

are disproportionately male. Thomson and Otsuji argue that, since most of their students (Business Japanese students at Australian universities) are female, these texts are not suitable.¹⁷ However, as is seen in the statistics they provide, over 90% of division managers and over 60% of supervisors in Japanese companies are male.¹⁸ Challenging Thomson and Otsuji's criticism gets at the heart of much of the research on stereotypes in language textbooks and suggests the question: Should these textbooks portray reality or an idealistic society?

Adams (1996) raises a similar question in his assessment of Porreca's (1984) evaluation of ESL texts. In his response, Adams states:

Porreca's assertions...imply that under-representation or omission of members of any group constitutes an affront to that group. The only way to avoid giving offense is to include members from each and every group in proportion to their numbers in the general population. Such a practice is impractical... (underline in original)

Throughout his article, Adams refers to the "reality" versus "ideal" debate as "accuracy" versus "fairness." While he doesn't necessarily advocate for one over the other (although his criticism of Porreca seems to suggest he favors "accuracy"), he does make it clear that today's ESL/EFL texts have sacrificed accuracy in their quest to be fair to less dominant groups (whether they be females, minorities, etc.). The examples of the "desexed" Ohio farm and the multi-cultural street corner illustration noted above suggest that concern for political correctness is altering these language texts.

Secondly, the analytical framework used in these studies often seems to overemphasize the power of the text. More recent scholarly discussion has begun to question the role of the text in the language classroom. For instance, while not dismissing the text as unimportant, Sunderland (2000) raises the point that the role of the text should be viewed as dynamic, not limited to what is explicitly written in the text. She (along with Jones, et al. 1997) gives numerous examples of how the content of a text could be transformed in a language class. For example, a teacher, dealing with a text with more male dialogues could switch roles, having females practice male roles and males read female roles. Or biases in textbooks could be used by the teacher to start a discussion about stereotypes.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ironically, Thomson and Otsuji seem to suggest that if most of their students were male, these stereotyped texts would then be suitable.

¹⁸ Thomson and Otsuji cite these figures from 2000-2001 based on statistics from the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare.

¹⁹ Also see Rifkin (1998).

Related to this is the role the student plays in receiving the text. This is especially relevant for students using CSL texts, who tend to be college-aged adults (as opposed to elementary school or younger students), more apt to recognize stereotypes and biases found in the texts they use. Many of the reports referenced above do not acknowledge this important point, but seem to regard students as passive victims who will automatically accept and perpetuate the stereotypes found in the texts they use.

4. GENERAL ANALYSIS OF MINORITIES IN CSL TEXTS

I began this project already having three CSL texts with mention of minorities in my possession. However, in order to gain a greater and more representative sample, I searched bookstores in China. In the summer of 2005, I spent two full days looking through texts in numerous bookstores in Beijing, and three afternoons looking at CSL texts in Yantai, Linyi (both in Shandong), and Lanzhou (Gansu). In addition to the texts collected in China and those I previously had, after returning to the States, I located one more text through a library database search at the University of Pittsburgh. A rough estimate of the total number of texts I examined, looking for references to minorities, would be over 500. In total, I selected 13 texts to analyze in this study.²⁰ All of these texts are intermediate or advanced level texts.

I do not claim this selection of texts to be exhaustive. In fact, the sheer number and rate at which CSL texts are being published makes this an impossible goal. However, I do feel these texts are representative of CSL texts with discussion of minorities for three reasons. First of all, the total number of texts I went through which did not include (sufficient) information on minorities adds legitimacy to these 13 texts as being representative of those that do include this topic. Secondly, as this paper will show, the content of these texts tends to reinforce each other, with certain groups and characteristics being mentioned in many, at times most, of the texts. Furthermore, since all CSL texts must be approved through official channels, difference may be

²⁰ I did find some CSL texts referencing minorities but, because of the brevity of the reference, are not included in this study. For example, *A New Chinese Course Book* (Huang 1996) includes a character, presumably Han, who mentions he will go to graduate school to study “minority history.” In this case, nothing further is said about minorities in this text, so it is not included in this analysis. In contrast, as discussed below, all but one of these 13 texts devotes a whole chapter to a minority topic.

further whittled down, lending credibility to these 13 as being representative. While there are some differences in these 13 texts, it would be surprising to find a CSL text that treated minorities in an explicitly different way than these texts.

This study is different than many of those done on ESL/EFL or other language texts highlighted in the preceding section. Paulston (1992: 70-3) criticizes Hartman and Judd, and her criticism can be applied to many of the other analysis cited above, for purposely selecting texts they knew included stereotyped portrayals to analyze and even selecting specific passages of these texts.²¹ She argues that this style of analysis manipulates textual content to adhere to a preconceived agenda. In contrast, while collecting the texts for this analysis, my goal was to find as many textual references to minorities as possible. I did not allow the content of the reference to disqualify texts from the analysis. Furthermore, I looked at all mention of minorities in these texts, and did not simply single out small passages to the neglect of others.

What is most noticeable regarding the representation of minorities in CSL texts is not how these people or groups are portrayed, but rather that they are *not* portrayed. Reference to or depictions of minorities are absent in most CSL texts. In fact, after looking through hundreds of CSL texts, I could find less than twenty texts with any mention of minorities. This point is surprising considering the toleration of ethnic differences and revival of interest in minorities that, in direct contrast to the Cultural Revolution period, has characterized reform era China. In section five of this paper, I will briefly discuss how minority issues have waxed and waned in importance (from different points of view). Also, in section six, I will begin to unpack possible reasons for the omission of minorities in today's CSL texts.

I will now turn to discuss some noticeable characteristics of those texts that do included discussion of Chinese minorities. First of all, 12 of the 13 texts analyzed in this study devote a single chapter to the topic of minorities.²² Three of these limit their approach to one specific minority group,²³ while the other ten texts discuss more than one group. Two of the texts do not mention a specific minority group, but rather look at the broad category of *shaoshu minzu*

²¹ It should be noted that not all ESL/EFL or other language textbook analyses were completed in such a fashion. For example, Porreca (1984) chose the most commonly used (in the US) texts to analyze.

²² The only text that does not do this, number 7, is not divided into chapters in the conventional sense. This text mentions minorities in three different sections of the book. Text number 10 also briefly talks about minority wedding customs and jewelry in two other chapters, but the major discussion on minorities is found in one chapter.

²³ Texts numbered 3, 8, and 9.

(minority nationalities).²⁴ The distinct labeling and division of individual minority groups seems apparent in these CSL texts and five of the texts give population statistics for the groups (or minorities in general).²⁵ For example, in *China's Cultural Heritage*, the student is told that the Han account for “91.96%” of China’s (mainland) population. The specific minority groups that are found in these texts and their frequency can be found in the table in Appendix B.

The most common characteristic associated with minorities in these texts is singing and dancing. For example, *China's Cultural Heritage* says, “China’s minorities are ethnic groups good at singing and dancing. The lives of minorities are unable to depart from singing and dancing.” These two activities are only clearly distinguished from one another in one of the texts. *Bridge*, vol. I tells of Wang Luobin collecting folksongs in the northwest, not directly connecting this with minority dance.²⁶ In total, ten of the texts include mention of minority song/dance.²⁷ Often related to singing and dancing is another characteristic of minorities as seen in these texts—festivals. Over half (seven) of the texts describing minorities also describe minority festivals.²⁸ Each of these texts tells of the Dai Water Splashing Festival. Other common minority festivals are the Mongolian Nadam Fair and the Torch Festival of the Yi and Bai groups.

Minorities in these texts are also characterized as “traditional” and with unique “customs and habits.” This is most obvious in the use of the Chinese terms *chuantong* (traditional) and *fengsu xiguan* (customs and habits). *Chuantong* is found 13 times in the chapters dealing with minorities and *fengsu xiguan* appears 12 times. For example, text number one says: “Many ethnic groups have their own *fengsu xiguan*; in many aspects of everyday life they have preserved their own *chuantong* characteristics.”²⁹

Furthermore, minorities in CSL texts are principally depicted in rural settings. Only one text (number six), places minorities in an urban setting—as students on a university campus. Related to this, the most common occupation associated with minorities in these texts is animal husbandry. For example, vol. I of *Bridge* describes a Tibetan maiden who “under the blue sky

²⁴ Texts numbered 1 and 4.

²⁵ Texts numbered 1, 4, 5, 6, and 10.

²⁶ Some other texts somewhat delineate singing and dancing, especially when talking about courtship songs (*duige*). However, in each instance, a sentence about dance is immediately preceding or following mention of singing.

²⁷ Texts numbered 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

²⁸ Texts numbered 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

²⁹ 很多民族都有自己的风俗习惯，在日常生活中的许多方面都保留着自己的传统特点。

and white clouds, on the green grassland...takes her whip and sends the flock out [to pasture]. The sheep around her 'ba' and slowly move forward like the clouds in the sky." Outside of the students mentioned above, only once in these texts has a minority member portrayed in any other occupation; another section of *Bridge* presents a Uyghur man who works as a driver.

A final characteristic of minorities in CSL texts is their lack of voice. Only one of these texts (number six), presents the foreign student with dialogue from a minority member. The other twelve texts offer a Han, unidentified person (or narrator), or a foreign student talking about minorities. Many of these texts use dialogue as a format and the absence of minority voice is even more apparent when contrasted with other chapters in these texts. For example, in other chapters of *Elementary Chinese Course*, characters talk about going overseas to study and discuss China's middle school education, but the chapter on minorities includes only a Chinese teacher and three foreign students.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE ANALYSIS

This section will comment on the findings of the analysis found in the preceding section, offering possible interpretations of why minorities in CSL texts are presented this way. It is important to be cognizant of the audience for these texts, foreign students, and the nature of foreign language texts while presenting possible interpretations of the analysis. The fact that little space and limited vocabulary is available for authors means that the tendency is to generalize in the presentation of any topic, including minorities (Starkey and Osler 2001). To more fully understand the specificities of the case of Chinese language texts, the reader of this section will also be reminded of the history of the PRC and the vacillating official attitudes towards minorities. In addition, much of this interpretation will reference (Western) anthropological research done on minorities in China.

As mentioned above (in section two), the content of CSL texts prior to the Reform Era (1978-present) was quite political. One example can help illustrate the difference between how these older texts treated minorities as compared to how they are portrayed in current CSL texts. The main series of CSL texts used in the 1970s was *Chinese Reader*, published in 1972 by the Commercial Press in Beijing. Volume II of this series contains a chapter describing two young

Mongolian sisters caught in a blizzard while tending sheep on the grassland.³⁰ During this perilous hardship, the girls encouraged each other with thoughts of “Uncle Lei Feng.” They are finally rescued by their parents and the production team chief, who, for their concern for the welfare of the sheep (they even asked about the sheep while still in the hospital), tells the girls that they “really are Chairman Mao’s children.” We can see from this story that even though minority characters are used, the focus is more political than anything else.

It is interesting to compare this story to a modern CSL text. *Meeting in China* also describes minorities tending sheep on the grassland. Chapter 15 highlights the charming scenery of the Kazakh grasslands, the unique ornaments worn by Kazakh female herders, the love songs sung by these maidens, and the generous hospitality of the Kazakh people shown in their opening of their yurts to outsiders. Unlike the example of the Mongolian children above, all of these characteristics in *Meeting in China* are meant to separate the Kazakhs, featuring their unique culture by describing them as distinct from the Han (and other groups).

This evolution of minorities in CSL texts highlighted by these examples mirrors how minorities were treated in China in general. Beginning with the Anti-Rightists Campaign (1957) and even more so during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), ethnicity was downplayed as everyone, regardless of *minzu*, was encouraged to unite as one. Prior to this, the PRC government had adopted a policy of “gradualism,” allowing, because of “special” circumstances, for certain minorities or minority areas to gradually implement some of the policies carried out in Han areas (Dreyer 1968). However, this policy was (temporarily) abandoned in favor of a more “Red,” or revolutionary, approach to dealing with “ethnic questions” (*minzu wenti*). Schein quotes Mao as saying a “desire for unity” would be sufficient to overcome these problems (2000: 86). Dreyer (1968: 100) explains that “in order to avoid the criticism of over-emphasizing the special characteristics of minorities, it was preferable not only to avoid acting as if they still existed, but in fact to avoid mentioning special characteristics at all. At least on paper, the minorities were henceforth treated as though they were inseparable from the Han.”

This is quite different from the picture we see of minorities in today’s China. Schein describes Reform Era China in this way: “In keeping with the reversals that marked the renunciation of the Cultural Revolution, minority cultures, rather than being suppressed or forced

³⁰ This series has a total of four volumes. This is the only instance in the series where minority characters are used.

into the mainstream, [are] perhaps more than ever before fostered and promoted” (2000: 88). However, this celebration of diversity in today’s China is not exactly consistent with minorities in current CSL texts. On the one hand, the texts analyzed in this project do show minorities as distinct from the Han, with their own “special characteristics,” decidedly contrary to Dreyer’s assessment of minorities in the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, though, overall, CSL texts have not followed the current trend of promoting China’s ethnic diversity. The vast majority of current CSL texts have no mention of minorities.

If in today’s China ethnic diversity is celebrated, why don’t we see this in CSL texts? I offer two straightforward responses that may help explain the absence of minorities in CSL texts. First of all, while the Reform Era started over a quarter century ago, I think it may take more time for the celebration of diversity seen in society at large to trickle down into CSL texts. To be sure, the ethnic resurgence did not occur immediately after the reforms began in 1978, but has been building since this time. It should be remembered that the texts collected here were all published in a six year span (1999-2005). This necessarily “freezes” the content of these texts, limiting it to this time period. While Han attitudes (and even state policy) may fluctuate, these textbooks, by their nature, are fixed.³¹

A second simple answer to the above question is that CSL textbook authors may not feel it necessary for foreign students, studying the language of the (modern) Han, to be introduced to non-Han characters. Minority groups, in the eyes of the majority Han, are often viewed as geographically and socially peripheral, and the lack of reference to them in CSL texts may merely be a manifestation of this. For the majority of Han Chinese, especially CSL textbook authors, predominantly centered in Beijing, contact with minorities is often rare or unnoticed. I think the omission of minority characters from CSL texts is a reflection of the (subconscious) opinion that, as Gladney says, “‘Han’ is generally equal to Chinese” (2004: 13).

Applying the framework used in assessing other language texts may lead us to view CSL texts as rather stereotypical in their presentation of minorities. Indeed, this is a possible interpretation. However, an anecdote from Ralph Litzinger, an American anthropologist who has researched the Yao minority group in China, may enable us to gain a deeper understanding of minorities in CSL texts. Litzinger tells how he was once rebuffed by a Yao scholar when he criticized how minorities (specifically the Yao) were only portrayed as traditional. He argued

³¹ My thanks to Evelyn Rawski for this terminology and reminding me of this.

that they should also be shown as peasants, workers, or even modern professionals (like the Yao scholar he was talking with). However, his friend countered by saying he “sounded like a Maoist who only wanted minorities to look just like all the other people of China” (2000b: 6). Below we will further look at some common representations of minorities as seen in CSL texts, but what this story can remind us is that these seemingly stereotypical characterizations are not necessarily seen as degrading or negative to many of the minorities themselves. Analyses of other language texts are critical for how women or minorities are stereotyped, and this may be justified, but what I am suggesting here is that a greater understanding of Chinese society should discourage one from immediately jumping to a similar evaluation of CSL texts. I am not claiming that one cannot be critical of CSL texts, but instead I feel that this critical analysis should be contextualized, inclusive of a Chinese perspective.

My analysis found that in nearly all CSL texts which include mention of minorities, the topic is limited to one chapter. Within these chapters, the different minority groups are distinctly distinguished from one another, but the practice of grouping discussion regarding any minority together seems to contrast them with the Han. When being compared amongst themselves, minority groups follow a strict, state-formulated classificatory scheme. However, when the Han are included in the mix, the number of categories shrinks from 55 to two, Han and non-Han.

Under the broad heading of “minorities,” China’s ethnic groups clearly differ from one another. The state’s classification work in the 1950s produced a total of 54 minority ethnicities within China (with one more group added in the 1970s) and today each citizen is identified (for example, as seen on their identification card/papers) as being Han or a member of one of these groups.³² The Chinese penchant for naming, or “classificatory impulse” to use Harrell’s term (2001: 36), means that the lines between categories are not gray but rather a bold black.³³

The classification of minorities is one area CSL texts differ from those Chinese language texts produced outside of China. DeFrancis’s (1967: 995-6) early Chinese text, *Intermediate Chinese Reader*, follows Sun Yatsen’s ethnic breakdown by noting that China consists of five ethnic groups (Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Hui, which DeFrancis calls

³² There are a few thousand Chinese citizens who are in “ethnic limbo”—the state has not yet decided which group they fit in with (or if they should be a new group). However, percentage wise, this population is very small.

³³ Gladney (2004: 35) relates this to the Confucian concept of *zhengming* or ‘rectification of names.’ Blum (1998: 215) poignantly writes that “the recentness of the adoption of the ethnic group’s names is generally forgotten or unknown. They simply exist.”

“Mohammedans” and included all Muslim groups).³⁴ Likewise, Yang’s (1967: 14-8) text, *College Chinese*, published in Taiwan, also claims that China is made up of five ethnic groups. More recent texts from outside of China reflect an ambiguity regarding the exact amount of minority groups in China. For example, *A New China* (Chou, et al. 1999: 228-33), describes China as having “50 or 60 minority groups.”³⁵ Similar vagueness is seen in *Oh, China* (Chou, et al. 1997: 410-21), which mentions China as hosting “tens of minority groups.”³⁶ These texts drastically differ from CSL texts in their treatment of the classification of ethnic groups.

I now turn to discuss which groups are depicted in these texts and the characteristics they are associated with. The table in Appendix B shows that the most populous minority groups found in China are not necessarily those most prevalent in CSL texts. Blum explains that minorities that do gain the attention of Han are not necessarily the most numerous groups, but rather the most “salient” (1992: 268). In other words, those groups that best fit a preconceived notion of what a minority should be are those most visible. At the top of this table, this also seems to be true for minorities within CSL texts. I found that the Dai, ranked number 19 in population among the ethnic groups in China, are referred to most often. It is not surprising that the Dai are a favorite of these authors. Blum (2001: 104; 1992) has described them as a prototype minority group, a quintessential opposite for the Han.

The Dai being prevalent in CSL texts, then, seems to mirror their popularity as a representative group for Chinese minorities as presented to a domestic audience. The next three groups found on the table, though, are not necessarily prototypical minorities. Instead, Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians are the three most politically sensitive minority groups. The comparative frequency with which they are presented to the foreigner through CSL texts suggest that these texts may be hoping to depoliticize international concerns surrounding these groups. Another possible explanation is that the authors may feel that foreign students are most familiar with, or interested in, these three groups. However, this interpretation does not explain why the

³⁴ Chapter 13.2 says “In the past, China was made up of five ethnic groups.” However, just a few lines below, in 13.6, DeFrancis mentions that most of China’s ethnic Koreans live in the northeast. What is important here is to show that this text does not feel the need to follow China’s state classificatory scheme.

³⁵ “除了汉族以外，中国还有五、六十少数民族。” (“In addition to the Han, China has 50 or 60 minority groups.”)

³⁶ “除了汉族以外，还有满、蒙、回、藏、苗等几十个少数民族。” (“In addition to the Han, there are the Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan, Miao and tens of other minority groups.”)

Dai, a group little known in the West and probably unfamiliar to many foreign students, would be most visible in these texts.

Regarding Tibetans in particular, two of the five texts which focus on Tibetans really center more on Tibet.³⁷ While previous generations of Han may have viewed Tibet as feudal, backward, and dirty, the picture presented in these texts tends to extol Tibet for its unique religion and beautiful scenery. For example, vol. II of *Bridge* depicts Tibet as exuding a “special enchantment.”³⁸ This corresponds to Schein’s description of Tibet as signifying “geographic distance and the romance of a pristine landscape enshrouded in mystical beauty” (2000: 5). The fact that Tibet, Xinjiang (home to most Uyghurs), and Inner Mongolia, as geographic entities, are easily romanticized may also help explain the frequency and innocuousness of these groups as seen in CSL texts.

It is notable that the largest ethnic minority group in China, the Zhuang, is focused on in only two of the analyzed texts. Seven groups are referred to more than the Zhuang. In her analysis of the Zhuang, Kaup (2000) offers a possible explanation of why this is so. She argues that traditionally the Zhuang were not thought of as very different from the Han. In more recent times, the trend in emphasizing one’s minoritiness, what Gladney (2004: 20) terms “coming out,” has meant that the Zhuang today are unquestionably thought of as a distinct group. However, in terms of their lifestyle, they are not very noticeably different than surrounding Han. Because of this, the Zhuang may not be considered a relevant minority to be shown to foreign students and are not very prevalent in CSL texts.

In addition to the Zhuang, the second and third most populous minority groups, the Manchu and Hui, are also not prominently featured in these texts. Many times classification is the forbearer of difference, and the most obvious difference between a Manchu, Hui, and Han is that their identity status would mark them as distinct. Gladney (2004) explains that members of the Hui ethnic group in China are simply thought of as Han Muslims in Taiwan. Why the difference? China’s state ethnic taxonomy has (arguably arbitrarily) decided to make the Hui an ethnic group. Although labeled a minority group, the Hui may not seem “Other” enough to be a major focus in CSL texts’ depictions of minorities. The fact that they speak Chinese, dress as Han do, and have no unified characteristics (other than avoiding pork, which is not even

³⁷ Textbooks numbered 2 and 3.

³⁸ “特殊的魅力。”

mandatory for Hui identity³⁹), means that they are quite similar to the Han. Although different in terms of historical significance, the Manchu of today, like the Hui, are also similar to the Han. They are a group “long thought to be assimilated to the Han Chinese majority” (Gladney 2004: 20; Harrell 1993). Moreover, the relatively high level of education and income of the Manchu are not conducive to a depiction of them as the ideal “Other.”⁴⁰

The relative absence of the Hui and Manchu is surprising considering how interspersed members of these groups are with Han. Unlike many other minority groups which tend to be situated in specific geographic areas, usually in borderlands far removed from where most foreign students are studying, the Hui (and the Manchu to a lesser extent) are located throughout China and are noticeably present in Beijing, the center for a large percentage of foreign students. Foreign students are most likely to have more chances for contact with members of these two groups in particular.

Considering the large number of South Korean nationals studying in China, the relative absence of Korean minorities in CSL texts is surprising. *Chosun Ilbo* (“Korean Students...”), a Korean newspaper, reported in 2005 that 39% of all foreign students in China are from South Korea. One would expect that mention of their Chinese brethren would appeal to this segment of the foreign student population. The fact that, like the Manchu, the Koreans in China tend to be more educated and economically prosperous may account for the lack of reference to them.⁴¹ The lack of focus on Koreans and Manchu in CSL texts seems to reflect their representation in China in general where their high levels of “civility” cause them to be “rarely exoticized” (Gladney 2004: 45; Mackerras 2003: 67-9).

Another group rarely focused on in chapters on ethnicity is the Han. The Han, as a distinct ethnic group, is mentioned in seven of these chapters, but focused on only once.⁴² The presence of the Han is treated as a given and exists on a different plane. The Han are not seen as something requiring explanation. Blum has described the Han as “invisible because they are so pervasive” (1998: 217). She goes on to say that “the nationalities [minorities] are always

³⁹ For discussion of this, see Gladney (2004), 155 and Fan (2001).

⁴⁰ Hannum (2002) and Zhou (2001) list the Manchu (and the Korean) as having higher levels of education, on average, than the Han.

⁴¹ Applying different ranking criteria than Hannum (2002) and Zhou (2001), Gladney (2004) lists the Koreans as the most educationally advanced ethnic group found in China.

⁴² The Han are focused on in text number 7.

marked; the Han are unmarked” (*ibid*). The absence of a focus on Han in these chapters seems to reflect an assumption of ‘Han-ness.’

As we can see in this breakdown of minority groups, the demographic realities of China are not congruent with the picture presented in CSL texts. It could not be expected that a CSL text would be able to accurately represent China’s full demographic situation, considering there are 55 minority groups. To be sure, this is not the role of a language text. However, the focus on some groups, like the Dai or Tibetans, and the relative exclusion of populous others, like the Hui or the Zhuang, is significant. Offered here are interpretations on why some groups are shown and others not. I suspect that this is because some groups better fit CSL texts’ author’s notions of what a prototypical minority is. One should also keep in mind that the selection of which groups to portray in CSL texts is also influenced by the audience, foreign students. These authors may feel that these groups are most interesting or most relevant for foreign students.

In describing state portrayal of minorities in China, Gladney (2004: 54) states that “they sing, they dance; they twirl, they whirl. Most of all, they smile, showing their happiness to be part of the motherland.” It may not be surprising then that the most common attribute associated with minorities in these texts is their fondness for singing and dancing. Mackerras explains that this is quite consistent with the representation of minorities in Reform Era China and is in direct contrast to minorities during the Cultural Revolution. He says, “The negation of the Cultural Revolution” has meant that minority songs and dance “have returned like a pent-up flood” (1984: 198). Mackerras (*ibid*: 202) further reports that a common phrase usually reserved for minorities since the Cultural Revolution is *nengge shanwu* (“good at singing and dancing”). Rees (2000: 177), likewise, speaks of this phrase’s “ubiquitous employment to characterize all minorities in the 1980s and 1990s. Three of the CSL texts not only include this phrase, but also incorporate it into their vocabulary list for foreign students to learn.⁴³

In other language textbooks analysis, we see criticism of specific characteristics being applied to certain groups as stereotypical and a form of reductionism. For example, Hellinger (1979) reported that women were more passive, rarely depicted working outside of the home, and unduly emotional in EFL texts used in German schools. It may be tempting to apply a similar judgment to CSL texts for so often depicting minorities as singing and dancing.

⁴³ Texts numbered 5, 6, and 10.

However, another interpretation is that such a depiction allows for minority groups to be presented as diverse. Mackerras claims that the revival of minority songs and dance has “meant a strengthening of the nationalities’ special styles” (1984: 217). Instead of solely condemning these texts for being stereotypical, one could also praise them for presenting the foreign student with a colorful picture of minority life. For as the Yao scholar told Litzinger, an alternative would be to have minorities depicted as Han (2000b: 6).

Minority festivals are another way minority culture is celebrated in these texts. The annual Water Splashing Festival of the Dai is found in each text mentioning minority festivals. Western scholars have noted the sexual undertones associated with this particular celebration (Schein 2000:151-3)⁴⁴ and while these texts are not explicit in this, they do portray the Water Splashing Festival as a feminine festival inextricably linked to Dai identity.⁴⁵ Blum has discussed the significance of highlighting minority festivals. She explains that “while Han also have numerous festivals/holidays...these are rarely focused on in a way to show the primitivity of the Han” (2001: 84). While these festivals in these texts may paint a picture of minorities as primitive, for example by detailing the wrestling tournaments of Mongolians or the Kazakh “Chase the Maiden” activity, they are also meant to be interesting for foreign students by showing something different. The earlier analysis by Hodge and Louie criticize CSL texts for being boring, and these texts’ depiction of minority festivals could be a way of arousing interest, and need not be a pernicious attempt to denigrate minorities.

Hobsbawm (1983) takes the issue of rural peasantry, which is how minorities in CSL texts are depicted, and connects it to an emphasis on “tradition.” In modern China, the idea of being “cultural” and “traditional” is often connected to minorities. Gillette describes that “one unanticipated outcome of the CCP’s policies during the Maoist era was to increase the value of tradition” (2000: 232). A sense of “nostalgia” was created “by attempting to suppress the traditional practices that the party classified as ‘feudal’ and ‘superstitious’” (*ibid*). The Reform Era has added another dimension by encouraging consumption and a striving for modernization. The contradiction arises here with desire to be modern and nostalgia for tradition. Minority traditions provide the “counterweight to Westernization” and can be thought of as “reservoirs of still-extant authenticity” (Schein 1994: 150 and 1997: 72). Schein (1994: 143) explains that the

⁴⁴ See Gladney (2004: 64-5) and Mackerras (2003: 145) for a discussion of Han eroticization of the Dai.

⁴⁵ Hodge and Louie (1998: 132) state that water is a feminine attribute in five elements (五行) theory.

prosperous, urban Han like to look to minority culture to “assuage [a]...sense of bereftness, of the dull grayness of metropolitan life.”

The correlation between minority groups and traditions is seen in CSL textbooks in the frequency of *chuantong* and *fengsu xiguan*, which could be characterized as what Liu describes as “overwording”—an emphasis on a topic made apparent by repetition of a term (or phrase), as an important indicator showing “over-concern with certain aspects of reality” (2005: 307). Looking at all of the chapters of these texts shows that *chuantong* is over three times as likely to be shown in chapters discussing minorities than in the other chapters. *Fengsu xiguan* is even more visibly connected to minorities, showing up in non-minority chapters less than ten times. This corresponds to Blum, who says that “*fengsu xiguan* carries with it an implication of quaintness; Han are not really said to have *fengsu xiguan*” (2001: 191, n.15).

In explaining Said’s concept of Orientalism, Schein (1997: 72) notes that the “Other” is often “rendered mute.” Elsewhere, Schein describes speechlessness as “a necessary condition of being the gazed-upon” (2000: 234). Many Western scholars are beginning to argue that minorities today are gaining voice through emphasizing their ethnicity. For example, Gillette (2000) shows that urban Hui in Xi’an are being able to become more distinct from the Han by using consumption practices made available by China’s overall modernization. These Hui, then, are taking charge of creating their own identity.⁴⁶ While this may be the case in today’s China, this is not the image given to foreign students through these CSL texts. Instead, minorities in CSL texts are noticeably silent.

6. A CLOSER LOOK AT *SPEAKING CHINESE ABOUT CHINA*

We will now take a closer look at how one of these texts, *Speaking Chinese about China*, deals with minorities. For the readers’ reference, a complete transcript (in the original Chinese and English translation) is provided in Appendix C. Like most of the other textbooks, *Speaking*

⁴⁶ Baranovitch (2001) offers another example, arguing that through ethnic music, some minorities are reshaping their identities.

Chinese about China relegates discussion of minorities to one chapter.⁴⁷ The setting for this chapter is the Central Nationalities University in Beijing where three foreign students are visiting a class of Chinese students. This setting could have been chosen because this would be a likely place for foreign students to encounter minorities, or it could be that this would provide the author a chance to introduce the foreign students (using the text) to many minority groups at once. The class chosen for this visit is a dance class in the art department. The text, given in dialogue form, begins by the teacher introducing the overall situation of minorities in China to the three guests. The text does not make clear the ethnicity or gender of the teacher. In this introduction by Teacher Li, s/he mentions that this specific class has one Han student, with the rest being minorities. It is interesting to note here that there are two distinct groups, Han and non-Han. Later in the text this non-Han category will be further dissected with characteristics of each of the individual ethnic groups highlighted, but, when contrasted with Han, minorities are grouped together.

Teacher Li's introduction also provides some foreshadowing of specifically who makes up this class. Teacher Li asks the three foreign students if they can tell to which ethnic group each student belongs. While this is not made clear in English or spoken Chinese, through the written text we see the teacher using the plural, feminine form for the word "they" (她们) in referring to the class' students.⁴⁸ A response by one of the foreign students follows, also ascribing this feminine form of "they" to the dance students. This student claims that if "they" were wearing their ethnic costumes, she could distinguish at least some of them.

Following this, each student in the class is asked to introduce herself, mentioning something about her specific ethnic group. Upon analyzing the order of presentation, it is obvious that the introductions are organized according to geography. Beginning in the northeast (closest to Beijing) and moving counterclockwise, students of the dance class introduce themselves and their ethnicity, providing the foreign students with an attribute commonly associated with their specific group.

⁴⁷ There is a further reference later in the text to Xinjiang as a minority area. However, this mentions the geographic area, rather than specific minority peoples. In this instance, a Han student explains that he wants to go to Xinjiang after graduating because the "economy and culture [there] are still more backward than the interior" ("经济上, 文化上, 还比内地落后").

⁴⁸ The fact that all students in the class are female seems surprising considering that, according to Hannum (2002), the gender disparity in higher education among minorities is even greater than that found among the Han (both groups favoring males).

By focusing on one or two characteristics of the individual minority groups, this text presents each group as homogenous, and distinct from other groups. The intragroup unity is seen in the introduction of Amina, the Uyghur representative. Amina asks the three foreign students to guess her ethnicity. John, one of the foreign students guesses she is Uyghur because she looks like a Uyghur girl he met last year. In a striking coincidence, it turns out that his previous Uyghur acquaintance is none other than Amina's older sister, Ayina. This strengthens an assumption that minorities of a certain ethnicity are united.

This chapter also presents us with an interesting picture of model foreign students. These three foreign students are portrayed as being quite interested in learning about China's minorities, engaging them through questions and through looking upon them, recognizing their distinct outfits and dances. The foreign students are also shown to be "friends of China" by showing their positive, nationalistic support of China. In response to Xia Lan's desire to return to Taiwan after it "reunifies with the motherland," Linda optimistically assures her that this will definitely happen. Likewise, Linda expresses her confidence that Shu Ying will be able to "carry on [her] country's excellent traditional art." While there is no response from the foreign students regarding this, it should be noted that the longest passage in the chapter is reserved for Zhuo Ma's lesson teaching the three guests about Tibet's tumultuous history of slavery, the liberation by the PRC, and the recent development of infrastructure.

As mentioned above, Teacher Li explains to the three guests that this class has one Han student and the rest are minorities. The text goes on to have each student introduce herself. At the end, Teacher Li explains that all the students have finished their introductions, so now they can have the performance. However, the introductions fail to include the one Han student. It seems that the Han student needs no introduction.

One final analysis of this passage is to look at the number and kinds of adjectives used. All adjectives in this chapter are positive (except mention of a previous "slave" society in Tibet). The ethnic groups and their customs are described as "traditional," "graceful," "splendid," "luxuriant and colorful," etc.⁴⁹ Hodge and Louie (1998: 60), in their analysis of the subtleties of the Chinese language, claim that "the 'masculine' needs fewer adjectives to describe than the 'feminine.'" Reliance on adjectives to portray minority groups, then, reinforces a gendered

⁴⁹ 传统, 优美, 优秀, 丰富多彩.

binary with the Han implicitly marked as masculine and minorities implicitly depicted in a feminized way. This is also evident in the fact that all minority students in this text are female.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed how minorities in CSL texts are portrayed. In this paper, I have tried to address the dearth of material on the socio-cultural content of CSL texts, which is in direct contrast to discourse on ESL/EFL and other foreign language texts in the previous 30 years. Most striking in this analysis is that most CSL texts do not include mention of Chinese minorities. The authors of these texts may see discussion of this as unnecessary for foreign students, who may not have much interaction with minorities. However, the absence of discussion of minorities in these texts contradicts the revival of interest in minoritiness in Chinese society in general. It is important to note, though, that CSL texts are changing. New, even controversial topics are becoming more common in these texts, most likely in an effort to be more marketable to foreign students. For example, talk about one-night stands and discussion of tearing down Beijing's *hutongs* can be found in current CSL texts (Wang 2004 and Liu 2003 respectively). Future studies of CSL texts may very well prove that the resurgence of ethnic consciousness within China today will trickle down into CSL texts.

Those texts that do address China's diverse ethnic groups seem to show a stereotypical depiction of minorities, grouping discussion of this into one chapter and tending to focus on the unique traditions and customs, fondness for singing and dance, various festivals, and ruralness of these groups. This analysis has also shown that minorities that seem to fit a prototypical conception, like the Dai, are most common in CSL texts, while those that do not correspond to this, even though populous, are not focused on very often.

A review of some analysis of other language textbooks indicates that many authors and publishers (especially in the West) are quite concerned about presenting a more "politically correct" image of characters in their texts. This paper suggests that this is also the case seen in CSL texts with minorities. However, while a Western politically correct text may focus on showing equal illustrations for different ethnic groups or have women speak as much as men, a Chinese politically correct text may not follow such a standard. Instead, a politically correct

image of minorities in modern China celebrates their diversity. This is done in CSL texts that talk about minorities by describing the characteristics of each group's culture which emphasize their difference. Therefore, as other language textbooks have evolved, so have CSL texts in their representation of minorities.

In reality, many minorities are becoming more Sinified. For example, Schein (1997: 80-4) recounts how many young Miao women relied on their ethnicity to find a job in the city, but after hours would dress and act more like Han. Likewise, Harrell (2001) demonstrates that many minority groups have a great deal of interaction with other groups, including Han.⁵⁰ The picture of minorities, then, presented to the foreign student through the segregation of minorities in these CSL texts may be an oversimplification and not necessarily an accurate representation of the situation of many minorities. However, the nature of foreign language texts causes them to oversimplify. The presentation of minorities we do see in these texts emphasizes what may make them more interesting to foreign students. In the same way that Paulston (1992: 72-3) speaks of the efficacy of making characters in ESL texts "disagreeable," so as to entice student interest, minorities in CSL texts may be thought of as being presented as attractive.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CSL TEXTS

English titles are listed for those books that provide them while *pinyin* is used for those without English titles. Chinese titles are provided for all texts. Throughout the paper, these textbooks are often cited by using the corresponding number.

1. Chen Hong and Tao Liming, chief eds. 2003. *Zhongguo wenxue yu zhongguo wenhua kemu kaoshi zhinan*, *中国文学与中国文化科目考试指南*. Beijing: Sinolingua.
2. Chen Zhuo, chief ed. 2001. *Bridge: A Practical Intermediate Chinese Course* (vol. I), *桥梁——实用汉语中级教程* (上册). Beijing yuyan daxue chubanshe.
3. Chen Zhuo, chief ed. 2003. *Bridge: A Practical Intermediate Chinese Course* (vol. II), *桥梁——实用汉语中级教程*(下册). Beijing: Beijing yuyan daxue chubanshe.
4. Deng Yi, chief ed. 2005. *Elementary Chinese Course* (Part 3), *汉语初级教程* (第三册). Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe.
5. Han Jiantang, ed. 2000. *China's Cultural Heritage*, *中国文化*. Beijing: Beijing yuyan wenhua daxue chubanshe.
6. Lin, Helen T. 2002. *Speaking Chinese about China* (Intermediate Oral Chinese, vol. II), *话说中国* (中级汉语口语), revised by Du Song. Beijing: Huayu jiaoxue chubanshe.
7. Liu Songhao, Huang Li, and Zhang Mingbao, eds. 2002. *Intermediate Chinese Reading*, *中级汉语阅读*. Beijing: Beijing yuyan daxue chubanshe.
8. Liu Yuanman, Liu Xiaoyu, and Liu Lixin, eds. 2001. *Meeting in China* (Advanced), *走进中国* (高基本). Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe.
9. Ma Shuda, chief ed. 2003. *Xiandai hanyu gaoji jiaocheng* (third year text, vol. II), *现*

- 代汉语高级教程 (三年级教材, 下). Beijing: Beijing yuyan daxue chubanshe.
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APPENDIX B

BREAKDOWN OF MINORITIES IN CSL TEXTS

Ethnic group	Focused on*	Mentioned*	Rank in population**
Dai	7	7	19
Tibetan	5	6	10
Uyghur	4	5	6
Mongol	4	5	9
Kazakh	4	4	17
Manchu	3	4	3
Yi	3	3	8
Zhuang	2	4	2
Korean	2	3	14
Bai	2	3	15
Han	1	7	1
Hui	1	3	4
Miao	1	2	5
Dong	1	2	12
Kirgiz	1	2	32
Li	1	1	18
Achang	1	1	39
Gaoshan	1	1	55
Buyi	0	2	11
Tujia	0	1	7
Hani	0	1	16
Wa	0	1	26
Naxi	0	1	27
Tajik	0	1	38
Ewenki	0	1	41
Olunchun	0	1	51
Hezhe	0	1	54
Lhoba	0	1	56

* “Focused on” refers to the amount of texts which mention something significant about a specific group. “Mentioned,” on the other hand, includes texts that include any mention of a group. For example, *China’s Cultural Heritage* lists the “Wa and Naxi, along with 15 other ethnic groups” as having between 1 million and 100,000 people. Since this is the only reference to Wa or Naxi in this text, these groups are not counted as being “focused on,” but are listed as

being “mentioned” in the text. It should also be noted that these figures are for the number of texts focusing on or mentioning these groups, NOT the amount of times these specific names are found in the texts.

** According to China’s 2000 census (Population Census Office under the State Council & Department of Population, Social, Science and Technology Statistics National Bureau of Statistics of China. 2002. *Tabulation on the 2000 Population Census of the People’s Republic of China*, Beijing: China Statistics Press.)

APPENDIX C

SPEAKING CHINESE ABOUT CHINA TEXT CONTENT

话说中国（中级汉语口语）

第6课 “轻歌曼舞花哦友情”

（一天上午，琳达，约翰和汤姆来到中央民族大学，和舞蹈班同学进行座谈。）

李老师： 中国一共有五十五个少数民族，其中壮族人口最多，有一千二百多万，赫哲族人口最少，还不到一千人。在我们国家，民族无论大小，都是平等的。这个班只有一个学生是汉族，其他都是少数民族。你们看得出来她们谁是哪个民族的吗？

琳达： 要是她们穿着民族服装，我能看出谁是蒙古族的，谁是维吾尔族的，谁是藏族的。其他民族的，就是穿上民族服装，我也看不出来。现在刚上完基本训练课，她们都没穿民族服装，就更看不出谁是哪个民族的了。

李老师： 既然如此，那就让同学们自我介绍一下好了。你们对什么问题感兴趣尽管提出来。

琳达： 好的。

（舞蹈班学生一一作自我介绍）

舒英： 我是满族，叫舒英，“舒服”的“舒”，“英雄”的“英”。你们都知道老舍先生吧？他也姓舒，也是满族人。

约翰：老舍先生是一位了不起的作家。我非常喜欢看他的作品，尤其是小说《骆驼样子》和话剧《茶馆》，写得简直太好了！

琳达：老舍先生是北京人，你也是北京人吗？

舒英：不，我是东北人。我们满族人大部分居住在辽宁省，全国一共二百六十多万满族人，辽宁省就有一百四十多万。

琳达：你为什么要学民族舞蹈呢？

舒英：我们国家的少数民族大都是能歌善舞的，各民族都有优美的传统舞蹈，我们满足的舞蹈动作也非常优美。我从小喜欢舞蹈，去年考上了中央民族学院艺术系。我要好好学习，把我国优秀的传统艺术继承下来。

琳达：有志者事竟成，你一定能成为一名优秀的舞蹈演员。

李老师：乌云，该你了！

乌云：我叫乌云，蒙古族，是在大草原上长大的。你们去过内蒙古草原吗？

约翰：去过，还住过蒙古包呢！我们去的时候正是秋天，大草原一望无际，牧民们赶着羊群、牛群在草原上放牧，真是“天苍苍，野茫茫，风吹草低见牛羊”，美极了！

乌云：你们参加“那达慕”大会了吗？

约翰：没有。我们去晚了，没赶上，真可惜！你给我们讲讲好吗？

乌云：好。“那达慕”是蒙古语，有游戏和娱乐的意思。每年七八月，牛羊肥壮的季节，蒙古族牧民都要举行“那达慕”大会。“那达慕”大会内容丰富多彩，有摔跤、赛马，有下棋、射箭，还有精彩的歌舞。你们下次再去内蒙古草原，可千万别错过这个机会。

约翰：对，我们一定要参加一次“那达慕”大会。

阿米娜：你们看我是哪个民族的？

汤姆：我看你有点儿像维吾尔族的。前年我来中国旅游的时候，认识了你们学校的一个学生，她是维吾尔族，长得跟你差不多。

阿米娜：她叫什么名字？

汤姆： 叫阿依娜。

阿米娜： 那是我姐姐，她已经毕业了，现在是新疆歌舞团的演员。

汤姆： 你毕业以后也回新疆吗？

阿米娜： 那还用说！有一首民歌里说，“新疆是个好地方，天山南北到处是牛羊”。我们新疆土地辽阔，物产丰富。那里不但有肥壮的牛羊，还有克拉玛依大油田。你们有机会的话，到我们新疆去看看吧，新疆的白葡萄和哈密瓜可好吃啦！

约翰： （向艾丽）你也是维吾尔族的吧？

艾丽： 不是。

约翰： 蒙古族的？

艾丽： 也不是。

约翰： 那你究竟是哪个民族的？

艾丽： 我是哈萨克族的。我们哈萨克族是个好客的民族，家里来了客人，不管认识不认识，都要拿出酒肉热情招待。

李老师： 哈萨克族有一句谚语，“如果在太阳下山的时候放走了客人，就是跳到水里也洗不清这个耻辱。”

艾丽： 我们哈萨克族的传统节日是库尔班节。节日那天有一个活动叫“姑娘追”，男女青年一对一对地骑着马向指定地点慢慢走去，小伙子可以跟姑娘开玩笑，姑娘不能生气。等到了指定地点往回走的时候，小伙子在前边跑，姑娘在后边追，并且可以用马鞭抽打小伙子。

约翰： 噢，让小伙子挨打呀！

琳达： 反正没人追你，你放心好了。

李老师： 卓玛，你先表演一个节目，让他们猜猜你是哪个民族的。

卓玛： 好。（边歌边舞）

琳达： 我看出来了，你是藏族的。

卓玛： 你从哪儿看出来的呢？

琳达： 你表演的时候有献哈达的动作。

卓玛： 你知道献哈达表示什么意思吗？

琳达： 表示敬意呗！

卓玛： 对。我们藏族给尊贵的客人献上洁白的哈达，是向客人表示真诚的敬意和美好的祝愿。

琳达： 你家在什么地方？

卓玛： 我家在拉萨。过去西藏一直是农奴制社会，一九五四年进行了民主改革，奴隶们才得到解放。我的父母从前都是奴隶，要是没有民主改革的话，我哪儿能到北京来上大学呀！现在西藏的经济文化发展很快，交通也方便多了，有了青藏公路，还修了拉萨机场，坐上飞机，几个小时就到北京了。百闻不如一见，我想你们最好还是亲自去西藏看看，尝尝我们的糌粑和青稞酒。好，我说的不少了，白玉兰，该你谈谈了。

白玉兰： 我是傣族，家在云南。云南少数民族最多，而且各有各的风俗习惯。由于时间的关系，我就简单谈谈傣族的泼水节吧。

汤姆： 好。

白玉兰： 泼水节是我们傣族的传统节日。节日那天，人们互相往身上泼水表示祝福，还有赛龙船，好几条龙船在江上你追我赶，可有意思啦！傣族人民把孔雀当做吉祥的象征，姑娘们跳起孔雀舞，表示美好的愿望。

汤姆： 请你给我们跳一个孔雀舞好吗？

白玉兰： 别忙，等她们两个介绍完了，我们一起表演几个民族歌舞。

林青： 我是壮族，叫林青，是从广西壮族自治区来的。我们壮族是个喜欢唱歌的民族，每年正月十五，三月初三，四月初八和五月十二，都要举行唱山歌的比赛活动，有男女分组对唱，也有一男一女对唱，非常热闹。

夏岚： 我叫夏岚，高山族，祖籍台湾。台湾是个美丽的宝岛，也是我的故乡，等祖国统一以后，我一定要回去看看阿里山，看看日月潭。

琳达： 我想你的愿望一定会实现。

李老师： 同学们都介绍完了，现在就请她们表演民族歌舞吧。

琳达： 好。

（同学们边歌边舞，琳达，约翰和汤姆高兴地打着拍子。）

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Speaking Chinese about China

Chapter 6
“Speaking of Friendship amid Song and Dance”

(One afternoon, Linda, John and Tom went to the Central Nationalities University and spoke with students from a dance class.)

Teacher Li: China has a total of 55 minority groups, the Zhuang being the most populous with 12 million people and the Hezhe being the smallest with less than 1,000 people. In our country, it matters not the size of the ethnic group, all are equal. In this class, there is only one student who is Han, and the others are all minorities. Can you tell which of [female] them belong to which minority?

Linda: If [female] they wore their ethnic costumes, I could tell who were Mongolian, Uyghur, and Tibetan. Even with ethnic costumes, I could not tell who belonged to the other ethnic groups. Right now, since class just finished, [female] they are not wearing ethnic costumes, so I really can't tell which group they belong to.

Teacher Li: Since this, let's have the students introduce themselves. Feel free to ask any questions you have.

Linda: OK

(The students introduce themselves one by one.)

Shu Ying: I'm a Manchu named Shu Ying [explains the characters in her name]. Do you all know Mr. Lao She? His surname was also Shu and he also was Manchu.

John: Mr. Lao She was a great writer. I really like his works, especially his novel “The Rickshaw Boy” and his play “Tea House;” both are written so wonderfully.

Linda: Mr. Lao She was from Beijing. Are you also from Beijing?

Shu Ying: No, I'm from the Northeast. We Manchu are mostly located in Liaoning province. In total there are 2.6 million Manchu in China and Liaoning has 1.4 million.

Linda: Why do you want to study ethnic dance?

Shu Ying: Most of our country's minorities are good at singing and dancing. Each minority group has their own beautiful traditional dances. The movements of our Manchu dances are very beautiful. I've liked dancing since I was young and last year I got

accepted [through a test] to the Central Nationalities University's Art Department. I will study hard to be able to carry on my country's excellent traditional art.

Linda: Where there's a will, there's a way. I'm sure you'll become an excellent dancer.

Teacher Li: Wu Yun, it's your turn!

Wu Yun: My name is Wu Yun, I'm Mongolian, and I grew up on the grasslands. Have you been to the Inner Mongolian grasslands?

John: I have, and I even stayed in a yurt! We went in the autumn and the grasslands seemed boundless. The herders were driving their sheep and cattle out to the pastures. It was really "blue skies, open expanse, and wind whistling with sheep and cattle on the grassland"—so beautiful.

Wu Yun: Did you attend the Nadam fair?

John: No. We didn't make it in time—what a pity! Would you tell us about it?

Wu Yun: OK. "Nadam" is Mongolian for "games and entertainment." Every year around July or August, when the cattle and sheep are stout and strong, Mongolian herders hold the Nadam fair. The Nadam fair's contents are very colorful, including wrestling, horse racing, board games, archery and wonderful dancing. Next time you go to the Inner Mongolian grasslands, be sure not to miss it.

John: OK, next time we'll for sure go to the Nadam fair.

Amina: Which minority do you think I am?

Tom: I think you look a little like a Uyghur. Last year when I came to China to travel, I met a [female] student from your school who was a Uyghur and looked a lot like you.

Amina: What was her name?

Tom: Ayina.

Amina: That's my older sister. She graduated and is now is a performer with the Xinjiang Song and Dance Troupe.

Tom: Will you also go back to Xinjiang when you graduate?

Amina: Of course! As the folk song says, "Xinjiang is a good place, to the north and south of the Heavenly Mountains are cattle and sheep." Our land in Xinjiang is very broad and the products abundant. Not only are there fattened cattle and

sheep, but also the Karamay oil fields. If you have a chance, you should visit our Xinjiang. The grapes and *hami* melons there are great.

John: (towards Yi Li) Are you also Uyghur?

Yi Li: No.

John: Mongolian?

Yi Li: Nope.

John: So, which minority group do you belong to?

Yi Li: I'm a Kazakh. We Kazakh are a very hospitable group. If a guest we know or don't know visits our house, we'll get out the alcohol and meat and warmly welcome them.

Teacher Li: There is a Kazakh proverb which says, "If a guest leaves after the sun has gone down, one cannot wash off the shame."

Yi Li: We Kazakh have a traditional holiday called *Ku'erbanjie*. On the day of this festival, there is an activity called "maiden chase." Young men and women [late teenagers to young adults] in pairs slowly ride horses toward a fixed point. The young men can joke with the women and the women are not allowed to get angry. But after reaching the fixed point, on the way back, the young man must run in front while the young woman chases him. The young women can even use the horse whip to beat the young men as they run.

John: What, the young men get beat?!

Linda: Chill out, they're not chasing you!

Teacher Li: Zhuo Ma, give us a short performance and let them try to guess which minority you are.

Zhuo Ma: OK. (singing and dancing)

Linda: I can tell—you're Tibetan.

Zhuo Ma: How could you tell?

Linda: Your performance included presenting a *katag* [a Tibetan cloth, usually white, often given as a gift].

Zhuo Ma: Do you know what presenting a *katag* signifies?

- Linda: It's an expression of respect.
- Zhuo Ma: Right. We Tibetans give esteemed guests white *katags*. This symbolizes sincere respect and glorious wishes.
- Linda: Where is your home?
- Zhuo Ma: My home is Lhasa. In the past, Tibet was always a society of serfs. Not until the democratic reforms of 1954 did the slaves gain freedom. In the past, my parents were slaves. If it wasn't for the democratic reforms, how could I come to Beijing to go to university? Now, Tibet's economy and culture is developing very fast, and transportation is much more convenient since there is the Qinghai-Tibet expressway and an airport in Lhasa is being built—by plane, you could be in Beijing in a couple of hours. Hearing about someplace one hundred times is not as good as seeing it once—I think it best that you personally go visit Tibet; to taste our *zanba* and barley alcohol. OK, I've said enough. Bai Yulan, it's your turn.
- Bai Yulan: I am a Dai and my home is in Yunnan. Yunnan has the most minorities, each with their own customs. Because of the time, I'll briefly talk about the Dai water splashing festival.
- Tom: Great.
- Bai Yulan: The water splashing festival is a traditional festival of our Dai. On the day of the festival, people splash water on other to express wishes of happiness. There are also dragon boat races with many dragon boats on the water chasing after each other—it's so interesting! The Dai view peacocks as good luck symbols and young ladies; young women perform the peacock dance, which expresses glorious aspirations.
- Tom: Would you please give us a demonstration of the peacock dance?
- Bai Yulan: Don't rush—wait until those two [females] finish their introduction and then we can perform some ethnic dances together.
- Lin Qing: I'm a Zhuang named Lin Qing from the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. We Zhuang are an ethnic group which likes to sing. Every year on January 15, March 3, April 8, and May 12 [lunar calendar], a “mountain song” competition is held. Boys and girls are divided into groups and sing to each other and sometimes one boy and one girl will sing to each other—it's really exciting.
- Xia Lan: My name is Xia Lan and I'm a Gaoshan from Taiwan. Taiwan is a beautiful “treasure island,” and is also my home. After the motherland unites, I will definitely go back to see Mt. Ali and Riyuetan Lake.

Linda: I'm sure you'll realize this dream.

Teacher Li: The students have all finished their introductions. Let's now invite [female] them to perform ethnic songs and dances.

Linda: Great.

(As the students sang and danced, Linda, John, and Tom are very happy and begin clapping.)

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