

How Can We Teach The Old Foe's Wounds? Analysis on Descriptions of the Atomic Bombs in Vietnamese and Singaporean Textbooks

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1. Introduction

Japanese citizens have counted as national wounds the dropping of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 for a long time and there is a popular slogan among peace movement actors such as 'No more Hiroshima, No more Nagasaki'. However, there have also been different views abroad about the atomic bombs and those views started to be introduced to the Japanese society mainly from the 1990's. The trigger was the argument among American citizens about the exhibition of the Smithsonian Museum in 1995 (Migita et al., 1996). Simultaneously Asian people's views on the atomic bombs also started to be introduced, for example: the atomic bombs as a symbol of liberation from the Japanese rule during the World War II period or as unfair to put Japan in a position only as a victim despite all her aggression towards Asian countries in wartime (Fujikawa, 1997; Hiraoka, 1996; Migita et al., 1996; Takashima, 2002). These opinions abroad demonstrated that there was a huge perception gap about the Atomic bombs between the foreign public and Japan and reminded the Japanese society of the necessity for them to balance war guilt during WWII and her experienced atrocities.

There have been a limited number of studies regarding the treatment of the atomic bombs in education outside Japan hitherto but it is still pointed out that teachers' views towards the Atomic bombs are influential on students' opinions (Ogawa, 2000a; Ogawa, 2000b; Stoddard, 2009). Then, it is also found that the descriptions of the atomic bombs in textbooks are inadequate (Kazemek, 1994) and biased in preference of the majority view towards the atomic bombs (Crawford, 2003; Stoddard, 2009). Those studies in regard to the textbooks are based on the cases in the US. When it comes to descriptions of the atomic bombs in the textbooks of Asian countries, there have been some attempts at dialogue by researchers from China, Korea and Japan (Fujisawa, 1998; Historical Science Society of Japan, 2004; Saito, 2008).

South East Asian countries also experienced the aggression and colonial rule of Japan. For them, Japan is an ex-foe and there is still strong anti-Japanese emotion because of the wartime experiences (Hayase, 2007; Fujikawa, 1997; Kawasaki, 1996). At the same time, in comparison with the East Asian countries or the US, there have been fewer opportunities for Japanese to explore more about the perception and opinions of South East Asian people in regard to the atomic bombs. In fact, there have been some studies into descriptions about the atomic bombs

in textbooks of South East Asian countries (Furuta, 2002; Sora, 1999; Takashima, 2002). However, their studies are not necessarily rigorously done in methodological terms and there is a necessity to conduct substantial research into how the atomic bombs are described in the textbooks of those countries.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyse the descriptions in textbooks of South East Asian countries about the atomic bombs. As cases in point, the textbooks from Singapore and Vietnam, where Japan invaded during the wartime but with different political directions and ideologies will be examined in this study.

2. Methods

In this study, four textbooks are the targets of analysis: namely, the history textbook for grade 5 and 9 from Singapore and grade 8 from Vietnam, as well as a language textbook for grade 5 in Vietnam. All the textbooks are currently used in the two countries. Singaporean education is on the 6-4-2 system, while the Vietnamese one is a 5-4-3 system. Thus, the textbooks chosen for this study are at primary and lower secondary levels from the two countries.

To investigate the textbooks from the two countries, there will be two components in the analytical framework: first, the quantitative data will be presented in order to capture to what degree the descriptions on Atomic bombs are presented in the textbooks. That is, how many pages are spent in each textbook will be counted. Then, as the second component, there will be a qualitative analysis on how they describe the Atomic bombs. Fukaya (2003) has provided the framework of qualitative analysis for primary history textbooks. Fukaya (2003) has defined texts in history textbooks as discourses for students to understand and consider and has categorised them into two parts: the first one being meta-discourse. Meta-discourse would mean discourse about discourse, which would include comments as a whole about descriptions or contents, such as the intents of the textbook authors or comments on the importance of the described items. Another type of discourse is parallel discourse. In textbooks, main texts written by the authors or excerpts of historical documents are there in order to help students further understand the meaning and structures of the events in the history. These materials, such as main texts or excerpts are to provide information from related but independent perspectives so they are defined as parallel discourse.

As Fukaya (2003) discusses, the items in the textbooks will be sorted according to the four points, as shown in Table-1. This framework was originally developed to analyse history textbooks. In this study, the Vietnamese primary textbook is for Vietnamese language, not history. However, this framework is still helpful to analyse the description on the atomic bombs and enables comparisons as to similarities and differences from other textbooks. Therefore, this framework will be applied to analyse the Vietnamese primary language textbook.

Table 1: Information in the textbook

	Meta-discourse	Parallel-discourse
Textual Information	Headings/subheadings Goals of learning or activities Remarks by characters Captions on tables/figures	Main texts Columns Historical documents
Visual Information	Illustrations of characters (students/ teachers)	Tables/figures/illustration Portraits, photos or illustrations of historical figures

Source: Fukaya (2003)

3. Results

In this section, the results will be shown by both quantitative and qualitative means. The sequence will be as follows; (1) descriptions on Japan during the wartime; (2) Singaporean primary history textbook; (3) Singaporean secondary history textbook; (4) Vietnamese primary Vietnamese language textbook, and (5) Vietnamese secondary history textbook.

3.1 Descriptions on Japan during the Wartime

In this subsection, descriptions on Japan during the Wartime will be shown. For that purpose, there will be a comparison between the Singaporean secondary history textbook and the Vietnamese history textbook. This is important, because their ways of describing Japan during World War II would relate to the kind of description given in their textbooks of the dropping of the atomic bombs. In this comparison, only secondary textbooks are used, because the Vietnamese primary history textbook does not deal with the dropping of the atomic bombs. However, it should be added that most of the coverage is about the modern history of Singapore in the Singaporean primary history textbook, which is between shortly before the breakout of and right after the end of World War II. Second, in the Vietnamese primary language textbook, there is no description on Japan during wartime.

Turning to the Singaporean textbook, there is a large tendency for Japan during the wartime to be viewed as an invader to Singapore. Japan is described as desiring to be a master of the world. Then there is a strong focus on how Britain lost the battle with Japan and how Japan ruled Singapore. The lives of prisoners of war (POW) are described in detail with pictures and there is mention of the Big Purge of Chinese. Further, there is a description about propaganda campaigns by Japan towards Singaporeans.

Turning to the Vietnamese case, their descriptions about Japan during the wartime are more multi-facet. First, they highlight the aspect of the rise of fascism in Japanese society in pre-war time. They analyse this by referring to the economic stagnation of the 1930's and militarisation of the country leading to invasion of other parts of Asia. However, their description goes further to cover Japanese figures against fascism. They focus upon the fights of the communists against authority at that time. Then Japan is described as an invader to Vietnam. The increase in taxes

and famine by seizing the rice are mentioned in the textbook as oppression of the Vietnamese society.

3.2 Singaporean Primary History Textbook

In the Singaporean primary history textbook, there are six units and students are supposed to learn topics in each unit as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Units and Topics in the Singaporean History Textbook

Units	Topics
End of the Japanese Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introduction •Capture of Japanese islands •Dropping of the Atomic Bombs •The Japanese surrender
Our war heroes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lieutenant Adnan bin Saidi •Lim Bo Seng •Tan Chong Tee •Elizabeth Choy •Halford Boudewyn •Places that remind us of people who died in the war
Life after the War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shortage of food •Feeding the people •Shortage of housing and poor public health •Housing the people and improving public health •Shortage of water, electricity and gas •Restoring water, electricity and gas supplies •Shortage of jobs •Helping the people find work •Problems caused by the communists •Dealing with the communists
If not for you	(Poem dedicated to the people referred to in ‘Our war heroes’)

Then the page numbers spent on each unit are shown in Fig 1. The part in regard to the Atomic bombs, ‘Dropping of the Atomic Bombs’ is included in the unit ‘End of the Japanese Occupation’ and the page numbers for each topic in the unit are shown in Fig 2.

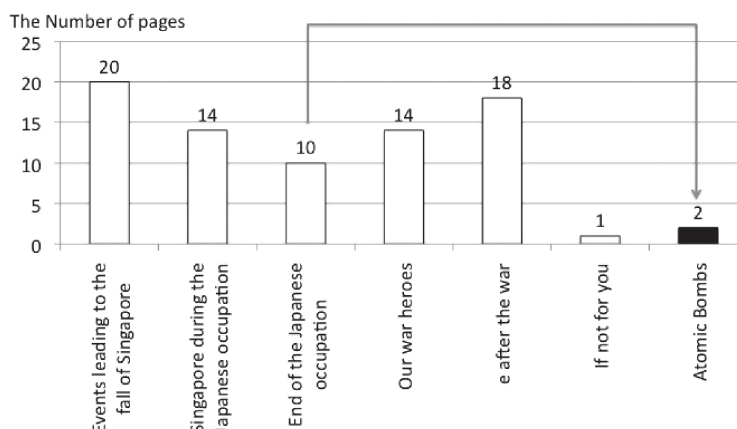


Fig 1: The Units in the Singaporean Primary History Textbook

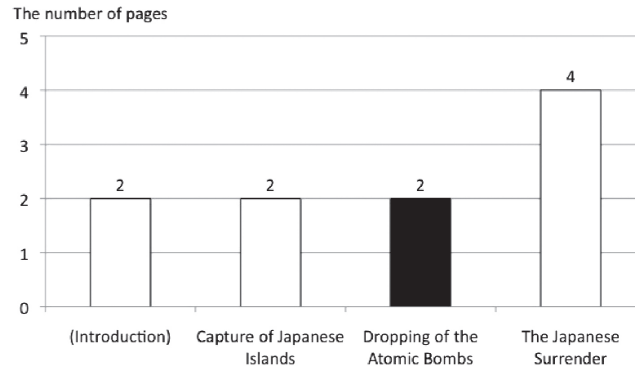


Fig 2: The Topics in ‘End of the Japanese Occupation’

Further, the information in ‘Dropping of the Atomic Bombs’ is categorised into the framework of Meta-discourse and Parallel-discourse in Table 3.

Table 3: Information in ‘Dropping of Atomic Bombs’

Information	Meta-discourse	Parallel-discourse
Textual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Headings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA:dropping A-bombs on 2 Japanese cities • 2 A-bombs killing many people & causing great suffering to the survivors ➤ Remarks by a character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation on 2 types of A-bombs ➤ Captions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bombing at Nagasaki, 1945 • Hiroshima after the dropping of the A-bomb, 1945 • Nagasaki after the dropping of the A-bomb, 1945 • People praying for peace at Hiroshima, 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Main Texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA: deciding to use A-bombs to end the war quickly • 6 Aug 1945: Hiroshima • A-bomb: more powerful than the other bombs • A-bomb: destroying the entire city • However, Japan did not surrender • 9Aug 1945: The second A-bomb dropped on Nagasaki • The city of Nagasaki was also destroyed
Visual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese girl in a uniform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Graphs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of Japan • Mushroom-cloud in Nagasaki • ‘Little boy’ • ‘Fat Man’ • Burned fields in Hiroshima • A ruined church in Nagasaki • Memorial cenotaph in Hiroshima

3.3 Singaporean Secondary History Textbook

In the Singaporean secondary history textbook, there are nine units, which have larger historical coverage than the primary one as shown in Table 4 and the amount for each unit is shown in Fig 3. The part in relation to the dropping of Atomic bombs is in ‘What were the effects of World War II on civilian populations?’ as a part of the extension activity in the unit of ‘How did World War II affect Singapore?’ The topics in that unit are shown in Fig 4 as well as Fig 5 for details in the Extension Activity.

Table 4: The Units in Singaporean Secondary History Textbooks

The Units
Was there Singapore before 1819?
Who was the founder of Singapore?
What part did the different immigrant communities play in Singapore’s development?
How did the British govern Singapore before World War II?
How did external events before World War II affect Singapore?
How did World War II affect Singapore?
How did the local people respond to British rule after World War II?
How did Singapore progress to internal self-government (1955-1959)?
How did Singapore achieve independence?
How did Singapore tackle its challenge in its early years of independence?
How did Singapore tackle its challenge in its early years of independence?

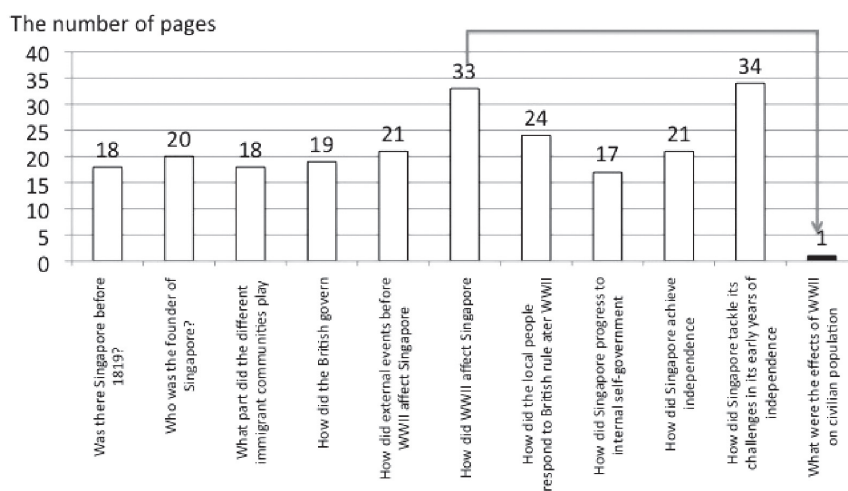


Fig 3: The Page Numbers of Each Unit in the Singaporean History Textbook

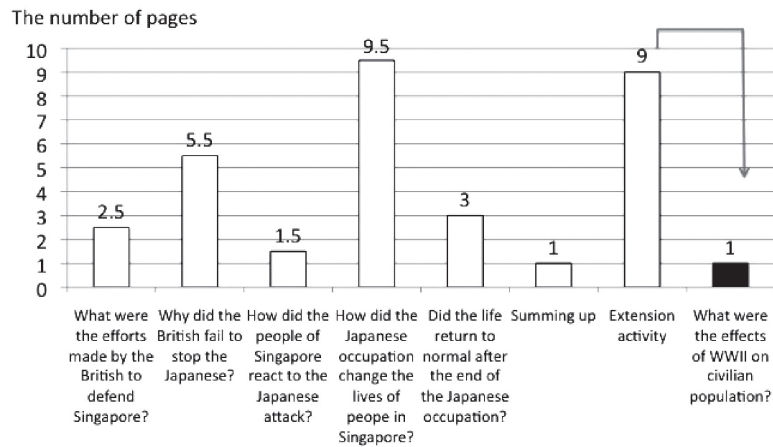


Fig 4: Topics in 'How Did World II affect Singapore'

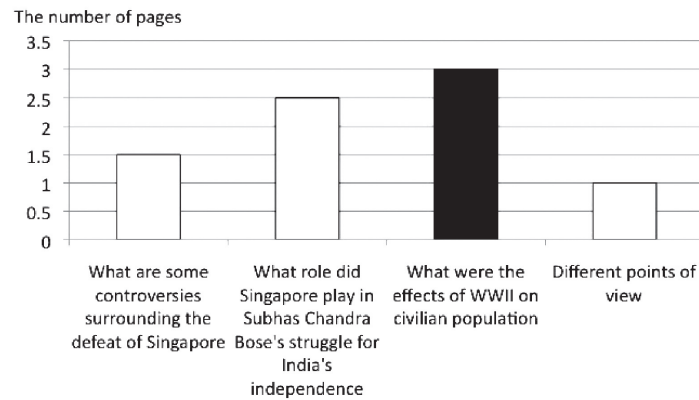


Fig 5: Topics in 'Extension Activity'

Further, the information in 'Dropping of the Atomic Bombs' is categorised into the framework of Meta-discourse and Parallel-discourse in Table 5.

Table 5: Information in ‘Dropping of the Atomic Bombs’

Information	Meta-discourse	Para-discourse
Textual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Headings - What were the effects of WWII on civilian populations? •Captions - The second atomic bomb, ‘Fat Man’, dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945 - ‘Little Boy’, the first atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 - Hiroshima, the day after the atomic bombing - The battle for Stalingrad - Hungarian Jewish women shortly after their arrival in Auschwitz, Poland - Mug Shots of prisoners - Locations of concentration & death camps in Nazi-controlled territories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main Texts - Devastating effects - Blitz on London - Bombing raids on Japan (Tokyo) - Hiroshima & Nagasaki - Nanking Massacre - Operation Barbarossa - Holocaust
Visual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Character - none 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Graphs - ‘Little boy’ - ‘Fat Man’ - Burned fields in Hiroshima, - Battlefield of Stalingrad with soldiers - Hungarian Jewish women in Auschwitz - Photo of prisoners at concentration camps - Map of camps in Nazi-territories

3.4 Vietnamese Primary Language Textbook

In the Vietnamese primary language textbook, there are twelve units and the amount for each unit is shown in Fig 6. The part in relation to the dropping of Atomic bombs is ‘Paper Cranes’ in the unit of ‘The Wings of Peace’, as one of the stories. The topics in that unit are shown in Fig 7.

The number of pages

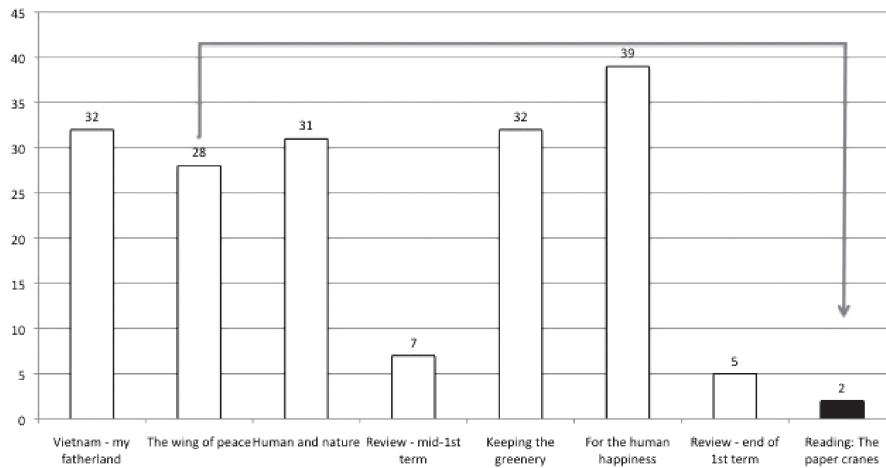


Fig 6: The Page Numbers for Each Unit in the Vietnamese Primary Language Textbook

The number of pages

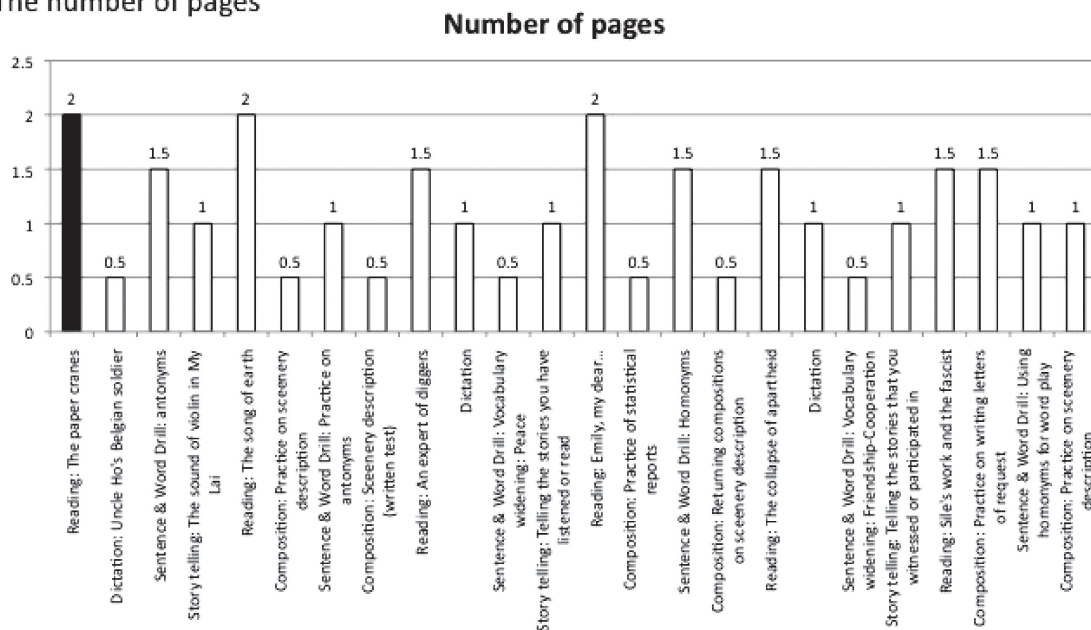


Fig 7: The Page Number for Each Topic in 'The Wings of Peace'

Further, the information in 'Paper Cranes' is categorised into the framework of Meta-discourse and Parallel-discourse in Table 6.

Table 6: Information in ‘Paper Cranes’

Information	Meta-discourse	Parallel-discourse
Textual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Headings - The counterattacks by the Allies and the End of WWII •Captions - Hiroshima after the dropping of the A-bomb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main Texts - Turn-around of the state of WWII after the counterattack by the USSR in Stalingrad - Counterattack by the USSR to liberate East European people from Fascists - The counterattacks by the US & UK - Surrender of Italy & Germany - USSR defeats Japan & dropping of the A-bombs - Surrender of Japan & the end of WWII •Tasks - What kinds of roles did the USSR play in defeating the Fascists?
Visual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Character - none 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Graphs - A girl folding paper cranes - Children's Peace Monument

3.5 Vietnamese Secondary History Textbook

In the Vietnamese primary language textbook, there are four units for grade eight and the amount for each unit is shown in Fig 8. The part in relation to the dropping of Atomic bombs is a part of ‘World War II’ in the unit of ‘The World Modern History from 1917 to 1945’, and the topics and their amount in that unit are shown in Fig 9 and Fig 10, respectively.

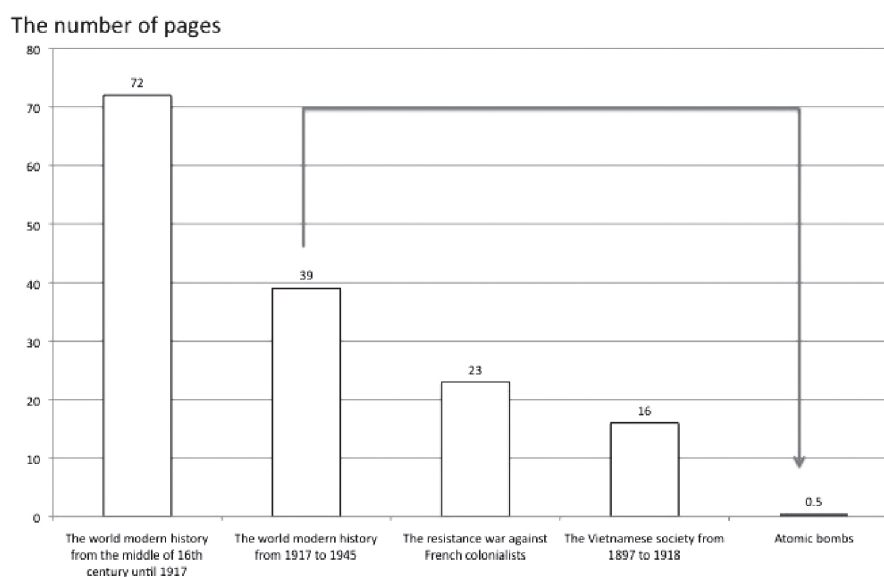


Fig 8: The Number of Pages for Each Unit in the Vietnamese Secondary History Textbook

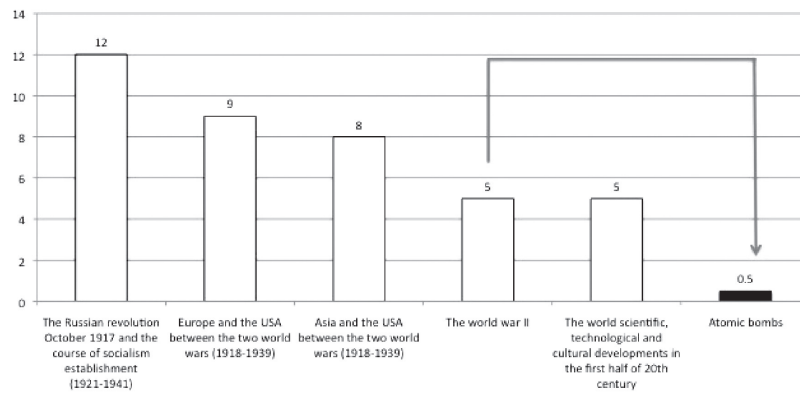


Fig 9: The Number of Pages for Each Topic in ‘The World Modern History from 1917 to 1945’

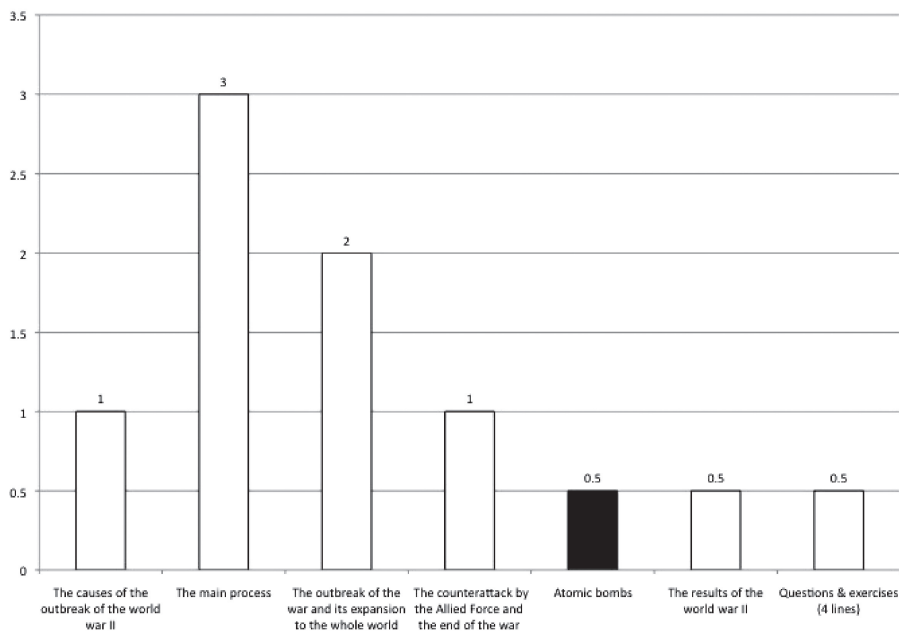


Fig 10: The Number of Pages for Each Topic in ‘World War II’

Further, the information in the segment on the Atomic Bombs is categorised into the framework of Meta-discourse and Parallel-discourse in Table 7.

Table 7: Information in the Segment on the Atomic Bombs

Information	Meta-discourse	Parallel-discourse
Textual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Headings - Paper Cranes •Captions - Quoted from ‘The historical stories of the world’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main Texts - Development of A-bombs - Dropping of A-bombs in Hiroshima & Nagasaki - Life of Sadako - Movements to commemorate Sadako •Tasks - When was Sadako was radioactively contaminated? - By which means did she hope to prolong her life? - What did the children do to: - show solidarity with Sadako? - show a wish for peace? - If you had a chance to stand in front of the memorial, what would you say to Sadako?
Visual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Character - none 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Graphs - The burned fields of Hiroshima after the dropping of the A-bomb

4. Analysis

In this section, there will be two types of discussion, namely: (1) the tendencies of descriptions on the atomic bombs in the sampled textbooks and (2) the perspectives of the atomic bombs and Japan under Wartime in the textbooks.

4.1 The Tendencies of Descriptions on the Atomic Bombs

First, there is a common tendency that the higher the grade of the textbooks, the less volume is spent on the atomic bombs. As seen in the series of figures, while the coverage about World War II itself increases, the atomic bombs and their atrocities are likely to be dealt with more lightly. Second, there are no images of the wounded victims of the bombs. In the Vietnamese primary textbook, there was a story about Sadako Sasaki, so it helps to tell of the atrocity in a more personalised manner. However, in the history textbooks in both countries, few descriptions were given about the difference in terms of the atrocities and their magnitude towards people between the atomic bombs and normal ones.

There would be a couple of reasons for not having photos to visualise the impact upon people. First, the photos of the victims can be very strong for younger students and there is an ethical question about whether exposure to such images should be avoided. With proper explanation, the images of the victims under the atomic bombs can be very strong and they would be strong enough to make students realise how violent and dangerous the atomic bombs were (Saito et al., 2010). In the sampled textbooks, however, the images of violence are regarding other cases. For example, in the Singaporean primary history textbook, there are

illustrations of killing in the purge of the Chinese, so-called ‘Sook Ching’, conducted by the Japanese army (Curriculum Planning & Development Division, 2007a; p.28-29). Thus the fact that there is no photo of the wounded victims of the atomic bombs does not necessarily mean that violent images are completely prohibited in the textbooks.

A second possible reason is that the authors would not necessarily be exposed to the real images of the victims. The images of the victims are not necessarily introduced to foreign countries (Fujikawa, 1997; Migita et al., 1996). There are few descriptions about the difference between atomic bombs and normal bombs due to the influence of radioactivity, which influences the unborn babies or next generations.

Third, there is a matter of fairness from the perspective of war guilt during World War II caused by Japan. Japanese colonised the two countries and their rule seriously affected the people’s lives. Some people believe that by referring to the wounds of the victims of the atomic bombs, Japanese can be described as victims and what they did to their colonies can be negated. (Fujikawa, 1997; Takashima, 2002). In comparison with East Asian countries, such as China or Korea, the emotions of South East Asians towards the war guilt of Japan are likely to be less reported to Japanese society. However, there still are strongly negative war memories in those countries (Hayase, 2007; Fujikawa, 1997; Kawasaki, 1996) and this sense can be reflected in the descriptions of the textbooks.

4.2 The Perspectives on the Atomic Bombs and Japan under Wartime

In this subsection, there will be discussion on the perspectives on the atomic bombs and Japan under wartime between Vietnamese and Singaporean textbooks. First, Vietnamese textbooks provide more contextual information about Japan and the atomic bombs. As seen above, in the Vietnamese secondary history textbook, the authors refer to the domestic reasons in Japan for the rise of fascism and the decision for invasion from the different views in Japanese society about fascism. Second, beyond the relationship between the two countries in wartime, empathy for the victims is shown in the primary language textbook by referring to Sadako. Furuta (2002) has pointed out that the stance of the Vietnamese textbook towards the victims of the atomic bombs could be different from other countries because of the possible dropping of nuclear weapons in the Vietnam War period. Further, Furuta (2002) has discussed that the authors of the secondary history textbook do not necessarily agree on the view that the dropping of the atomic bombs helped World War II finish earlier.

In contrast, Singaporean textbooks provide more detailed information on Japanese rule. This is because of their emphasis on the importance of self-defence (Goh and Gopinathan, 2005). From the middle of the 1990’s, the Singaporean government stressed the policy of ‘National Education’, with an emphasis on a sense of national identity and social responsibility in young Singaporeans (Goh and Gopinathan, 2005; p.213) and this started from the increase of the popularity of a nationalistic movement and opinions from the Japanese society, which is reflected in and originated from international disputes in the 1980’s in regard to changing the textbook description about the Japanese invasion as ‘Sinryaku’ (invasion) to ‘Shinshutsu’

(advance). Another example would be the movement of authoring and its ministerial approval in the 2000's on publishing a so-called 'New History Textbook' (Takashima, 2002). The authors of the New History Textbook are basically from the conservative wing, harshly criticising the critical accounts of Japanese history in the existing history textbooks as 'masochism' and 'anti-Japanese', with particular reference to the descriptions on the Nanjing Massacre and so-called Comfort Women (Yoshida, 2007) and they published their own history textbook from a more conservative perspective. Based upon such recognition, more attention is paid to their own victimised experiences caused by Japan, than the atrocities that Japanese people experienced in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Moreover, in the textbooks, the view is expressed that the dropping of the atomic bombs led to an earlier end of World War II.

Then, turning to the types of the narratives, there was only one voice or narrator in the main texts of each sampled textbook. In the existing literature also, this tendency is pointed out, particularly in the case of Singapore (Ho, 2010; Sim and Print, 2009). There was a character with narrations about the atomic bombs and it does not necessarily attempt to show any conflicting views or ideas. In the cases of European history textbooks, the authors are likely to take either a very objective stance, almost taking up a role to marshal various people's opinions, rather than telling their own ideas, or they stress their views as just one of many while they narrate the stories of history from their perspectives (Kondo, 2003). In both ways, the point is that the authors expect students to know that there are various perspectives towards history.

5. Conclusion

As shown above, the volume of the texts about the atomic bombs is very limited in each sampled textbook. Teachers are pressed to finish the curriculum in both Vietnam (Saito et al., 2008) and Singapore (Kang, 2005). In such circumstances, a question is how teachers teach about the atomic bombs. This, according to the existing literature (Ogawa, 2000a; Ogawa, 200b; Stoddard, 2009), depends upon teachers: their interest and knowledge. If there is a dearth of interest or in socially held knowledge about the atomic bombs in both countries, there is a large possibility that the atomic bombs are taught on the surface level and a huge question still remains about how much students learn in depth about the magnitude of the atrocity that the atomic bombs brought about to the people in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki at that time.

On the other hand, Japan is considered as a former foe to both countries. From their perspectives, Japan was the aggressor so their views can be very critical about its past invasion. Despite the deaths and wounds of the victims, the act of dropping the atomic bombs can be considered as a symbol of liberation—regardless of whether this view is accepted or not, it may be very deeply held in other countries.

Japanese occupation during World War II covered both East and South East Asia. In order to fill the gap in the view of their modern history, various organisations and individuals have started to have dialogues between East Asian countries, such as China or South Korea and Japan (Fujisawa, 1998; Historical Science Society of Japan, 2004; Saito, 2008). However, the

dialogue about the history between institutions or individuals in South East Asian countries and Japan has been much less frequently held or reported. It does not mean that their interactions in the wartime were either less important or more superficial than those in East Asia. There were various tensions, atrocities or uprisings in various parts of South East Asia and even after the end of World War II, it took a long time to ease the agony of anger or sorrow in the region. The historical past is being quickly forgotten in Japanese society but not necessarily in South East Asia (Hayase, 2007; Fujikawa, 1997; Kawasaki, 1996).

If the wounds caused by the atomic bombs in the Japanese society are to be advocated, it is very important, particularly if the advocates are from Japan, for them to recognise that the memory of the wounds caused by Japan is deeply felt in societies in South East Asia. Particularly, it has to be understood that people of South East Asia can weigh the wounds of the atomic bombs against their own wounds caused by Japan during wartime. Therefore, it would be crucially important for advocates of the negative impacts of the atomic bombs to know more about the suffering that the people in the region had to go through during Japan's rule. For that purpose, sincere and long-term historical dialogues need to be practiced between the people in the South East Asia and Japan.

Materials for this study

(Singaporean Textbooks)

Curriculum Planning & Development Division. (2007a). *Interacting with Our World*. Singapore, Marshall Cavendish.

Curriculum Planning & Development Division. (2007b). *Singapore from settlement to nation: pre-1819 to 1971*. Singapore, Panpac Education.

(Vietnamese Textbooks)

Bo Giao Duc Va Dao Tao (Ministry of Education and Training). (2010a). *Tien Viet 5 Tap Mot (Vietnamese for 5th Grades, Volume I)*. Hanoi, Nha Xuat Ban Giao Duc Viet Nam.

Bo Giao Duc Va Dao Tao (Ministry of Education and Training). (2010b). *Lich Su 8 (History for 8th Grades)*. Hanoi, Nha Xuat Ban Giao Duc Viet Nam.

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