

DIVERSITY AND NATIONALISM IN HISTORY EDUCATION

**A Case Study of Textbook Descriptions of
Controversial Historical Events in Japan**

By

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Submitted to Central European University - Private University
Nationalism Studies Program

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Vienna, Austria
2025

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ABSTRACT

This study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the relationship between nationalism and history education in modern Japan, conducting a detailed comparative analysis of textbook descriptions of controversial historical events. Chapters dealing with Japan's relations with Asian countries from the First Sino-Japanese War to the end of the Pacific War were examined to clarify the historical perspectives, ideologies and nationalistic aspects embedded in each textbook.

The analysis revealed that, although all textbooks exhibit elements of 'purificationism' and 'patriotism' within a nationalistic framework, there are significant variations in the portrayal of 'exclusivism'. Mainstream textbooks provide relatively frank and detailed descriptions of the negative aspects of Japan's imperialist actions, social inequality, the horrors of war and diverse group perspectives, shedding light on power and inequality. In contrast, textbooks promoting a nationalistic view emphasise Japan's efforts to defend itself and pursue its national goals in a harsh international environment and the unity of its people during the war. By avoiding references to specific acts of aggression, such as the Nanjing Massacre, these textbooks tend to belittle Japan's responsibility as a perpetrator and suggest that its actions were justified or inevitable.

This study demonstrated that the vocabulary choice, focus and deliberate omissions in textbooks affect the types of nationalistic messages conveyed to students and the degree to which they promote critical thinking. This highlights the challenges and importance of history education in modern Japan.

Keywords: nationalism, history education, textbooks, Japan, critical discourse analysis (CDA).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have provided invaluable support and cooperation in the completion of this master's thesis.

First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Professor Miller. Despite my tendency to overschedule myself, Professor Miller consistently offered timely and precise advice, guiding my thesis definitively towards improvement. Without their expert guidance, this thesis would not have been possible.

Next, my thanks go to the professors and staffs of Nationalism Studies. We navigated a challenging year together, and I am grateful for your immense efforts and support in ensuring our learning continued uninterrupted. Thank you very much.

To my classmates in Nationalism Studies, I am grateful for the immense inspiration and unwavering support you provided as my fellow learners. The time we spent together was an invaluable part of my research journey.

Finally, I owe my heartfelt thanks to my family. They warmly supported me even when I turned up on their doorstep in despair just before the deadline. This thesis quite simply wouldn't have been completed without my mother's delicious cooking. Thank you, truly.

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Japanese society, particularly since the 2000s and increasingly throughout the 2010s, a variety of phenomena related to nationalism have been frequently reported in the media, with the expansion of its influence becoming a topic of public debate (Tanabe, 2016a). The term “nationalism” has been translated into Japanese in various ways—such as ethnic nationalism, statism and popular nationalism—with the precise meaning differing depending on the context and interpretation. In existing research, various typologies have been proposed in order to capture the diverse manifestations of nationalism, including the use of subcategories such as purificationism, patriotism, and exclusivism (Tanabe, 2011a). Moreover, a wide range of factors have been analysed as influencing nationalism, including individual attributes (e.g. age, educational background), regional characteristics, contemporary political attitudes, and social anxiety.

Education plays a key role in the formation and dissemination of nationalism. In particular, history textbooks used in formal schooling are believed to exert a strong influence on the construction of national identity and historical consciousness (Coenders & Scheepers, 2003). The historical narratives presented in textbooks vary widely—from those that portray a glorious past centred on the majority group in an exclusive manner, to those that emphasise the multiplicity of national history and the contributions of minority groups in an inclusive way. These narratives have been shown to influence readers’ sense of belonging to a group and their perceptions of intergroup relations (Haas & Lindstam, 2024).

In recent years, Japanese history textbooks have become the subject of increasingly active debate, particularly regarding the historical viewpoints they represent. Notably, the organisation “The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks” (hereafter referred to as Society), established in 1997, has criticised existing textbooks for being based on what it calls

a “self-deprecating view of history²” and has sought to produce and promote its own textbook that presents Japanese history in a more positive light. The content of this textbook has been widely criticised for containing particular political intentions, distorting historical facts, and potentially contributing to the politicisation of education and social division. Such developments demonstrate that history textbooks are not simply neutral compilations of historical facts, but rather convey specific historical perspectives and ideologies, and are deeply connected to various aspects of nationalism.

However, in order to understand precisely what kinds of historical perspectives and ideologies are embedded in the content of these textbooks, which aspects of nationalism are emphasised, and what may be overlooked or omitted, it is essential to conduct a detailed linguistic analysis. Ishii (2012) pointed out that the language use in the textbook from “The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks” (here after ‘the Society textbook’), actively presents the opinions and evaluations of the author, and is marked by an emphasis on justifying Japan’s actions and reinforcing a particular historical understanding. Nishida (2023) in her research, showed that changes in the national curriculum guidelines have increasingly aimed to reinforce nationalism, and that Japanese English textbooks tend to emphasise Japan’s victimhood in war-related contexts. Building on such earlier research, this study focuses on the discourse of specific history textbooks—particularly their language use and structural features—with the aim of analysing the historical perspectives and ideologies they convey, and their relationship to different aspects of nationalism.

This study applies the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to selected excerpts from multiple lower secondary school history textbooks, including the version

² It is a term used to criticise and negatively evaluate a certain historical perspective in Japanese society, academic circles and education after the Pacific War. Commentators use the term to criticise historical descriptions that deliberately emphasise the negative aspects of Japanese history and denigrate Japan.

published by Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha, which is affiliated with the Society and has attracted significant public attention in recent years. The analysis focuses on the sections that describe Japan's relations with Asian countries from the First Sino-Japanese War to the end of the Pacific War. By examining elements such as lexical choices, grammatical structures, and the overall composition of the texts, the study aims to identify which aspects of nationalism—purificationism, patriotism, and exclusivism—are emphasised in the Society textbook, in comparison with others. Through this analysis, the study explores how the discursive structure and language use in history textbooks may influence the formation of historical consciousness and conceptions of nationalism among student readers, and what implications this has for contemporary discussions of nationalism in Japan.

CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Nationalism in Contemporary Japan

In Japanese, "nationalism" can be translated in various ways depending on the content and interpretation. When translated as ethnic nationalism, it refers to "an ideology or movement aimed at unifying, achieving independence, and promoting the development of a nation or ethnic group, while rejecting pressure or interference from other countries." When translated as state nationalism, it refers to "an ideology that regards the state as the supreme entity and seeks to prioritise national interests even at the expense of individuals"³. It is also sometimes translated as nationalism, ultranationalism, national interestism, or ethnocentrism⁴.

This section provides a detailed analysis of the multifaceted aspects of nationalism in contemporary Japan, based on existing research trends and the latest findings. Since the 2000s, and particularly since the 2010s, various phenomena related to "nationalism" have been frequently featured in various media outlets, including newspapers, television, and the internet, and their increasing influence, or so-called "rise," has become a subject of social debate (Tanabe, 2016a). For example, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's approval rating remained relatively high and stable even in 2016. This is attributed to the wide range of citizens who resonate with his policies and ideals. According to Nakahara (2021), the Abe administration's nationalism has the following characteristics. First, the administration focused on the slogan "Take Back Japan" and aimed to break away from the "postwar regime" established during the American occupation to restore national pride. Second, it pursued the concept of a "normal country" that could play a leading role in the international community. To this end, the administration said that constitutional reform and the promotion of patriotic history education

³ Meikyo Japanese Dictionary 3rd edition "nationalism"

⁴ SHINMEIKAI Japanese Dictionary 8th edition "nationalism"

were essential. Considering the anti-nationalist and pacifist sentiments of the postwar period, historical revisionist ideas were intentionally vague. As a strategy to spread nationalism, the administration distinguished between economic policy, presenting concrete plans, and history education, using vague language. They frequently used rhetoric that the country was in a "crisis." The administration also sought to otherize the opposition with an "us versus them" dichotomy and neutralize critical voices. These strategies and slogans were also used to justify the LDP's policy agenda, particularly Proactive Peace, and to justify the LDP's continued rule. Some have raised concerns that a specific form of "nationalism" embraced by Prime Minister Abe is permeating and strengthening the tone of Japanese society as a whole.

In existing research on nationalism, various typologies using multiple sub-concepts have been attempted to capture its diverse manifestations (Tanabe, 2016b). Tanabe (2011) classifies nationalism into three types: "purificationism," "patriotism," and "xenophobia." Purificationism seeks to define the scope of a specific "nationality (i.e., people within the nation)." Patriotism seeks to unify the nation by demanding loyalty from its members. Xenophobia, on the other hand, seeks to exclude anyone outside the nation, i.e., foreigners. Particularly in quantitative prior research, "purificationism," which indicates an awareness of "boundary setting" that distinguishes between the inside and outside of the nation, or the conditions for being a "true national," has been examined in detail as a core element of national consciousness. The criteria for this boundary setting of the nation include two main aspects: "civic (political) criteria" based on individual subjective consciousness or political attitudes (e.g., "self-definition" or "loyalty to legal systems"), and "ethnic (cultural) criteria" that emphasise objective attributes such as blood ties or birth (e.g., "lineage (ancestry)" or "birth").

According to statistical analysis using data from a large-scale quantitative social survey conducted by Tanabe (2021) across Japan, while gender differences in each type of nationalism are not considered significant, age and educational background show significant differences in

all surveys. The data suggests that as age increases or educational attainment decreases, there is a stronger tendency towards ultranationalism compared to a liberal orientation. Furthermore, a pro-Western nationalism also tends to be stronger among older age groups at any given time. These analytical results suggest that the types of nationalism are more likely to be influenced by the transmission of knowledge and values cultivated through education, rather than by environmental factors such as an individual's socio-economic status or social class.

Public awareness of specific social policies, as examined by Tanabe (2021), also provides important clues for understanding the characteristics of nationalism in contemporary Japan. An awareness survey conducted among residents of Ainu⁵-populated areas in Hokkaido revealed that while there is some support for policies related to the promotion and dissemination of Ainu culture, support is low for policies aimed at providing living assistance. This suggests the presence of a perception that discrimination is a thing of the past and a self-responsibility theory that attributes living difficulties to individual lack of effort. In Japan, where the myth of a "single ethnic group" persists, a complex consciousness structure emerges, where ethnic (cultural) differences are emphasised while civic (political) equality consciousness resists special living assistance for specific ethnic groups.

Furthermore, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the determinants of nationalism in contemporary Japan, it is important to quantitatively clarify the influence of macro characteristics of residential areas (e.g., the proportion of foreign residents, the proportion of blue-collar workers, etc.) in addition to individual attributes (Tanabe, 2016a). It is also essential to empirically examine the relationship between nationalism and modern political consciousness trends, such as attitudes towards foreign countries and foreigners, and the

⁵ An indigenous people living in northern Japan. Since ancient times, they have had their own language, religion, and culture, which they have passed down to the present day.

increasingly prominent populism and neoliberalism, in light of relationships with neighbouring countries, to grasp the dynamics of nationalism in contemporary Japan.

Tanabe (2021a) reviews the current state and evolution of nationalism research in Japanese sociology. The first half of the review outlines studies from a historical perspective on how Japanese nationalism was born and developed. The latter half surveys research on various aspects of contemporary Japanese nationalism. Many historical studies, influenced by modernism, argue that Japanese nationalism and the concept of the "nation" were "invented" and historically constructed in the modern era. These studies empirically demonstrate, in particular, that the common belief that "Japan is a homogeneous ethnic nation" is actually a fiction that was strongly promoted through legal systems and discourse during a specific period after World War II. Furthermore, research influenced by ethnosymbolism identifies the roots of nationality formation in older layers such as Kokugaku⁶, the Emperor system, and the Koseki⁷. These studies reveal that the boundaries and criteria of "Japanese people" have fluctuated throughout history.

Research on contemporary Japanese nationalism indicates the existence of diverse national identities, including not only special events but also "banal nationalism" present in everyday life. Quantitative survey analyses have revealed that in Japan, the criteria for "Japaneseness," such as nationality and blood lineage, tend to be less clearly distinguished. They also show that strong national pride is prone to being linked with exclusiveness, and that there are diverse types of nationalism with different tendencies across generations (particularly, exclusive and ultranationalistic tendencies are observed in the older generation, while these

⁶ An academic field that studies Japanese classics and seeks to understand the unique Japanese thought and spirit.

⁷ A Japanese public document that clarifies the family status of individuals. It records the name, date of birth, and relationship of each unmarried child living with a couple, and it is notarised. The family register system.

tendencies are weaker among the younger generation). Since the 2000s, exclusive hate speech online (the "Netouyo" phenomenon) and historical revisionism have garnered attention. It has been pointed out that social anxieties due to globalisation, geopolitical tensions, and specific political consciousness (especially its association with supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party) lie behind these phenomena. While Tanabe's research illustrates the multifaceted nature of Japanese nationalism and its complex relationship with social and political situations based on various studies, it also points out the challenge of a lack of common definitions and frameworks among researchers, advocating for the necessity of long-term research in the future.

Nationalism in Japan in Foreign Literature

McVeigh (2004) "Nationalisms of Japan" analyses Japanese nationalism from the perspective that it is not a single phenomenon but exists in various forms, both public and private. He focuses not only on state-led nationalism, such as militarism and the Emperor system, but also on economic nationalism and nationalism that permeates popular culture, such as daily customs and "nihonjin-ron⁸." In particular, he regards "nihonjin-ron" as a typical example of popular cultural nationalism, pointing out its ethnocentric tendencies and racial determinism, which suggests that culture and customs are determined by biological characteristics. Furthermore, McVeigh argues that Japan's "internationalisation" is a paradoxical phenomenon that actually functions as a hidden code indicating "non-Japanese things" and reproduces Japanese uniqueness. He also points out the existence of "revisionist nationalism," which seeks constant responses to external pressures and the reform of domestic systems, suggesting that Japanese nationalism is deeply intertwined with the international environment.

⁸ Discussions about the Japanese people, their culture and society, and publications and reports summarising these topics.

On the other hand, "Nippon Kaigi" by Guthmann (2024) analyses political nationalism in contemporary Japan, focusing particularly on the influential organisation Nippon Kaigi. He points out the existence of nationalism that emphasises the absolute role of the state in protecting the safety, property, and rights of its citizens. He also argues that the deeply rooted hierarchical consciousness in Japanese society has a complex influence on the psychology of Japanese people in international relations. Specifically, he points out that while a submissive attitude is observed towards the United States, the victor in World War II, there is a tendency to have a sense of superiority towards other Asian countries, stemming from the experience of past colonial rule, analysing the psychology of Japanese people who waver between superiority and inferiority.

"Japanese Cinema and Otherness" by Kō (2010) examines the issues of Japanese nationalism and multiculturalism through the representation of "others" such as foreigners, ethnic minorities, and Okinawans in Japanese films. She argues that contemporary Japanese films not only reflect the trend of multiculturalism in society but also play an active role in reinforcing or challenging the dominant discourse of "Japanese uniqueness." In particular, she introduces the concept of "cosmetic multiculturalism" and critically analyses the state of multiculturalism that superficially praises cultural diversity but does not shake the underlying dominant structure of "Japanese uniqueness." Using examples such as Shunji Iwai's "Swallowtail Butterfly" and Takashi Miike's works, she clarifies the structure in which "others" are represented as objects of consumption and used as tools to reaffirm "Japanese uniqueness." Furthermore, through the representation of Okinawa and Zainichi Koreans, she depicts the aspects of marginalisation and resistance in Japanese society, showing the current state where minority film directors are challenging the very concept of "Japanese cinema."

Comparing these literatures, it can be seen that Japanese nationalism permeates various areas, from state-level ideology to everyday consciousness and cultural representation.

McVeigh shows the diverse forms of nationalism and its influence that extends to every corner of society, Guthmann clarifies the psychological aspects of political nationalism and its unique position in international relations, and Ko specifically shows how nationalism constructs "others" and strengthens its own identity through the cultural medium of film. These analyses suggest that Japanese nationalism is a complex phenomenon that cannot be grasped from a single perspective, and that each literature approaches its essence from a different angle, enabling a more comprehensive understanding.

The relationship between education and nationalism

The relationship between education and nationalism is a complex and multifaceted field of study, explored from various perspectives in academic research. The influence of educational attainment, the historical development of mass education, and the specific content of curricula on individuals' national attitudes and perceptions, as well as the broader societal dynamics related to national identity and inclusiveness, has already been empirically demonstrated by Coenders & Scheepers (2003).

One approach to understanding this relationship involves examining how educational attainment correlates with aspects of nationalism and ethnic exclusionism. Nationalism can be conceptualised as encompassing aspects such as xenophobia and patriotism. Ethnic exclusionism, on the other hand, refers to attitudes that alienate individuals based on their ethnic origin and includes the exclusion of immigrants, the exclusion of political refugees, and exclusion from group membership determined by factors deemed important for becoming a "true" member of the nation, such as place of origin, length of residence, and language proficiency.

Coenders & Scheeper's research suggests that educational attainment has a significant impact on the aspects of nationalism and ethnic exclusionism. Specifically, higher levels of

education are associated with lower levels of xenophobia, patriotism, and ethnic exclusionism, including the exclusion of immigrants and political refugees, as well as exclusion from a sense of group belonging. However, the effectiveness of this educational phenomenon in combating ethnic exclusionism is contingent on national characteristics, such as the duration and interruptions of a country's liberal democratic tradition. For instance, the impact of education on ethnic exclusionism has been found to be significantly smaller in recently established democracies compared to countries with long-standing or interrupted democratic traditions.

From a historical perspective, Darden & Grzymala-Busse (2006) illuminate the role of mass education in the formation of a shared national identity. In post-communist states, it has been empirically demonstrated that the high pre-communist literacy rates achieved through mass education are strongly linked to political outcomes such as the defeat of communist parties in the first free elections. Mass literacy typically requires several years of education, during which people were exposed to a standardised "high culture" and written history through the curriculum of subjects such as history, literature, geography, and music. This education played a crucial role in the formation of a common national identity and political loyalties. The shared understandings that emerged from this national education became a standard against which the legitimacy of governance was evaluated. Consequently, individuals who had received pre-communist national education came to perceive the communist regime as an alien imposition incompatible with national values.

Furthermore, the content of education, particularly the historical narratives presented in textbooks, plays a crucial role in shaping the perception of national identity and the inclusion or exclusion of marginalised groups (Haas & Lindstam, 2024). An incentivised online experiment conducted in India, using exercises with authentic official textbook materials, investigated the impact of inclusive and exclusive historical narratives. Exclusive historical narratives are characterised by depicting a glorious past centred on the majority group, whereas

inclusive historical narratives emphasise the plurality of the nation's history and the contributions of minority groups. Exposure to these narratives significantly affected the sense of centrality and entitlement, as well as the supply and demand for leadership, among marginalised minority groups.

Haas & Lindstam (2024) examined how historical narratives influence marginalised communities' perceptions of group centrality, entitlement to leadership, and attitudes towards leadership behaviour. Exposure to exclusive narratives decreased the extent to which Muslims perceived their group as central to the Indian nation, whereas inclusive narratives increased this perception, particularly in terms of self-evaluation. While evidence regarding the perception of entitlement to leadership was weaker, inclusive narratives slightly increased minority respondents' perceptions of both the quality of minority politicians and their own ability to act as representatives. Moreover, inclusive narratives significantly increased the willingness of marginalised individuals to assume leadership roles, particularly in mixed-group settings, whereas exclusive narratives had a slightly negative impact on civic engagement. Regarding the demand for leadership, inclusive narratives positively affected minority respondents' evaluations of minority politicians, but the reactions of majority group members were inconsistent, with some signs of backlash.

From a broader perspective, the findings suggest that the content and framing of national history in education play a vital role in shaping political legitimacy, participation, and the dynamics of leadership. Mass education has historically contributed to the construction of national identities through standardised curricula, and the specific historical narratives taught therein continue to influence perceptions of national belonging and intergroup relations. While higher levels of education generally correlate with decreased ethnic exclusionism, the qualitative aspects of education, particularly the inclusiveness of historical narratives, are crucial in fostering inclusive nationalism and empowering marginalised groups to take on

leadership in the public sphere. A nuanced understanding of these processes is essential for comprehending the complex interplay between education, national identity, and political participation.

The results of this study indicate that the content of education, particularly the way in which a nation's history is presented, can influence who is perceived as entitled to participate in the public sphere and who is considered legitimate as a leader by others, with the most significant effects observed in marginalised communities. The impact on marginalised individuals' willingness to lead (supply) was particularly strong in mixed-group settings after exposure to inclusive narratives, highlighting the interaction between historical narratives and social context.

Major historiographical debates in contemporary Japan

As the preceding discussion suggests, education—particularly the historical narratives presented in school textbooks—plays a significant role in shaping national identity and historical consciousness. Certain narratives can influence not only one's sense of belonging to a group and perceptions of intergroup relations, but also the motivation to engage in civic participation. The power of education and the importance of debates surrounding historical consciousness are strongly recognised in contemporary Japanese society. In particular, the activities of The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks, which produces and promotes textbooks based on a specific historical perspective, have drawn attention as a concrete example of the complex relationship between education and nationalism. The historical perspective they promote, and the discourse structure of their textbooks, provide an ideal subject for analysis in relation to earlier discussions on how educational content shapes national attitudes, identities, and inclusivity.

Since the 2000s, and especially into the 2010s, debates over historical perspectives in Japanese history textbooks have become increasingly active. These developments reflect a growing awareness that textbooks are not merely descriptions of historical facts, but also convey specific viewpoints and ideologies, and are deeply connected to various aspects of nationalism. Given the vital role that textbooks play in shaping how citizens understand their nation and its past, disputes over their content have often developed into wide-ranging public debates that engage society at large.

One of the key points of contention in these debates is the clash between so-called “self-deprecating” and “affirmative” historical perspectives. As Kikuchi (2012) notes, from the post-war period onwards—and particularly from the 1970s—Japanese history education increasingly focused on Japan’s wartime actions, especially its invasions of and responsibility for aggression against Asian nations. From a critical standpoint, such depictions have been seen as overly negative or “self-deprecating,” and have become the target of backlash. The Society has argued that existing textbooks overemphasise the negative aspects of Japan’s past and thereby damage national honour. They advocate for the creation and dissemination of textbooks that portray Japanese history in a more affirmative light—especially by presenting Japan’s actions before and during the Second World War as acts of self-defence. For instance, textbooks produced or edited with the involvement of the Society, such as those by Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha, tend to minimise or omit descriptions of the number of victims in the Nanjing Incident or the issue of “comfort women.” They also offer alternative perspectives by portraying Japan’s wartime actions as part of the “liberation of Asia”—a significant departure from conventional textbook narratives (Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai, 2005). The promotion of this “affirmative view of history” is often interpreted as an attempt to beautify Japan’s past and reconstruct national pride.

Another important area of debate concerns the extent to which textbooks acknowledge Japan's responsibility as an aggressor, particularly with regard to specific acts such as the Nanjing Massacre or the "comfort women" issue—both of which have been central points of controversy. For example, when the Society's textbook passed the national textbook screening process in 2001, it attracted international criticism for failing to use the term "invasion" to describe Japan's military campaigns in Asia up to the mid-20th century. This controversy served to reaffirm the importance of explicitly addressing Japan's wartime responsibility (Ishii, 2012). Nonetheless, textbooks published by Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha continue to show a tendency to obscure, downplay, or, in some cases, completely omit these issues. In contrast, they often give greater emphasis to Japan's suffering at the end of the war—such as the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Soviet invasion, and the internment of Japanese citizens in Siberia—thus portraying Japan as a victim of the war. For example, these textbooks frequently contain detailed descriptions of the repatriation from Manchuria and the tragedy of the kamikaze pilots, thereby underscoring the hardships experienced by the Japanese people during the war. Such emphasis is sometimes interpreted as an attempt to relativise Japan's war responsibility and to highlight Japan as also being a victim of wartime suffering (Hirakareta Rekishi Kyokasho no Kai, 2007).

The textbooks analysed in this study reflect different positions and perspectives within this broader debate over historical consciousness. For instance, the aforementioned textbooks by Jiyūsha and Ikuhōsha tend to strongly present an affirmative narrative and one of self-defence, while other publishers' textbooks offer more critical and multi-dimensional perspectives. In the following chapters, by closely examining how each textbook addresses these major issues, this study aims to clarify the ideological divisions currently shaping history education in Japan.

Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform

Founded in 1997, The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks (hereafter referred to as Society) attracted attention for its activities in opposing the descriptions in existing history textbooks and for breaking away from the "self-deprecating view of history."⁹¹⁰ The Society argues that Japanese history should be evaluated more objectively and from the perspective of the country, and criticizes existing textbooks for denigrating Japan. On the other hand, the Society has also been criticized for its political intent (Koo, 2009) and for distorting historical facts (Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom, 2005). Through these debates, the Society has come to symbolize the opposing axes of conservatism and liberalism, and nationalism and internationalism, in postwar Japanese history education.

The core ideas of the Society are summarized in two pillars: "breaking away from a self-deprecating view of history" and "nurturing a proud nation." Tawara (2020) three ideological characteristics of the Society: 1) a positive attitude towards Japan's modernization since the Meiji era, 2) emphasis on Japan's leading role in Asia, and 3) a strong affinity with the imperial system.

The Society's activities are mainly carried out in the following three areas:

1. Textbook compilation: creating its own history textbooks and applying for certification
2. Awareness-raising activities: spreading its own view of history through lectures and publications

⁹ 新しい教科書をつくる会「ご存知ですか? 「新しい歴史教科書をつくる会」の教科書改善運動。」
<https://tsukurukai.com/start.html> (06/12/2024 Last accessed, translated by the author)

¹⁰ It is a concept that criticises and gives a negative evaluation of a particular view of history in Japanese society, academic circles specialising in history, and educational circles after the Pacific War.

3. Political lobbying: proposing system reforms such as reviewing textbook certification standards

Looking at statistics on textbook adoption, after passing the certification in 2001, the adoption rate of the Society's textbooks was initially less than 1%, but by 2011 it had risen to about 4%¹¹. Subsequently, the Society's junior high school history textbook failed the 2020 textbook examination¹², but it is expected to pass the 2024 textbook examination and be adopted in Hitachi-Omiya City, Ibaraki Prefecture, from the 2025 school year¹³.

In this paper, I will use the case of textbook adoption in Hitachi-Omiya city to examine the relationship between education and nationalism in modern Japan, particularly the process of forming national identity through history education and its influence. Specifically, I will provide some insight into the various issues raised by this case through an analysis of the theoretical considerations of nationalism, previous research on The Society textbook, and the reactions to the textbook adoption in Hitachi-Omiya city.

Nationalism and the Textbooks of The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks

Having understood that the relationship between education and nationalism is complex, I will next review previous research on The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks, which is trying to spread a nationalistic view of history in Japan. The activities of the Society have had a significant impact on Japanese education and society. In particular, I will clarify the problems from the perspective of the suppression of freedom of speech, the politicization of education, the division of society, authoritarian tendencies, and the impact on international relations.

¹¹ <https://tsukurukai.com/aboutus/ayumi.html> (Last accessed 24/12/2024)

¹² <https://www.sankei.com/article/20200221-FA6K7RW745IP3BFOLFK34AAQPI/> (Last accessed 24/12/2024)

¹³ <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/lnews/mito/20240909/1070025265.html> (Last accessed 24/12/2024)

First, I will consider the impact on freedom of speech. The textbooks from the Society have been criticized for glorifying the history of Japan's invasion and distorting historical facts (Jiang, 2017). In particular, it has been pointed out that the textbook certification system gives the impression that the government supports a certain view of history, and may suppress free discussion (Hayashi, 2007; Horiuchi, 2002; Morita, 2011). In addition, court cases in which descriptions of the killing of civilians and the rape of women by Japanese troops during the Battle of Okinawa were found not to be "unacceptable errors" suggest the possibility that historical facts are not adequately reflected (Kikuchi, 2012). These issues reveal the current situation in which freedom of speech in education is not adequately guaranteed.

Next, there is the issue of the politicization of education. The textbooks of the Society reflect a biased perspective based on modern values, and contain content that idealizes the restoration of imperial traditions and the worldview of "survival of the fittest" (Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom, 2005). Furthermore, the case of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology deleting the description of the "mass suicides" during the Battle of Okinawa from the description of the coercive power of the Japanese military suggests that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology may have been influenced by political pressure (Hayashi, 2007). Such movements undermine the neutrality inherent in education and are a factor that deprives students of the opportunity to develop critical thinking (Ishii, 2012). While boards of education are required to make neutral judgments based on the Constitution and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there is a tendency for the Society's textbooks to be introduced into schools with the support of certain political forces (Jiang, 2017).

Furthermore, it is said that they also contribute to the division of society. The textbooks of the Society contain descriptions that deny or glorify the history of Japanese aggression, causing conflict both at home and abroad (Kikuchi, 2012). Within Japan, the vagueness of war

responsibility and the emphasis on victimhood have deepened divisions in society. There are also increasing instances of conflicts of opinion between parents and teachers over the adoption of textbooks (Horiuchi, 2002). These indicate that the activities of the Society, which is supported by conservative right-wing forces, promote a rightward shift in society as a whole and foster a climate that rejects diversity (Koo, 2009).

In addition, the activities of the Society are prone to authoritarianism. The textbooks have been criticized for presenting a certain view of history as the absolute truth and excluding diverse interpretations and critical thinking (Kakuda, 2010). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the government controls the content of education and imposes a certain ideology through the textbook certification system (Horiuchi, 2002; Kikuchi, 2012). There are concerns that this will reduce the room for teachers to utilize their critical perspectives and strengthen the authoritarian structure in the field of education.

The impact on international relations is also an important issue. The textbooks cause friction with neighbouring countries such as China and South Korea by denying or glorifying Japan's history of aggression (Jiang, 2017). One-sided historical views create international distrust and are a factor in undermining stability throughout the region. Furthermore, the glorification of militaristic values has led to neighbouring countries being wary of the re-emergence of Japanese militarism, which is one of the factors that has increased international tensions.

Overall, it is clear that the activities of the Society have a wide-ranging impact on Japanese education and society. In particular, biased historical perceptions and distortion of facts can instil a false view of history in students and undermine fairness and diversity in society as a whole. To solve this problem, it is necessary to maintain neutrality in education and respect

a wide range of perspectives. In addition, efforts are needed to build trust through history education by deepening mutual understanding with the international community.

Background and impact of textbook adoption in Hitachi-Omiya City

The decision of the Hitachi-Omiya City Board of Education to adopt the Society's history textbook highlighted the diversity of historical awareness in Japanese society and the great influence of textbooks. There are both pros and cons to this adoption, with each position showing different perspectives on education and historical views.

First, those in favour praise the Society's textbook for being in line with the philosophy of "loving one's hometown and being proud of Japan's history" and for its positive portrayal of Japan's uniqueness and history¹⁴. In addition, the textbook's structure that allows students to learn about the characteristics of the era and world trends, and its consistency with the unique educational reforms being promoted by Hitachi-Omiya City, are also cited as reasons for support¹⁵.

On the other hand, there are also many opposing opinions, with criticism that the Society's textbook is vague about Japan's war responsibility, and while it advocates "breaking away from a self-deprecating view of history," it is lacking in descriptions of responsibility for aggression¹⁶. It has also been pointed out that the view of the Constitution is one-sided and problematic in light of the Fundamental Law of Education and the Course of Study¹⁷. These findings suggest that the contents of textbooks may be biased toward a particular ideology, raising questions about neutrality and diversity in education.

¹⁴ https://ibarakinews.jp/news/newsdetail.php?f_jun=17252863015934 (Last accessed 31/12/2024)

¹⁵ <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/lnews/mito/20240909/1070025265.html> (Last accessed 31/12/2024)

¹⁶ <https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/351997> (Last accessed 31/12/2024)

¹⁷ <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/lnews/mito/20240909/1070025265.html> (Last accessed 31/12/2024)

This argument can also be analysed from the perspective of ethnonationalism and ethno-symbolicism. As (Smith, 2009) points out, myths, memories, and symbols play an important role in forming ethnic identity, but the Society's textbook in particular incorporates a chosen people myth perspective that emphasizes the uniqueness and pride of Japan's history. While such a perspective increases the unity of the Japanese people, it also carries the risk of encouraging exclusive attitudes toward other ethnic groups. Furthermore, textbooks that present a specific interpretation of history have a significant impact on the formation of students' views of the nation and history, and educational content based on specific values may hinder diverse historical awareness.

The adoption of the Society's textbook was an opportunity to re-recognize the great influence and complexity of history education. The use of textbooks that are biased toward a particular ideology may hinder education that fosters students' critical thinking skills and diverse perspectives. Therefore, it is necessary to provide opportunities for students to come into contact with diverse materials and interpretations, and to cultivate the ability to learn and judge history independently. Furthermore, it is important for teachers to critically examine the contents of textbooks and play a role in supplementing any missing perspectives. Such efforts will help create an educational environment that fosters a balanced understanding of history.

Overall, the debate over the adoption of the Society's history textbooks could be a turning point for history education in Japan. There is a need for society as a whole to deepen discussion about the content of textbooks and their impact, and to reconsider the way history education should be conducted.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Previous research as a basis and methodology

The Purpose of Ishii (2012) is to clarify the characteristics of language usage in the "New History Textbook" which was produced by The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks and passed the examination in 2001, by comparing it with seven other junior high school history textbooks that passed the examination at the same time. For the analysis, the main text that describes the relationship between Japan and Asian countries from the Sino-Japanese War to the end of the Pacific War was selected and a comparative analysis was conducted between each textbook.

His research has pointed out that the uniqueness of this textbook lies in the descriptions that emphasise Japan's actions and historical awareness, and that it stands out from other textbooks in that it actively presents the writer's opinions, judgments, and awareness. In particular, there is a bias in the choice of terminology, such as not describing Japan's actions as "invasion" and using this specific term for wars conducted by other countries. It has also been pointed out that the book frequently uses expressions that obscure responsibility for Japan's military actions, which may reflect a specific historical awareness.

Furthermore, this textbook avoids neutral and objective descriptions and makes extensive use of subjective expressions that take Japan's position. For example, expressions such as "amazing victory" and "threat" appear more frequently than in other textbooks, clearly indicating the writer's position and opinion. The book's vocabulary is roughly twice as large as other textbooks, and it is also characterised by a large number of unique items and detailed descriptions. The findings of these previous studies will serve as an important foundation for this paper's deeper analysis of the bias in language use and descriptive attitudes in textbooks produced by The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks.

The research by Nishida (2023) indicates a progressive shift in the national curriculum towards the reinforcement of nationalism. Moreover, studies on Japanese English-language textbooks reveal an emphasis on a victim narrative of Japan, often neglecting responsibility for wartime atrocities. However, Ishii (2012) notes that the Society's textbooks, in contrast to the victim narrative frequently highlighted in English textbooks as revealed by Nishida (2023), mention the atomic bombings without any reference to the suffering caused, a detail present in many other textbooks. As categorised by Tanabe (2011a) cited above, there are three types of nationalism: purificationism, which defines a specific 'national people' (or 'internal people'), patriotism, which seeks to integrate the nation by demanding loyalty from these 'internal people', and xenophobia, which seeks to exclude 'non-internal people', or foreigners, from the nation. This study investigates the ideology promoted by the Society textbook and whether it differs from that of other textbooks.

Subjects of the research

The textbooks covered were Society textbooks, as well as the following seven Japanese junior high school history textbooks published by other companies (titles are translated by the writer of this paper):

1. Tokyo Shoseki, New Social Studies: History
2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 'Junior High School Social Studies: History, Opening the Future'
3. Teikoku Shoin: Social Studies: Junior High School History: Japan's Progress and World Movements
4. Yamakawa Shuppansha, Revised Edition: Japan and the World, Junior High School History
5. Nippon Bunkyo Shuppansha, 'Junior High School Social Studies: Historical Section'.
6. Jiyusha, 'Junior High School Social Studies: New History Textbook'.

7. Ikuhoshsha, 'New Japanese History'.

Regarding the historical period under examination, drawing on Ishii (2012), the study will focus on the main text of the sections describing the relationship between Japan and other Asian countries (including their relationships with Russia (Soviet Union), the United States, etc.) from the First Sino-Japanese War to the end of the Pacific War, a period particularly salient in the history textbook controversy (excluding headings, notes, figures, and columns).

The adoption rate of each textbook is as follows¹⁸:

Rank	Publisher	Number of copies	Share
1	Tokyo Shoseki	543854	49.5
2	Teikoku Shoin	313087	28.5
3	Kyoiku Shuppan	107290	9.8
4	Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan	104760	9.5
5	Yamakawa Shuppan	20263	1.8
6	Ikuhoshsha	4974	0.5
7	Manabisha	4545	0.4
8	Jiyusha	567	0.1
9	Reiwa Shoseki	78	0.0
Sum		1097622	100.0

(Naigai Kyoiku 2025.1.24)

¹⁸ Textbooks from 'Manabisha' and 'Reiwa Shoseki' were excluded from this survey due to their low adoption rates.

Research Methodology

The research employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to Wodak & Meyer (2016), CDA is a method for understanding how language functions in real-life contexts, extending beyond grammar and vocabulary to examine its connection with social structures, particularly power and inequality. While CDA focuses on discourse, this encompasses not only spoken language but also all forms of communication, including written texts, images, and even policies and political strategies. CDA views language as a social practice, meaning it is not neutral but is shaped by society and, in turn, contributes to its formation.

A central tenet of CDA is critique. This does not imply negativity in a pejorative sense. Rather, it involves a careful examination of social problems and the language used around them, aiming to reveal what is taken for granted and what may conceal inequalities and power imbalances. Frequently, the goal is to understand how language contributes to domination and how it might facilitate emancipation. CDA is concerned with power, referring to the greater influence or control that one group in society holds over others. CDA researchers analyse how language is used to create, maintain, and challenge these power relations. Moreover, ideology is another key concept. Ideologies can be understood as sets of beliefs and values shared by social groups. CDA analyses how language can express and disseminate these ideologies and how these ideologies can support existing power structures.

The specific methodological approach to CDA will incorporate the ten questions for describing the formal features of texts as presented by Fairclough (2015).

These ten questions can be grouped according to the focal point:

A. Examining Words (Lexis):

1. What do words tell us about experience? This prompts consideration of how the language used categorises the world and people's experiences. Are there specific ways of

classifying things? Are there frequent repetitions of particular words, or are multiple different words used to express the same thing?

2. What do words tell us about social relations? This focuses on whether the language is formal or informal and if there are polite ways of speaking, such as euphemisms. This helps in understanding the kind of relationships the speaker or writer is trying to establish.

3. What do words tell us about emotions and evaluations? This centres on the expressive aspect of language, how word choices reveal the speaker's or writer's assessments and attitudes.

4. Are there any hidden comparisons (metaphors)? Metaphors shape our understanding by comparing something to something else. This question asks to identify and consider the effects of the metaphors used.

B. Examining Sentences (Grammar):

5. How do grammatical choices represent experience? This involves looking at whether sentences are active or passive (who is doing the action). It also considers if abstract nouns (nominalisation) are used instead of verbs, which can hide who is responsible for actions. Are the sentences mainly affirmative or negative?

6. How do grammatical choices affect relationships? This examines the types of sentences used (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and how pronouns like "we" and "you" are used to include or exclude people. It also considers the use of words that show how definite or uncertain things are (modality).

7. How do grammatical choices express emotions and evaluations? This focuses on how grammar, particularly words indicating certainty or possibility (expressions of modality), reveals the speaker's or writer's perspective.

8. How are sentences connected? This considers how ideas are linked using words like "and," "but," and "because." It also looks at how words refer back to things mentioned earlier in the text.

C. Examining the Overall Structure of Texts:

9. What kinds of interaction are typical in this type of text? In conversations or interviews, are there typical rules about who speaks when and what they can say? Does one person seem to control the conversation?

10. Are there any predictable patterns or structures in the text? For example, do news articles usually present information in a specific order? Understanding the overall structure can reveal what is considered most important.

The information gathered through this detailed analysis will serve as the basis for interpreting and explaining the underlying power relations and ideologies.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS

CDA analysis of each textbook

1. Tokyo Shoseki

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choice

Descriptions of Actions: In relation to Japan’s involvement with Korea and China, the textbook uses terms such as “advance,” “struggle for influence,” “acquisition of rights and interests,” “sphere of influence,” “occupation,” “control,” and “annexation.” In particular, the use of “advance” in the early stages may be interpreted as a somewhat euphemistic expression that masks the violent nature of invasion and colonisation. Conversely, expressions such as “pushed forward colonial rule”, “suppressed resistance with military force,” “severely restricted,” “forcibly taken away,” “forced to work under harsh conditions,” and “severely repressed, resulting in many casualties” over Taiwan and Korea also appear, indicating the violent and oppressive aspects of colonial rule. The balance and context in which these terms appear influence how Japan’s actions are evaluated.

Depictions of Other Countries and Peoples: The Western powers are referred to as “the great powers,” with descriptions of their “invasions,” “imperialism,” and the “partitioning of China.” The Donghak Peasant Revolution¹⁹ in Korea is described with terms like “abandonment” and “rebellion,” while the Righteous Army is labelled a “resistance movement,” and the March First Independence Movement²⁰ is described as “declaring independence” and

¹⁹ The Peasant Rebellion was led by Donghak followers in Korea in 1894. It began as an uprising by peasants in Jeolla Province against the misrule of local officials. The Korean government requested that China send troops to suppress the rebellion. In response, Japan sent troops to oppose China, which ultimately resulted in the Sino-Japanese War.

²⁰ The Korean independence movement against Japanese colonial rule began on 1 March 1919 and continued for over a year. Spreading from cities to rural areas, the movement was ultimately suppressed by Japan, which sent in its military.

“the movement spread.” These lexical choices suggest how different forces and movements are positioned and evaluated.

Expressions of Emotion and Opinion: Expressions such as “strong opposition,” “assertions intensified within Japan,” “a heightened sense of rivalry,” “frustration exploded,” “strong resistance,” “harsh criticism,” “increased mistrust,” and “was welcomed” are used to depict the emotions and opinions of the people. This approach conveys not only events but also the atmosphere of the time. However, which emotions and opinions are highlighted and how they are expressed is significant. For example, in relation to the Manchurian Incident²¹, the statement “many newspapers supported the military’s actions, and the public, suffering from the effects of the Shōwa Depression²², welcomed them” emphasises domestic support for the military.

B. Tendencies Observed in Grammatical Structures

Active and Passive Voice, Nominalisation: Many actions are expressed in the active voice, clearly specifying the agent—for example: “Japan colonised...,” “the Qing ceded... to Japan,” “Japan annexed...,” “the Japanese army occupied...” On the other hand, passive constructions are also used—for instance, in learning prompts such as “How were the unequal treaties revised?” which downplay the agent. Nominalised phrases such as “the development of capitalism,” “the emergence of social problems,” and “the popularisation of culture” place

²¹ The explosion of the South Manchuria Railway at Liutiao Lake, a suburb of Mukden (now Shenyang), on 18 September 1931 marked the start of the Japanese military’s war of aggression in north-eastern China. Despite the fact that the Imperial Japanese Army had adopted a policy of non-expansion, the Japanese military, which was deployed in Manchuria at the time, proceeded to occupy the three northeastern provinces. The following year, Manchukuo was established, marking the start of the 15-year Sino-Japanese War.

²² The depression that occurred in Japan from 1930 to the following year. It was part of the Great Depression, which began the previous year. It impoverished rural areas and paved the way for war.

the focus on processes and outcomes, thereby making the agents and concrete actions less prominent.

Pronouns: Pronouns such as “we” or “us” are rarely used, and the textbook tends to describe events and groups objectively. However, the use of the word “nation” or “the people” in expressions such as “a sense of national consciousness became established,” “a sense of being a major country arose among the people,” and “the people endured increasingly difficult lives and cooperated in the war” can foster a sense of collective unity.

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Causal Relationships Between Events: The textbook not only traces the chronological sequence of events but also frequently implies causal relationships. Examples include: “Capitalism developed rapidly... in search of resources necessary for production and markets to sell its products, the great power advanced into Asia, Africa, and even the Pacific islands, eventually colonising most of these regions through military force... This movement is called imperialism.” “Following China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, the traditional East Asian international order centred on China collapsed,” “When the Great Depression began, ... the Nazis significantly expanded their power.” While these expressions aid historical understanding, they may also prompt readers to interpret one event as inevitably leading to the next.

Emphasis and Omission: There are variations in the amount of space and level of detail devoted to different topics. Japan’s modern industrial development and the culture and lifestyle of the Taishō Democracy era are described in relatively detailed terms. In contrast, while the lives of people under colonial rule and resistance movements are mentioned, the descriptions tend to be limited compared to those from the perspective of the colonisers. As for the

devastation of war, the textbook addresses topics such as the Nanjing Massacre²³, the Battle of Okinawa²⁴, air raids, the atomic bombings, and the impact of total war on civilian life, thereby highlighting negative aspects of the war to some extent. However, how these descriptions are positioned within the broader historical flow—such as how the war began and escalated—ultimately shapes readers’ understanding.

Conclusion

From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, the Tokyo Shoseki textbook does not merely present historical facts “neutrally.” Through its vocabulary choices, grammatical structures, and the composition of the text as a whole, it presents particular historical perspectives and ideologies to the reader. It portrays Japan’s modernisation, changes in its status within the international community, the complex domestic and international factors leading to war, and the impact of war, including human suffering. Especially the vocabulary used to explain Japan’s actions and the way causal relationships are presented may lead readers towards particular interpretations. Moreover, the balance in descriptions of various events and positions—for example, between the ruling and ruled, or the government/military and the public—may reflect power imbalances or naturalise certain standpoints.

2. Kyoiku Shuppan

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choice

Depictions of Other Countries and Events: The textbook refers to the actions of the Western powers with terms such as “invasion,” “colonial expansion,” and “powers advancing

²³ An incident in which the Japanese military massacred a large number of non-combatant civilians, prisoners of war and defeated soldiers in the city of Nanjing over a period of several months after occupying it in December 1937. The massacre is a historically controversial issue, with divided international perceptions.

²⁴ Fierce battles between the United States and Japan took place on Okinawa Island and its surrounding islands at the end of World War II (1 April – 23 June 1945). Over 100,000 islanders were killed.

into Asia.” Japan’s overseas expansion is described with phrases like “expanded its influence,” “brought under control,” “annexation,” “occupation,” “invasion,” and “advance.”

Expressions of Power Relations and Discriminatory Attitudes: The textbook states that after the First Sino-Japanese War, “feelings of superiority and discriminatory attitudes towards China and Korea also spread within Japan,” and that after the Russo-Japanese War, “a sense of superiority towards other Asian countries intensified.” These direct references to ideologies and discriminatory views that existed in Japan at the time are noteworthy.

Expressions Concerning Social Issues and Victims of War: Phrases such as “working under harsh conditions” (factory labourers), “significant damage” (Ashio Copper Mine pollution incident²⁵), “selling daughters²⁶” and “children with no lunch²⁷” depict social issues, inequality, and the harsh realities of war. Expressions like “numerous casualties,” “many victims,” “cities reduced to ruins,” and “people driven to mass suicide” convey the human suffering caused by war. These phrases do not merely list facts; they function as expressions that aim to evoke emotion and opinions in the reader.

B. Perspectives Observed in Grammatical Choices

Use of the Passive Voice: The passive voice is frequently used in the textbook, as in “...was signed,” “...was enacted,” “...was recognised,” “...was suppressed.” Passive constructions often obscure or de-emphasise the agent of the action. For example, in the phrase “The Peace Preservation Law was enacted,” the government, which enacted the law, is not

²⁵ A series of incidents related to the damage caused by mineral poisons that leaked from the Ashio Copper Mine in Tochigi Prefecture, became a major social issue from the 1880s to the 1900s. This is said to be the origin of the pollution movement in Japan.

²⁶ An incident occurred during the Showa Depression (1930–1931), when farmers in the Tohoku region sold their daughters to pay off debts caused by a severe harvest resulting from a cold wave that hit the region.

²⁷ A phenomenon also occurred during the Showa Depression. During this period, cold weather in the Tohoku region resulted in poor harvests and a rise in the number of children unable to bring lunch to school.

grammatically the subject. Likewise, the description “residents were driven to mass suicide” (in the Battle of Okinawa) uses the passive voice, and the agent—namely the Japanese military—is not placed in the forefront of the sentence.

Nominalisation: Phrases such as “revision of treaties,” “colonial expansion,” “military expansion,” “economic advancement,” “cooperative diplomacy,” “Manchurian Incident,” and “Japanisation²⁸” nominalise inherently dynamic actions or processes. This grammatical strategy can make the agent or specific background events more abstract and present them as objective facts or phenomena.

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Causal Relationships Between Events: The textbook generally follows a chronological structure, using conjunctions and phrases such as “and then,” “furthermore,” “however,” “as a result,” and “against this backdrop” to show the relationships between events. For example, regarding the Manchurian Incident, the textbook states that “as China was nearly unified under the Nationalist Government, its influence began to reach Manchuria, where Japan had concentrated interests such as the South Manchuria Railway.” It continues, “arguments increased that Japan’s interests should be protected by force,” presenting domestic Japanese arguments of the time. While this sentence describes contemporary Japanese opinion, it may also prompt interpretations that justify the Manchurian Incident (e.g., that it was a necessary action to protect Japan’s interests). The textbook does, however, clearly identify the railway explosion by the Kwantung Army as the cause of the incident.

Conclusion

²⁸ A series of policies implemented in colonial Korea and Taiwan before World War II to perpetuate Japanese rule and to encourage Koreans and Taiwanese to cooperate with Japan in the war effort. Koreans and Taiwanese were forced to receive a Japanese-language education and to visit shrines.

The Kyoiku Shuppan textbook appears to attempt a relatively detailed and multifaceted description of Japan's modernisation, foreign relations, wars, and societal changes. It also touches upon the negative aspects of Japan's history, including labour issues, social movements, environmental pollution, resistance movements in colonies, hardship during wartime, the sacrifices of Okinawan civilians and the issue of mass suicides, the forced mobilisation of people from colonies and occupied territories (Koreans, Chinese, etc.) under harsh conditions, and forced assimilation policy. This suggests that the textbook does not uncritically affirm particular ideologies or powers (e.g., nationalism or discriminatory attitudes), but rather seeks to reflect on the problems society faced and those who suffered as a result of Japan's actions. On the whole, this textbook excerpt can be said to provide a relatively candid account of the various dimensions of modern Japanese history, including its more difficult and troubling aspects.

3. Teikoku Shoin

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choice

Depictions of Other Countries and Events: The textbook describes the expansion of Western powers overseas as “actively advancing abroad,” “using military force,” and “colonising and controlling regions with less economic and technological development,” using terms such as “invasion,” “colonies,” and “control” in reference to Asia and Africa.

Depictions of Japan's Overseas Expansion: Japan's overseas expansion is described with expressions like “struggle for power,” “attempt to extend influence,” “military intervention,” “dispatched troops to Korea,” “began colonial rule of Taiwan,” “proceeded with the colonisation of Korea,” “annexed Korea and made it a colony,” and “attempted to place Manchuria under its influence” and “occupied Manchuria.” The choice of these words, along with explicit descriptions such as Japan's actions after the Russo-Japanese War being “active

as an imperialist nation” and its “interaction with the peoples of Asia,” suggests the textbook’s evaluative stance. The repeated use of words like “annexation” and “occupation” in the sections on the annexation of Korea and the Manchurian Incident also reflects the textbook’s attitude toward these events.

Expressions of Power Relations and Discriminatory Attitudes: There is a direct statement that “feelings of superiority and discriminatory attitudes towards China and Korea spread within Japan” after the First Sino-Japanese War. Similarly, after the Russo-Japanese War, “a sense of superiority over other Asian countries intensified.” This explicit reference to the existence of superiority complexes and discriminatory ideologies within Japan indicates an intention to address issues of power and inequality. Regarding Japan’s policies in colonies and occupied territories, expressions such as “rule by force,” “assimilation policy,” “opportunities to learn Korean culture and history were reduced,” “creation of Japanese-style surnames (Sōshi-kaimei),” and “forced mobilisation under poor working conditions” are used, indicating the harmful nature of Japan’s actions and the suffering of colonised peoples.

Expressions Concerning Social Issues and Victims of War: The textbook depicts social inequality and the plight of the vulnerable during industrial development using phrases such as “worked under harsh conditions” (factory workers), “serious damage” (Ashio pollution incident), “the sale of young girls became a problem,” and “children with no lunch.” War-related expressions include “approximately 80,000 Japanese soldiers were killed,” “many casualties,” “numerous victims,” “many civilians were also killed” (Nanjing Massacre), “ground battles involving civilians” (Battle of Okinawa), “people driven to mass suicide,” “numerous victims of the atomic bomb,” “cities reduced to ruins,” “numerous casualties,” and “scars of war.” These repeated references to the horrors and victims of war indicate a conscious attempt to shed light on those who suffered under state power and conflict, including people from colonies and occupied territories and Okinawan civilians.

B. Tendencies Observed in Grammatical Structures

Use of the Passive Voice: As with previous textbooks, the passive voice is frequently used in the Teikoku Shoin textbook, with phrases such as “...was signed,” “...was enacted,” “...was recognised,” and “...was suppressed.” In particular, there are contexts where the agent of the action is unclear or de-emphasised (e.g., “The Peace Preservation Law was enacted,” “Labour movements were severely suppressed”). The phrase “people were driven to mass suicide” in reference to the Battle of Okinawa is another example in which the agent (the Japanese military) is not explicitly the subject, showing how grammatical choices can influence historical perception.

Nominalisation: Abstract noun phrases such as “revision of treaties,” “colonial expansion,” “military expansion,” “economic advancement,” “annexation of Korea,” and “Manchurian Incident” are used frequently. These expressions serve to abstract and reify specific actions and processes, presenting them as fixed historical facts.

Use of Conjunctions and Indications of Relationship: Conjunctions such as “therefore,” “however,” and “on the other hand,” along with phrases like “against this backdrop,” are used to clearly indicate causal and contrastive relationships between events. In particular, the use of contrastive conjunctions like “however” and “on the other hand” suggests the presence of differing perspectives and encourages more multifaceted understanding.

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Causal Relationships Between Events: Events are described in chronological order, with dedicated chapters or sections on major wars (Sino-Japanese, Russo-Japanese, World Wars I and II), industrial development, social change, and the Taishō Democracy. The structure allocates considerable attention not only to the “bright” aspects of history, such as industrial and military development, but also to the “dark” sides, including social problems, labour

movements, pollution, colonial rule, and war-related suffering. This suggests an intention to present a multi-perspective view of history.

Presentation of Diverse Perspectives: The textbook mentions both pro-war and anti-war opinions, various voices among the populace (dissatisfaction, distrust, support, welcome), and movements by diverse social groups such as workers, farmers, women, Burakumin²⁹ (discriminated communities), and the Ainu people. This indicates an attempt to depict the experiences and perspectives of a wide range of people—not just those in positions of power.

Conclusion

The Teikoku Shoin's textbook does not simply narrate a tale of success or national glory. Rather, it attempts to describe in detail and with candour the realities of Japanese imperialist actions, the domestic and international suffering caused by war, the social inequality behind industrial development, and the movements of people striving for freedom and rights. Overall, it sheds relatively ample light on power relations, inequality, and social issues in modern Japanese history. This makes it a discourse that can serve as an important foundation for readers in forming a critical historical consciousness.

4. Yamakawa Shuppan

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choice

Depictions of Other Countries and Events: Regarding the actions of Western powers, the textbook uses terms such as “actively advanced overseas,” “colonised many regions,” and “invasion.” It also emphasises the competitive nature of imperialism with expressions like “competed to expand their areas of control,” “confrontation,” and “gained concessions (rights

²⁹ An issue regarding a district in which many people are said to be descendants of groups that suffered severe discrimination under the Edo period's class system, and who continue to experience unfair discrimination today. Although the residents' legal status was abolished in 1871, social discrimination remains deeply rooted to this day.

and profits).” These words present the realities of imperialism in a relatively straightforward manner.

Depictions of Japan’s Overseas Expansion: Japan’s involvement with Korea and China is described using phrases such as “Japan and Qing clashed over Korea,” “competed for influence,” “sent troops,” “advanced colonial rule” (in Taiwan), “while advancing the colonisation of Korea,” “annexed Korea and made it a colony,” “governed Korea with military power,” “attempted to bring Manchuria under its influence,” and “occupied the whole of Manchuria.” Notably, the textbook explicitly uses terms like “colonial rule,” “annexation,” and “occupation,” clearly identifying the nature of Japan’s actions. The description of the Nanjing Massacre stating “not only soldiers but also many civilians were killed” is a direct expression, which suggests the textbook’s attitude towards the event.

Expressions of Power Relations and Discriminatory Attitudes: After the First Sino-Japanese War, it states that “feelings of superiority and discriminatory attitudes towards China and Korea spread,” and after the Russo-Japanese War, “a sense of superiority over Asian countries intensified.” These are explicit references to discriminatory attitudes that existed within Japan at the time. Regarding colonial rule, expressions such as “assimilation policy,” “many Koreans suffered disadvantages,” and “resistance was suppressed by force” shed light on the experiences and suffering of the colonised. The textbook also uses the term “discrimination” to describe the treatment of Burakumin and the Ainu people, indicating a willingness to address social inequality.

Expressions Concerning Social Issues and Victims of War: As negative aspects of industrialisation, the textbook uses expressions such as “social issues arising from the Industrial Revolution,” “forced to work under harsh conditions” (workers), “miserable conditions” (coal miners), “serious damage” (pollution incidents), “the sale of young girls became a problem,”

and “children with no lunch,” thereby describing the situation of society’s most vulnerable. Regarding war damages, phrases like “numerous casualties,” “many sacrifices,” “suffering” (burden on the people), “scars of war,” “ground battles involving civilians” (Okinawa), “people driven to mass suicide,” “many victims due to the atomic bomb,” and “cities reduced to ruins” are used. These expressions aim not merely to list facts, but to convey the reality and pain of the victims to the reader.

B. Tendencies Observed in Grammatical Structures

Use of the Passive Voice: As with the other textbooks, the passive voice is frequently observed: “...was signed,” “...was enacted,” “...was recognised,” “...was suppressed.” For example, “The Peace Preservation Law was enacted” does not make the government, which enacted the law, the grammatical subject. The expression “people were driven to mass suicide” uses the passive voice to imply that the action was caused by external pressure, but the agent of that pressure is not explicitly stated.

Nominalisation: Words like “Industrial Revolution,” “imperialism,” “treaty revision,” “colonial expansion,” “military expansion,” “social problems,” “annexation of Korea,” “Manchurian Incident,” “Sino-Japanese War,” and “Second World War” are frequently used. These nominalised expressions abstract dynamic historical events or processes, presenting them as fixed concepts.

Use of Conjunctions and Indications of Relationship: Conjunctions such as “therefore,” “however,” and “on the other hand,” and phrases like “against this backdrop” are used to clearly indicate causal and contrastive relationships between events. In particular, the frequent use of “however” and “on the other hand” implies the existence of multiple aspects or contrasting circumstances within the historical narrative, forming a discourse structure aimed at presenting complex historical images.

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Arrangement and Emphasis of Events: Events are presented in chronological order, with chapters or sections dedicated to specific themes and events such as the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese war, the Industrial Revolution, social problems, the First World War, social movements, and the Second World War. Especially, the textbook allocates significant space not only to the “bright” aspects of history such as modernisation and military victories, but also to the “dark” aspects, including war damages, colonial oppression and resistance, and social inequality—indicating a structure that places value on both.

Presentation of Diverse Perspectives: The textbook includes both pro-war and anti-war views, as well as various public responses (dissatisfaction, support, etc.). It also refers to the existence and movements of diverse social groups such as workers, farmers, women, Burakumin, and the Ainu people. This indicates a discourse structure that attempts to include the experiences and perspectives of not only the ruling class or dominant actors, but also marginalised groups.

Conclusion

The Yamakawa Shuppan textbook can be regarded as a discourse that describes modern Japanese history in relatively detailed and specific terms, including the realities of Western and Japanese imperialist actions, colonial rule, and the inequality and suffering brought about by modernisation and war. Overall, the textbook is consciously composed with attention to aspects such as power, inequality, and social diversity in modern Japanese history. It offers a foundation for readers to develop a critical and multifaceted historical understanding.

5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choice

Imperialism and the Actions of the Great Powers: The textbook uses terms such as “invasion,” “colonies,” “military aggression,” “control,” “expanded influence,” “extended power,” “gained concessions (rights and profits),” and “partition” in reference to the actions of Western powers and Japan. These terms aim to convey the realities of imperialism in terms of power and domination. For example, in the following passage: “Amidst a decline in Western interest in Asia, the Japanese government, in 1915, submitted the Twenty-One Demands to the Chinese government. Since the demands were aimed at expanding Japan’s continental interests, China strongly opposed them as an infringement of its sovereignty. Nonetheless, backed by military force, Japan compelled China to accept many of the demands.” Here, Japan’s pursuit of expanded influence and the use of military pressure are explicitly described.

Japan’s Foreign Actions and Resulting Suffering: Japan’s actions towards Korea and China are described with phrases such as “annexed Korea and made it a colony,” “advanced colonial rule backed by military force,” “promoted assimilation policy,” “virtually occupied the whole of Manchuria,” “invaded northern China,” “killed many civilians (Nanjing Massacre),” “carried out severe mobilisation,” “brought people to Japan against their will,” “forced to work under harsh conditions,” “even women were made to work in warzones,” and “those deemed anti-Japanese were severely repressed, resulting in many victims.” These expressions do not present Japan’s actions in a positive light but rather highlight their oppressive and violent nature. Notably, the use of the word “killed” regarding the Nanjing Massacre, and the detailed description of forced labour mobilisation from Korea and China, are examples of vocabulary that conveys the reality of victimisation. Similarly, the expression “some people were driven to commit mass suicide” in reference to the Battle of Okinawa implies the coercive nature of the event.

Social Problems and Inequality: As negative aspects of modernisation, the textbook includes phrases such as: “Various social problems such as poverty and discrimination

surfaced,” “harsh, long hours of labour for low wages,” “unsanitary dormitories,” “miserable conditions,” “tuberculosis deaths increased, becoming a serious social issue,” “child labour in factories was also seen and criticised,” “serious pollution from mining,” “serious environmental issues,” “many lost their land and became tenant farmers,” “selling daughters to pay off debts,” and “children unable to bring lunch to school (children with no lunch).” These words focus on the suffering of society’s vulnerable and aim to highlight inequality. The textbook also uses the term “discrimination” in reference to Burakumin and Ainu people, noting that they “sought equality as human beings” and engaged in movements for “liberation from discrimination,” which suggests a critical stance on social injustice.

The Horrors of War: In discussing the damage caused by war, the textbook includes highly explicit and detailed expressions, such as: “Numerous casualties,” “an enormous number,” “endured harsh living conditions,” “severe controls,” “shortages,” “national life became more difficult,” “intense air raids,” “cities turned to ashes,” “fierce fighting involving civilians,” “many victims,” “people were driven to mass suicide,” “atomic bombs were dropped,” “instantly annihilated by heat rays of several thousand degrees and fierce blasts,” “exposed to massive radiation,” “within a few months, the number of victims reached over 100,000 in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki, the majority of whom were civilians,” “due to this cruel weapon, survivors still suffer from radiation-related illnesses, and the number of victims continues to grow,” “many people also died from starvation or were left behind as war orphans,” “many were taken prisoner and interned in Siberia, forced to work under harsh conditions for a long time, resulting in numerous deaths,” “tens of millions of victims worldwide,” and “especially the high number of civilian casualties left deep scars.” These phrases highlight the massive and tragic human cost of war, particularly for civilians, and emphasise its inhumane and devastating nature.

B. Tendencies Observed in Grammatical Structures

Use of the Passive Voice: As in the previous textbooks, the passive voice is frequently used: “...was called,” “...was controlled as...,” “...was reduced,” “...was confiscated,” “...was forced.” These constructions convey actions carried out by specific agents while de-emphasising or omitting those agents. In particular, expressions like “people were driven to mass suicide” focus on the victims’ situation while leaving the agents of coercion unspecified.

Nominalisation: Words such as “treaty revision,” “imperialism,” “Industrial Revolution,” “social issues,” “annexation of Korea,” “Manchurian Incident,” “Sino-Japanese War,” and “Second World War” are used to present complex events and processes as conceptualised, abstract entities. This helps organise the historical narrative while potentially reducing the visibility of specific agents and contexts.

Use of Conjunctions and Indications of Relationship: The textbook uses conjunctions such as “therefore,” “however,” “on the other hand,” “moreover,” and “thus,” along with expressions like “against this backdrop” and “due to...” to clearly indicate causality, contrast, or additional information. These choices contribute to a discourse structure that helps readers understand cause-and-effect relationships and the multiplicity of historical perspectives.

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Arrangement and Emphasis of Events: Events are generally presented in chronological order, with sections or subsections focused on themes such as imperialism, war, the Industrial Revolution, social problems, social movements, the wartime regime, and war damages. Particular attention is given to the consequences of war, the negative aspects of modernisation, and the experiences of marginalised groups such as workers, farmers, women, Burakumin, Ainu people, and colonised populations. This structure indicates a focus not only on dominant historical developments but also on those most affected by inequality and power dynamics.

Presentation of Diverse Perspectives: The textbook includes both pro-war and anti-war perspectives, various public reactions (dissatisfaction, support, riots), and the experiences and movements of a wide range of social groups. This reflects a discourse structure that seeks to present perspectives beyond those of the powerful or mainstream, incorporating the voices of diverse peoples, including those from colonised or occupied regions.

Conclusion

The *Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan* textbook can be regarded as a discourse that describes the realities of modern Japanese history—including Western and Japanese imperialist actions, colonial rule and resistance, and the inequalities and suffering caused by modernisation and war—in a relatively detailed and specific manner. In particular, its choice of vocabulary when describing colonial rule and war damage is concrete and frank. Moreover, its attention to social issues and the movements of marginalised groups suggests a deliberate intention to highlight the darker sides of history and the experiences of the oppressed. Overall, the textbook is consciously composed with an awareness of power, inequality, and diversity in Japanese modern history, and it provides a foundation for readers to develop a critical and multifaceted historical consciousness.

6. Jiyūsha

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choice

Categorisation, Repetition, and Variation: *Jiyūsha*'s textbook excerpt includes distinctive word choices not commonly found in other textbooks. For example, the phrase “Under the slogan ‘*gashinshōtan*³⁰’ (enduring hardship to take revenge), the entire nation, both government and people, began striving to enhance national power in order to counter Russia”

³⁰ To endure long trials and hardships in order to avenge one's enemy or achieve a great goal. This word originates from ancient Chinese legend.

is used to describe post-Sino-Japanese War Japanese society. The term “gashinshōtan” encapsulates the national determination and emotional sentiment toward Russia. Similarly, it states that after the Russo-Japanese War, “‘The Yellow Peril’ theory began to spread in the West,” using vocabulary that reflects how the West viewed Japan with suspicion. Regarding the Pacific War, the term “Greater East Asia War” is used alongside “Pacific War,” as in: “It was named the Greater East Asia War (after the war, it became known as the Pacific War),” and the conflict is positioned as a war of “self-existence and self-defence.” These vocabulary choices clearly reflect a particular interpretation and evaluation of events, guiding readers toward a specific understanding.

Evaluative Language and Authorial Attitude: In describing scientists who contributed to Japan’s modernisation, individuals such as Kitasato Shibasaburō³¹, Noguchi Hideyo³², and Nagaoka Hantarō³³ are praised with expressions like: “Japanese scientists conducting world-leading research emerged,” “reached levels that attracted global attention,” and “scholars who earned worldwide acclaim also appeared.” These phrases indicate a highly positive evaluative stance. Regarding party politics, the textbook uses expressions such as: “In order to overthrow corrupt parties and financial cliques, army and navy officers formed a government centred on the military and assassinated Prime Minister Inukai in the May 15 Incident³⁴ (1932),” and “There was growing criticism that political parties prioritised the interests of zaibatsu³⁵ conglomerates, ignored public opinion, and were obsessed with political strife.” Such wording

³¹ Japanese bacteriologist (1852-1931).

³² Japanese bacteriologist (1876-1928).

³³ Japanese physicist (1865-1950).

³⁴ An incident that occurred on 15 May 1932. Young naval officers, outraged by rural poverty and political corruption, joined forces with right-wing civilians to attack the official residence of the Prime Minister and the Bank of Japan. This resulted in the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi. The era of party cabinets came to an end and the military gained more influence.

³⁵ A family or clan that had monopoly control over large capital and large corporations. Financial cliques.

suggests a critical view of party politics and zaibatsu conglomerates, highlights the background conditions that led to the military's rise to power.

Notable Vocabulary Absence: The term 'Nanjing Massacre' was not used in the Jiyusha text. This is a notable feature of the Jiyusha textbook discourse, as the following textbooks all mention 'Nanjing Massacre': 1. Tokyo Shoseki, 2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppan, 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan.

B. Tendencies Observed in Grammatical Structures

Active and Passive Voice: The textbook often uses the active voice to describe actions and victories of the Japanese military. For example: “The Japanese army fought advantageously and achieved victory,” “General Nogi’s army captured the Port Arthur fortress and won the Battle of Mukden (description from the Sino-Japanese war),” and “The Combined Fleet under Admiral Tōgō confronted Russia’s Baltic Fleet at Tsushima and achieved a military success (description from the Russo-Japanese war)”. These active constructions emphasise Japan’s initiative and strength. In contrast, when describing disasters like the Great Kantō Earthquake, the passive voice is used: “Numerous homes, important buildings, and cultural institutions were destroyed,” which objectively depicts the extent of the damage.

Pronouns: The pronoun “Japan” frequently appears as the subject throughout the text, reinforcing a focus on Japan’s actions and standpoint. For instance, with the context of colonisation, “In order to protect Japan’s security and interests in Manchuria, stabilising Korea was deemed necessary,” and “The Japanese government proceeded with the annexation of Korea and established the Government-General of Korea.” These uses of “Japan” as the grammatical subject support a discourse that could imply the legitimacy of Japan’s relationship with and domination over Korea.

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Arrangement and Emphasis of Events: The textbook follows a generally chronological structure with clearly defined sections and thematic learning tasks—typical of many textbooks. However, the amount of space dedicated to particular events indicates what the text regards as important. For example, based on the table of contents and actual content, significant space is allocated to events such as the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, the Manchurian Incident, and the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War, suggesting that these external developments are considered central themes. Furthermore, the descriptions of the war process, particularly Japan's victory, are far more detailed than in other textbooks.

Characteristics of Jiyūsha's Narrative

Nationalism and a Sense of Unity: Phrases like “The Japanese people accepted the government's policy as their own and cooperated in the war,” and “The people, enduring increasingly difficult lives, cooperated in the war. Many citizens worked hard and fought bravely, wishing for victory,” emphasise national unity in the face of hardship. Such language promotes a vision of patriotism and an ideal image of the citizen, potentially reinforcing a nationalist ideology.

Depictions of Military Power and Party Politics: Descriptions of incidents such as the May 15 and February 26³⁶ Incidents, as well as resistance to the London Naval Treaty³⁷ by the military and nationalists, reflect a shift in the power structure away from party politics toward

³⁶ A coup d'état launched by young army officers belonging to the Imperial Way faction. In the early hours of 26 February 1936, they attacked the official residence of the Prime Minister and the Metropolitan Police Department, killing ministers and occupying central Tokyo. This marked the beginning of subsequent military intervention in the cabinet.

³⁷ A naval treaty signed on 22 April 1930 among the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, France, and Italy. The treaty aimed to limit the number of auxiliary vessels that could be possessed. Compared to the United States and Britain, Japan was particularly restricted in the number of auxiliary vessels it could possess, which caused strong opposition within the navy and raised the issue of infringement of supreme command.

the military. By presenting the public's dissatisfaction and distrust in party politics, the textbook may implicitly justify the rise of the military.

Foreign Relations and Power Struggles: Events such as the Triple Intervention³⁸, the Russian occupation of Manchuria after the Boxer Rebellion³⁹, and the ABCD encirclement⁴⁰ are portrayed as pressure from Western powers and Russia. This framing emphasises the difficult international environment Japan faced and may be part of a discourse that legitimises Japan's military expansion and foreign policy.

Relations with Asian Countries: Although the textbook does mention resistance to Japan's occupation and the hopes of independence in Asia, it also describes Japan's role in "liberating" and "developing" Asia. This creates a complex narrative surrounding Japan's involvement in Asia and suggests multiple interpretations of its impact.

Conclusion

Jiyūsha's textbook describes Japan's modernisation as a necessary effort to survive in a world dominated by the Western powers. It portrays Japan's transformation into a major power following the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars, the expansion of military power, and the unity of the people during wartime. Descriptions of the Manchurian Incident and the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War place strong emphasis on external causes such as Chinese

³⁸ This was an incident in which Russia, France, and Germany interfered in Japan's affairs following the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, forcing the return of the Liaodong Peninsula to China. Russia, fearing that Japan's influence would spread into China after its victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, encouraged Germany and France to cooperate in limiting Japanese influence.

³⁹ An anti-foreign movement by the Chinese people in 1899-1900 against the advance of the great powers. Beginning in Shandong, the Boxer Rebellion spread throughout northern China and culminated in an attack on the various embassies in Beijing. This prompted the dispatch of allied forces from Japan, Britain, the United States, Russia, Germany, France, Italy and Austria, who put down the movement.

⁴⁰ An economic blockade of Japan by the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands and China. It was implemented in the late 1930s in response to the overseas expansion and conflicts of the Empire of Japan. The blockade involved restricting and banning the export of strategic materials such as oil and scrap iron. 'ABCD' stands for the initials of the four countries in the Allied camp: the United States, Great Britain, China and the Netherlands.

actions and Soviet/Comintern influence, implying the legitimacy of Japan's actions. The textbook also devotes attention to the damages Japan suffered at the end of the Second World War, such as the atomic bombings, Soviet intervention, and internment in Siberia. Notably, it does not mention certain negative aspects covered in other textbooks, such as the Nanjing Massacre, suggesting selective omission and the construction of a particular historical narrative. This selective discourse is key to understanding what kind of historical consciousness the textbook aims to instil in its readers.

7. Ikuhoshu

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choice

Descriptions of Actions: Japan's foreign involvement is described with terms such as "advance," "attempted to expand its influence," "sphere of influence," "annexation," and "southward advance." These words sometimes frame military actions and colonisation as part of a broader strategy—e.g. "In order to counter Qing control over Korea, Japan prioritised strengthening its military capabilities." The war is also framed as one of "self-existence and self-defence." In contrast, the actions of Western powers are described as "the great powers," with expressions such as "invasion," "partition," and "pressure." Russia's policies are described as part of its "southward expansion," and its occupations are also explained in military terms. The Chinese Boxer Rebellion is described as the action of "a mob," while the Chinese Nationalist Government's efforts are labelled as "anti-Japanese movements" and "strong demands for the return of concessions." These vocabulary choices appear to highlight external pressures and threats, forming part of a discourse that emphasises Japan's defensive posture.

Expressions of Emotion and Opinion: Terms such as "felt a sense of crisis," "provoked public backlash," "the people sought strength to oppose Russia," "gave hope," "strengthened a

sense of caution,” “resentment increased,” “dissatisfaction rose,” and “placed expectations upon” are used to describe public sentiment. These choices deepen the narrative by illustrating how people reacted to events. However, the emotions and opinions presented are selective—e.g. terms like “determination to resist” and “gashinshōtan (enduring hardship to take revenge),” portray the people as unified and determined in the face of foreign threats.

Notable Vocabulary Absence: The term 'Nanjing Massacre' was also not used in the Ikuhoshia text. This lack of vocabulary may indicate a discourse strategy that manipulates the focus and interpretation of events by either avoiding reference to specific historical facts or using different terminology (e.g. 'Nanjing was occupied, but Chiang Kai-shek relocated his headquarters to Chongqing and continued to fight with the support of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union').

B. Tendencies Observed in Grammatical Structures

Active and Passive Voice: Japan and the Japanese military are frequently described using active voice, with clearly stated agents: “Japan devoted its full efforts to treaty revision,” “Japan became an equal of the Western powers,” “The Japanese military defeated Qing forces in various areas,” “Japan poured all its national power into the war,” “Japan signed the Japan-Korea Protocol under military pressure,” “The Japanese military advanced southward and occupied Singapore.” This tends to emphasise Japan’s initiative and achievements. Conversely, when describing Japan as the victim, passive constructions are more common: “Pressure was exerted,” “Was driven into a corner,” “There were casualties,” “Was attacked,” “There were deaths,” “Was dropped (the bomb).” These choices may frame Japan’s actions as strong and decisive, while portraying its suffering as imposed from the outside.

Pronouns: Inclusive pronouns like “we” or “our” are rarely used; instead, the text maintains an objective tone. However, the word “(nation) people/citizen⁴¹” frequently appears as a subject, often highlighting unity and collective struggle: “The people acted in unity,” “The people’s views were more easily reflected in politics,” “Many citizens simply hoped for victory, encouraging one another and enduring hardship.”

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Causal Relationships Between Events: The text does not merely follow a chronological order; it frequently implies causality. Examples include: “Amidst such circumstances, Japan felt a sense of crisis and sought to become equal to the Western powers,” “Because tariff autonomy was denied... the terms were extremely unfavourable,” “Britain, seeking to counter Russian southward expansion, aimed to foster good relations with Japan. As a result, the abolition of extraterritoriality was realised,” “Qing exposed its fragility, prompting European nations to aggressively seek influence in China.” These descriptions help readers grasp historical logic, but may also suggest that certain developments were inevitable or justified.

Emphasis and Omission: Significant attention is given to military conflicts, foreign relations, and the domestic sacrifices and efforts accompanying them. Topics that receive detailed description include, Japan’s victories in the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars, increased international status, the Siberian Intervention, the impact of the Great Depression and responses by major powers (e.g. bloc economies, fascism, Soviet planning), the Manchurian Incident and its consequences, the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Pacific War (Greater East Asia War), and late-war devastation (air raids, Battle of Okinawa, atomic bombings, internment in Siberia). Although the text mentions resistance and life under colonial rule in Asia, these topics are

⁴¹ The Japanese word is the same: '国民'; However, it is more natural to translate differently depending on the context.

treated more briefly compared to Japan's actions or international affairs. As previously noted, the absence of terms like "Nanjing Massacre" indicates a tendency to minimise or omit certain negative aspects of history. Meanwhile, Japan's scientific and cultural developments are mentioned but are not a central focus compared to military or diplomatic themes.

Conclusion

The Ikuhousha textbook constructs a narrative in which modern Japan, faced with a harsh international environment dominated by Western powers, enhanced its military and national strength to survive. It focuses on foreign policy, military conflict, and national unity, framing Japan's actions—especially expansion and war—as somewhat inevitable or necessary responses to external pressure (e.g. Western encirclement, Russian southward policy, the ABCD encirclement).

The textbook also highlights the hardships and damages Japan endured during the Second World War (air raids, atomic bombings, Siberian internment). Especially, it omits certain events mentioned in other textbooks—such as the Nanjing Massacre—suggesting that the discourse selectively avoids negative aspects of Japanese history. This selectivity plays a key role in shaping the kind of historical consciousness the textbook aims to instil in readers.

Comparative Discussion of Textbook Discourse Analysis

A. Tendencies Observed in Vocabulary Choices

Depictions of Japan's Foreign Actions: In many textbooks, Japan's involvement in Korea and China is described using the term "advance". However, at the same time, terms that more directly indicate domination—such as "colonial rule", "annexation", and "occupation"—are also employed. In particular, in the excerpts from 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhousha, the Second World War is referred to both as the "Greater East Asia War" and a "war of self-existence and self-defence," using vocabulary that clearly implies a specific interpretation of the war's

objectives and character. By contrast, the other textbooks predominantly use terms like “Second Sino-Japanese War” or “Pacific War.”

Depictions of Negative Aspects, Victimhood, and Inequality: Many textbooks refer to the social problems that arose during the process of modernisation—such as poor working conditions, poverty, and pollution—as well as to the sense of superiority or discriminatory attitudes within Japan towards other peoples and nations. In particular, textbooks 2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppan, and 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan frequently employ vocabulary that draws attention to social disparities and inequality. Words like “victims,” “casualties,” “suffering,” and “damage” are commonly used in relation to the impacts of war and colonial rule. However, the degree of detail varies depending on the event. For instance, the Nanjing Massacre is described using terms such as “killing” in textbooks 1. Tokyo Shoseki, 2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppan, and 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan. In contrast, no reference to the “Nanjing Massacre” was found in the excerpts from 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhousha, suggesting the possibility of discursive strategies aimed at avoiding or reframing certain negative aspects.

B. Tendencies Observed in Grammatical Structures

Use of the Passive Voice: All textbook excerpts make frequent use of the passive voice. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the passive voice can function to obscure the agent responsible for an action. For example, in describing the suffering of Okinawan civilians during the Battle of Okinawa, many textbooks use the passive construction “were driven to commit mass suicide.” This grammatical structure places emphasis on the victim’s experience, while de-emphasising the agent of coercion—in this case, the Japanese military—by not presenting it as the grammatical subject.

Conjunctions and Phrasal Markers: Conjunctions that indicate relationships between events—such as “and then,” “however,” “on the other hand,” “as a result,” and phrases like “against this backdrop”—are widely used across all textbooks. In particular, textbooks such as 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppansha, and 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan make frequent use of contrastive conjunctions like “however” and “on the other hand,” suggesting a discourse structure that seeks to emphasise the complexity and multi-faceted nature of history.

C. Tendencies Observed in the Overall Structure of the Text

Presentation of Learning Tasks: All textbooks feature learning prompts or questions at the beginning of chapters or sections, encouraging students to approach the content with a critical or thematic focus. Although the exact focus of these tasks varies slightly, many direct attention to the “causes” or “background” of events—especially from the perspective of Japan or in relation to the international situation.

Emphasis, Omission, and Diversity of Perspectives: There are notable differences between textbooks in terms of what topics are emphasised and how space is allocated. Textbooks 1. Tokyo Shoseki, 2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppan, and 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan tend to devote more attention to social problems, the damage caused by war, resistance under colonial rule, and the presence and activities of diverse social groups such as workers, women, Burakumin (historically discriminated communities), and the Ainu people. This suggests a discourse structure that seeks to illuminate not only the “brighter” aspects of history but also its “shadows,” especially the experiences of those affected by power and inequality.

In contrast, 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhousha appear to place greater emphasis on Japan’s efforts to respond to Western pressure and international competition, its pursuit of national security and strengthening of national power, the unity of the people in wartime, and the

damage Japan suffered at the end of the war (particularly the atomic bombings, the Soviet invasion, and internment in Siberia). The absence of references to the “Nanjing Massacre,” as mentioned earlier, can also be seen as part of a discursive structure that determines what is emphasised and what is relatively minimised or omitted.

Differences in Textbook Discourses Revealed through CDA

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a comparative reading of the textbook excerpts reveals that none of them merely provide a neutral listing of historical facts; rather, each functions as a form of “discourse” embedded with particular historical perspectives and ideologies.

Strength of Critical Perspective: The textbooks from 1. Tokyo Shoseki, 2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppan, and 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan refer comparatively frankly and in detail to the negative aspects of Japan’s imperialist actions, social inequality, the horrors of war, and the perspectives of diverse groups. These textbooks can be considered to provide a discursive foundation for developing a critical understanding of history. They clearly show an intent to shed light on issues of power and inequality.

Focus on the State and International Environment: In contrast, the textbooks from 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhoshu tend to place stronger emphasis on how Japan, under harsh international conditions, sought to ensure its own security and status, how the people cooperated with the nation, and what kinds of suffering Japan endured at the end of the war. Such discourses may suggest the legitimacy or inevitability of Japan’s actions by highlighting external pressures or portraying the nation’s hardships and triumphs. The absence or suppression of reference to certain negative aspects—such as the Nanjing Massacre—can be seen as an element that reinforces this type of discourse structure.

Classification of Nationalism in the Textbooks

Based on the typology of nationalism by Tanabe (2011)—namely purificationism, patriotism, and exclusivism—the following section analyses which aspects of nationalism are most strongly embodied in the discourse of each textbook, using insights gained through CDA.

1. Purificationism (Defining the boundaries of a specific “nation”)

All textbooks describe how a national consciousness was formed during the modernisation process, and how the government attempted to instil this consciousness through the development of education systems. This reflects the purificationist aspect of nationalism that seeks to establish boundaries around a shared national identity.

In particular, 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhosha depict Japan striving to become an “equal” of the Western powers, reflecting a discourse structure that focuses on the status of “Japanese” people in the international community. Textbook 7. Ikuhosha includes references to assimilation policies in the colonies (i.e. attempts to treat Koreans as equal to Japanese), while 6. Jiyūsha contains no reference to such policies. Textbooks 1–5 also mention assimilation and the formation of national identity but, at the same time, they point out the sense of superiority and discriminatory attitudes towards other ethnicities and nations within Japan. This suggests that purificationism may lead to negative consequences, such as the promotion of discrimination.

2. Patriotism (A tendency to demand loyalty to the state and promote internal unity)

All textbooks refer to the cooperation of the people in wartime, efforts to strengthen national power through armament and industrial development, and the hardships endured during times of crisis. These references reflect patriotic discourses that emphasise unity and loyalty to the nation in pursuit of national objectives. In particular, 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhosha show a stronger tendency to emphasise national unity and effort—for instance, with the use of

slogans such as *gashinshōtan* (enduring hardship to take revenge), or describing the Russo-Japanese War as a struggle for survival. Their use of vocabulary such as “a war of self-existence and self-defence” implies a certain legitimacy to Japan’s actions and may serve to positively reinforce patriotic sentiment.

While the other textbooks also mention the cooperation and sacrifice of the people, they simultaneously provide detailed descriptions of the hardship war brought upon people’s lives—such as starvation, child labour, and the selling of daughters—thus also shedding light on the darker aspects of patriotic mobilisation.

3. Exclusivism (A tendency to exclude foreigners or others from the nation)

All textbooks refer to the discriminatory attitudes or feelings of superiority held in Japan at the time towards other ethnicities and nations. They also discuss the oppression and forced labour of people in the colonies or occupied territories, and the discrimination faced by the Burakumin and Ainu people. These descriptions illustrate how nationalism could take the form of exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

However, the degree and nature of how such exclusionary actions—especially those perpetrated by Japanese against others—are described varies significantly between textbooks.

Textbooks 1–5 provide comparatively clear and detailed vocabulary in describing specific acts of aggression committed by Japan, such as the killing of civilians during the Nanjing Massacre, coercion into mass suicides in the Battle of Okinawa, and the forced mobilisation of Korean and Chinese labourers under harsh conditions. These descriptions convey the devastating consequences of exclusivism and encourage a critical perspective.

On the other hand, in the excerpts from 6. *Jiyūsha* and 7. *Ikuhosha*, there is no mention of the term “Nanjing Massacre.” In contrast to the other textbooks, this omission may indicate

a discursive strategy of avoiding or deflecting attention from particular negative aspects. These textbooks tend to frame Japan's foreign actions as measures of self-defence under severe international pressure—such as threats from Western powers or Russia—thereby suggesting a certain legitimacy or inevitability to Japan's behaviour. While they do mention the suffering and resistance in the colonies or occupied territories, their descriptions of Japan's aggressor role are relatively restrained compared to the other textbooks.

Categorisation of Nationalism in Each Textbook

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a comparison of the provided textbook excerpts in terms of the three categories of nationalism reveals the following:

All textbooks, to varying degrees, depict elements of purificationism (the formation of national consciousness and assimilation policies) and patriotism (cooperation with national goals and the strengthening of national power).

While all textbooks also touch upon the realities of exclusivism (discriminatory attitudes, oppression, and violence against others), the degree of depiction and the framing of such issues vary significantly.

Textbooks 1. Tokyo Shoseki, 2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppan, and 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan describe, in relatively frank and detailed terms, the social distortions and inequalities brought about by Japan's modernisation and wars—particularly the acts of aggression committed against other ethnic groups and nations, and their tragic consequences. These texts can be seen as discourses that attempt to provide readers with the information necessary to critically examine the exclusivist aspects of nationalism.

In contrast, 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhosha exhibit a stronger tendency to portray Japan's actions as efforts at self-defence or the pursuit of national objectives within a harsh

international environment. This may indicate an emphasis on the patriotic and externally reactive aspects of nationalism (i.e. resistance to foreign pressure). The omission of explicit references to certain acts of aggression (e.g. the Nanjing Massacre) suggests a discourse structure that downplays the negative consequences of exclusivism and instead implies a certain degree of legitimacy in Japan's position and actions.

Thus, CDA reveals that even when dealing with the same historical facts, the choice of vocabulary, the focus of attention, and what is relatively downplayed or omitted varies between textbooks—thereby influencing the nationalist messages conveyed to readers and shaping how opportunities for critical reflection are provided.

Comparison of the Jiyūsha and Ikuhosha Textbooks

The Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks split in 2007 due to internal conflicts regarding editorial policy and organisational management. Jiyūsha and Ikuhosha are both publishers that adhere to the Society's current principles.

Shared Features:

- Emphasis on confronting a harsh international environment:

Both textbooks tend to depict modern Japanese history as a national struggle for survival and security under the threat of “invasion” or “pressure” from Western powers. Terms like *gashinshōtan* (enduring hardship to seek revenge) reflect the sense of national determination and efforts to build national strength, including caution towards Russia's southward advance.

- Framing of Japan's foreign actions as necessary or justified:

Foreign “advancements” and military actions are often portrayed as necessary responses for self-preservation or securing national interests. Events such as the Manchurian Incident and the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War are often

framed with a focus on Chinese actions or disorder, or on external forces (e.g. the Soviet Union, Comintern), as contributing factors—thus highlighting external causes for Japan’s behaviour.

- Emphasis on national unity between state and people:

Descriptions often highlight how the population worked “in unity” to support war efforts and strengthen the nation, enduring hardship and cooperating in the pursuit of national goals.

- Emphasis on suffering and losses incurred during the war:

Both textbooks dedicate considerable space to the damage and sacrifices Japan endured at the end of the Second World War—such as the atomic bombings, the Soviet invasion, Siberian internment, air raids, and civilian losses in the Battle of Okinawa.

- Avoidance or suppression of references to specific acts of aggression:

Neither textbook includes the term “Nanjing Massacre” in the provided excerpts, suggesting a shared discursive tendency to avoid or suppress reference to certain aspects of Japan’s culpability in wartime atrocities.

Key Differences Identified Through Analysis:

- Emphasis on criticism of party politics and zaibatsu:

The analysis of Jiyūsha highlights its relatively detailed treatment of the corruption of party politics and criticism of financial cliques as a backdrop to the military’s rise to power. While Ikuhosha also refers to the rise of the military, it may place comparatively less emphasis on party politics as a target of public dissatisfaction.

- Degree of evaluative emphasis on individuals and domains:

In the Jiyūsha textbook, individuals who contributed to Japan’s modernisation—particularly scientists or military achievements—are highly praised using evaluative

expressions such as “world-leading” and “renowned globally.” In contrast, Ikuhosha does not exhibit such strong emphasis on individual figures or specific fields.

- Direct reference to discriminatory attitudes:

The Ikuhosha excerpt explicitly states that, after the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars, “feelings of superiority and discriminatory attitudes towards China and Korea spread” within Japan. In contrast, Jiyūsha does not include explicit vocabulary indicating the spread of such attitudes, instead focusing more on Japan’s position and competitiveness in the international community.

Taken together, the textbooks by Jiyūsha and Ikuhosha can be seen as sharing an ideological foundation that portrays Japan’s modern history as a story of national effort and resilience under external pressure, with an implicit suggestion of justification or necessity behind certain actions. Both tend to downplay references to specific instances of aggression (e.g. absence of the term “Nanjing Massacre”) and instead emphasise the suffering Japan endured. However, subtle differences in focus and lexical choices are observable—Jiyūsha places greater emphasis on critiques of party politics and positive evaluations of achievements, whereas Ikuhosha more clearly acknowledges the spread of discriminatory attitudes within Japan.

The Ideological Foundations of Language Use in the “New History Textbook” (Jiyūsha)

The discourse analysis of the Jiyūsha⁴² textbook excerpt reveals the following linguistic and structural characteristics:

1. Lexical Choices:

⁴² The focus here is on Jiyūsha because it is connected to the Society textbooks discussed in the original Ishii (2012) study.

Terms such as *gashinshōtan* (enduring hardship to take revenge) and “Yellow Peril” are used to depict public sentiment and the international environment at the time. The Pacific War is presented with both names—“Greater East Asia War” and “Pacific War”—and is framed as a war of “self-existence and self-defence.” While critical vocabulary is used to portray party politics and *zaibatsu*, highly evaluative terms are also used to praise Japanese scientists and military achievements (e.g. “world-leading,” “international renown”). It is also notable that the term “Nanjing Massacre” does not appear in the excerpt provided.

2. Grammatical Structures:

There is a tendency to describe Japanese military actions and victories in the active voice, emphasising agency and success. In contrast, Japan’s own suffering is often described in passive constructions or similar grammatical structures, which downplay the identity of the acting agent and focus on Japan as the victim.

3. Overall Text Structure:

While following the chronological flow of events, the text devotes significant attention to external affairs such as the First and Second Sino-Japanese Wars and their aftermath, the Manchurian Incident, the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, and the damage Japan suffered at the end of the Second World War (atomic bombings, Soviet invasion, internment in Siberia). The structure emphasises these events while presenting detailed background explanations that stress external causes—such as Chinese actions or Soviet/Comintern influence—for incidents like the Manchurian Incident and the Second Sino-Japanese War. There are also descriptions that stress national unity and the cooperation of the people with the state.

Based on these linguistic and structural characteristics, the following five ideological elements can be identified as underpinning the discourse of the *Jiyūsha* textbook:

1. Statism and Patriotism:

Descriptions emphasising national efforts symbolised by gashinshōtan, the people’s cooperation in wartime, and the unity between state and citizens reflect an ideology of strong national cohesion and patriotic sentiment.

2. State-Centred Historical Perspective and Prioritisation of National Interest:

By depicting Japan’s modernisation as a struggle for survival within a harsh international environment, and describing its foreign actions with terms such as “self-existence and self-defence,” the text reflects an ideological viewpoint that prioritises national security and interests. The portrayal of pressure from Western powers and Russia lends a sense of necessity or inevitability to Japan’s actions.

3. Affirmation of Military Power and Sympathy for the Military:

The emphasis on corruption in party politics, the rise of the military as a response to public dissatisfaction, and the use of active voice in describing military victories suggest an ideological stance that shows understanding or even approval of military power and the military’s role in Japan’s modern history.

4. Avoidance or Suppression of Certain Negative Aspects:

The absence of the term “Nanjing Massacre,” which is mentioned in other textbooks, may reflect an ideological tendency to avoid or downplay Japan’s wartime responsibility—especially with regard to acts of aggression.

5. Emphasis on Japanese Victimhood:

The structure’s focus on Japan’s suffering at the end of the war—atomic bombings, Soviet entry into the war, and internment in Siberia—reflects an ideological inclination to portray Japan as a victim, shifting the focus away from its role as an aggressor.

The language used in the Jiyūsha textbook constructs a historical narrative in which modern Japan, under severe international pressure, strives for the survival and development of the state through national unity and effort. Its portrayal of military actions and foreign expansion tends to be affirmative or at least presented as inevitable, supported by an ideological framework that places emphasis on national resilience, patriotism, and victimhood, while suppressing or avoiding explicit mention of Japan's culpability for wartime aggression.

As noted by Ishii (2012), the “new history textbook” differs from others in two key respects:

- (1) the writer's attitude is clearly aligned with Japan's perspective, and
- (2) it actively presents opinions, evaluations, and subjective interpretations in addition to factual information.

The present CDA-based analysis has clarified these features in greater detail and demonstrated the discursive and ideological mechanisms that support this tendency.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on the relationship between nationalism and history education in contemporary Japan. Using the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it conducted a detailed comparative analysis of the discursive structures and language usage in multiple junior high school history textbooks, including the version published by Society. In particular, the study examined the sections dealing with Japan's relations with Asian countries from the First Sino-Japanese War to the end of the Pacific War, with the aim of revealing the historical perspectives, ideologies, and aspects of nationalism embedded in each textbook's narrative.

The analysis revealed clear differences in lexical choices, grammatical structures (especially the use of active/passive voice and nominalisation), and overall text composition across the textbooks, even though they all addressed the same historical period. These differences suggest that textbooks function not as neutral records of fact but as discourses shaped by particular ideologies and historical viewpoints.

According to Tanabe's (2011) typology of nationalism—purificationism, patriotism, and exclusivism—all textbooks contained elements of purificationism (the formation of national consciousness) and patriotism (cooperation with national goals and strengthening of national power). However, there were notable differences in how exclusivism (discriminatory attitudes and oppression of others) was portrayed across the textbooks.

Textbooks 1. Tokyo Shoseki, 2. Kyoiku Shuppan, 3. Teikoku Shoin, 4. Yamakawa Shuppan, and 5. Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan described in relatively frank and detailed terms the social distortions and inequalities caused by modernisation and war, and in particular, the acts of aggression committed by Japan against other peoples and the devastating consequences of those actions. These textbooks reflect a strong intention to shed light on power relations and

inequality, and can be seen as discourses that aim to provide the reader with information necessary for critically engaging with the exclusivist aspects of nationalism.

In contrast, 6. Jiyūsha and 7. Ikuhosha showed a stronger tendency to portray Japan's actions as efforts at self-defence and the pursuit of national objectives under harsh international conditions, emphasising the unity of the people during wartime. The analysis of the Jiyūsha textbook in particular suggested ideological elements such as statism and patriotism, state-centred historical perspectives, affirmation of military power, and sympathy for the military's role. Moreover, in the excerpts provided, both Jiyūsha and Ikuhosha omit reference to the term "Nanjing Massacre", unlike the other textbooks, suggesting a shared tendency to avoid or suppress descriptions of certain negative aspects—particularly those related to Japan's responsibility as an aggressor. This reflects a discourse structure that downplays the consequences of exclusivism and implies a degree of legitimacy or inevitability to Japan's actions. As noted by Ishii (2012), Jiyūsha's textbook displays a clear authorial stance sympathetic to Japan and includes the active presentation of opinion and evaluation. The present CDA-based analysis has clarified in more detail the discursive and ideological mechanisms that support this tendency.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the selection of vocabulary, the focus of attention, and what is relatively downplayed or omitted in textbooks significantly affect the type of nationalist messages conveyed to students, and the extent to which critical thinking is encouraged. The use of ideologically biased textbooks may hinder the development of students' critical thinking skills and engagement with diverse perspectives, and may even contribute to friction in domestic and international debates over historical memory. Therefore, it is essential in history education to critically examine textbook content and to provide opportunities for students to encounter a range of materials and interpretations so that they may develop the ability to think independently and make informed judgements about the past.

This study analysed only a limited time period from a selection of textbook content and did not extend to the structure of entire textbooks, their use in actual classrooms, or students' reception and interpretation. Nevertheless, by clarifying the ideological aspects embedded in textbook language and discourse, this research contributes meaningfully to the study of nationalism and history education in contemporary Japan. Future research should expand to comparative analyses of other historical periods and themes, examine how textbooks are used in practice, and explore the concrete impact textbook discourses have on the formation of nationalism among learners.

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