# The Representation of World War II:
## A Comparison of Japanese and American Textbook Discourse

Erica J. Hashiba, Macao Polytechnic Institute

This paper presents the findings of a linguistic comparison of the representation of World War II in a Japanese and American history textbook. While Japanese textbooks have received much attention and criticism for their biased depiction of history, American textbooks have not experienced the same degree of international scrutiny. Thus, it is the aim of this paper to analyze the language use of a textbook from each of the two countries and evaluate how the American textbook compares to the Japanese textbook with regard to communicating bias. The findings of this study reveal that the two textbooks share several striking similarities that indicate they both strive to portray a history that is favorable to their country. Though the Japanese textbook has received much more criticism than its U.S. counterpart, the Japanese textbook does not appear to be any more biased than the U.S. textbook. This finding suggests that perhaps more attention should be given to American history textbooks and textbooks of other countries with regard to how they portray history.

Studies in discourse analysis consider how language is used in texts to fulfill different purposes. A number of discourse analysts working in the framework of systemic functional linguistics (such as Lukin, 2005; Martin, 2002; Moore, 2002) have been concerned with the representation of different world views in texts through the use of different linguistic choices. Lukin (2005) notes, "There is no simple correspondence between language and 'reality'" (p. 140). Rather, language is a "shaper of reality for those who use it" (Hasan, 1996, as cited in Lukin, 2005, p. 141). Thus, language is a tool through which a particular perception of reality can be conveyed, and there is, perhaps, no such thing as a text free of bias.

However, bias embedded in language may not necessarily be conspicuous. Though the use of loaded words can be an obvious indicator of bias, many public texts such as newspapers, magazines, and textbooks will most likely avoid resorting to overtly biased language so as to uphold an image of objectivity. Thus, in order to uncover bias, we must not only investigate the lexical items of a text, but also its grammar, which Lukin describes as the "cryptotypic regions" of a text that "work on us in deeply unconscious ways" (p. 142). After all, a text is constructed not only through word choice, but also grammatical choices.

Within the field of systemic functional linguistics, transitivity analysis is a method through which the grammar of a text can be examined for the experiential meaning it communicates. There have been several studies that have researched the relationship between language and reality through an analysis of transitivity (Butt, Lukin, & Matthiessen, 2004; Lukin, 2005; Moore, 2002). These studies show a striking similarity in their findings regarding how bias is reflected in language. As Moore's (2002) and Lukin's (2005) studies show, one way in which language can reflect this bias is the centrality, or frequency, of a favorable or unfavorable entity in a text. Moore's (2002) study of obituaries published in the major British magazine, *The Economist*, reveals the ways in which certain linguistic choices

reflect the magazine's bias towards certain obituary subjects. Moore finds that Jack Mann, a British fighter pilot, is clearly central to his obituary, "being directly mentioned in 64 percent of clause complexes" (p. 515). On the other hand, General Aideed, a Somalian warlord, only appears in 35% of clause complexes in his very own obituary. Rather than Aideed himself, the subject of UN peacekeeping, an event which he sought to disrupt during his lifetime, is more of a central topic to the obituary. Lukin's (2005) study of two contrasting articles on the Iraq War also revealed bias through the centrality of certain subjects—nearly 75% of the clauses in a *The Australian* article report on actions of or by the U.S. rather than Iraqi civilians, revealing the article's U.S.-centric point of view. In an article written by journalist Robert Fisk, however, actions by Iraqi civilians constitute 40% (the majority) of the clauses.

Another revealing and yet covert way in which a text could reflect ideological bias is how the participants of a text are linguistically represented. Though this concerns word choice rather than grammar, bias is not always reflected in loaded language. Lukin's (2005) study makes a detailed categorization of the kinds of entities (e.g., "civilians," "act of war," etc.) that are employed in the Australian article and the article by Robert Fisk. Her categorization reveals that in the Fisk article, "humans act on humans," and the detailed reporting on how Iraqi civilians are victimized by the war effectively communicates the tragic nature of the war (p. 150). On the other hand, the Australian article minimally incorporates civilian entities, and rather, attributes actions of war to "geopolitical entities, government officials, weaponry and abstractions like 'bombardments'" (p. 150). Likewise, entities affected by the actions also tend to be non-human and abstract rather than human entities. Thus, the Australian article obscures "the gruesome details of how war affects flesh-and-blood humans" (p. 150). According to Lukin, this difference in the types of human or non-human participants employed in each of the texts reflects their ideological biases—in this case, whether they are for or against the war. In Butt, Lukin, and Matthiesen's (2004) study, the same pattern is seen in Bush's State of the Union address, in which the enemy is construed as engaging in concrete acts (e.g., "kill," "brutalize") that affect human beings (e.g., "Americans," "Afghanistan's people"), whereas U.S. actions are often construed in "indirect and abstract terms" (p. 273). Thus, by representing certain entities in a particular way, these texts are constructing a perspective of reality that is favorable to a certain group of readers.

The texts analyzed in these studies, namely news articles, *The Economist* obituaries, and the president's State of the Union address, are all those which reach an extremely wide audience and thus, are highly influential in our society. As Moore (2002) notes, "What is read by any reader will in some way influence their thinking and their perceptions of the world . . . [and] will contribute to the reader's sense of reality, whether or not they agree with what they read" (p. 497).

Needless to say, school textbooks are also an example of such an influential text, and young students may particularly be impressionable. History textbooks can especially have a powerful effect on a reader's perception of reality, since their purpose, as Goodman, Homma, Najita, and Becker (1983) suggest, is to "influence the attitudes of young people toward their own society and toward other nations" (p. 542). Several studies informed by systemic functional linguistics have investigated the language of historical texts (Barnard, 2001; Eggins, Wignell, & Martin, 1993; Martin, 2002; McCabe, 2004; Oteiza, 2003; Schleppegrell,

Achugar, & Oteiza, 2004; Schleppegrell & de Oliveira, 2006; Veel & Coffin, 1996). Eggins, Wignell, and Martin (1993) and Martin (2002) state that the language of history can be highly abstract and there can be great distance between actual history and how it gets written about.

The problematic potential for language to misrepresent the reality of history can even have socio-political repercussions, as in the case of the ongoing textbook controversy in Japan. The Japanese Ministry of Education's attempts to sanitize the portrayal of Japanese aggression during World War II have outraged the governments and people of those Asian countries that were victimized during the war. Their grievances have not been reconciled to this day and the development of a friendly relationship between Japan and its Asian neighbors has been hindered due to such disputes over historical memory.

Barnard's (2001) study of Japanese history textbooks reveals the ways in which the textbooks use language in order to construct a favorable ideology, particularly in the discussion of the Nanjing Massacre. He finds that the Japanese perpetrators of the massacre are hardly ever present on "an individual human level" (e.g., "the Japanese") but only on an "organizational level" (e.g., "the military"), making the perpetrators face-less and non-human (p. 522). Only one textbook out of the corpus of 88 textbooks attributes the massacre's killing to a human-level actor, that is, the soldiers of the Japanese army. Barnard's findings are parallel to that of Lukin's (2005) and Butt, Lukin, and Matthiesen's (2004), and illustrates that the grammatical patterns construing ideology can also be found in history textbooks. The findings of Barnard's study are intriguing, and create an impetus for further investigation of whether any parallels may be found between the language of Japanese history textbooks and textbooks of other countries.

If, as Lukin (2005) suggests, language can never be without bias, then surely American history is no exception. Loewen (1995), in his research on U.S. history textbooks, suggests that the aim of textbooks is to "indoctrinate blind patriotism" (p. 14). However, it is curious that U.S. textbooks have hardly undergone any international criticism regarding their depiction of history, as is the case with Japanese textbooks (Hein & Seldon, 2000). Thus, it would be interesting to see how U.S. textbooks compare to the highly criticized Japanese textbooks. Though much research has been done on the language of history textbooks, none thus far have compared history textbooks from two different countries to investigate how certain linguistic choices can serve to portray a particular perspective of an event in history.

It is the goal of this study to compare a particularly controversial Japanese textbook with a current American textbook, and investigate how similarly or differently bias is communicated in these texts. As there is no known controversial textbook in the U.S., a currently used textbook will serve as the comparison. In order for the comparison to be effective, the analysis will focus solely on the chapter on World War II, an event in history that was experienced by both the U.S. and Japan. World War II is an especially interesting topic since the two countries were enemies in this war.

The following questions will be addressed in this paper through the analysis of the World War II chapters of a Japanese and American textbook:

RQ1: What are the similarities and differences in the linguistic representation of World War II in the Japanese and U.S. history textbooks?

RQ2: How can the U.S. textbook be evaluated in terms of bias, in comparison to the controversial Japanese history textbook?

I hope to use linguistic analysis to further our understanding of history and to show how historical texts are constructed through language. In history textbooks, "What are judged to be the important facts and how these are presented has varied in response to different social movements and political and social pressures" (Barnard, 2001, p. 520). If it is not reality but a certain perspective of reality that is being presented through the language of textbooks for the benefit of certain political and social groups, then it is important for teachers and students to be aware of this.

## Methodology

*The Textbooks*

For this study, sections of both a Japanese and U.S. history textbook were compared. A middle school level textbook, titled *Atarashii Rekishi Kyoukasho* [*The New History Textbook*], by Nobukatsu Fujioka (2005), is the Japanese textbook analyzed. This textbook has been the subject of much criticism, both domestic and international, for its alleged patriotic and whitewashed presentation of history. By linguistically analyzing such a text, we would be able to examine how language may play a role in communicating bias and evaluate the claims of the criticisms made against this textbook.

There is, however, no known controversy surrounding U.S. textbooks equivalent to that of Japanese textbooks (Hein & Seldon, 2000). Thus, *American History* (Dallek, Garcia, Ogle, & Risinger, 2008), a currently used textbook published by McDougal Little, a major textbook publishing company, was selected for the comparison with the Japanese textbook. This textbook is also written for the middle school level. By applying the same linguistic analysis to the U.S. textbook, we would be able to see any similarities or differences in how history is portrayed between the two textbooks, and whether or not the same kinds of criticisms made against the Japanese textbook might apply to the U.S. textbook.

Of course, the content of the two textbooks is significantly different, as one book deals with Japanese history and the other deals with U.S. history. Thus, rather than comparing the textbooks in their entirety, only the sections that recount the events of World War II, an experience shared by both Japan and the U.S., were analyzed for the purpose of comparing their linguistic representations of the same event. Consequently, a total of 330 main clauses were analyzed in the Japanese textbook, and a total of 392 main clauses in the U.S. textbook. Subordinate clauses and text outside the main narrative, such as headings, captions, anecdotal texts located in the margins, and so on, were not included in the analysis. Even though the U.S. textbook is more than four times the length of the Japanese textbook, the space allocated to discussing World War II is remarkably similar.

*The Analysis*

The system of transitivity reflects the experiential meaning of texts and captures how a certain reality is represented through choices made in the language (Eggins, 2004). In this analysis, clauses are analyzed for their process type and the associated participants. The process is realized in the verb group of a clause (i.e., what is happening in the clause) and the participants are realized in the nominal group(s) of a clause (i.e., who or what is involved in the clause) (Eggins, 2004). The circumstantial elements of a clause which express such things as location, manner, and extent of time are realized through adverbial groups and prepositional phrases, but were not analyzed in this study. The following descriptions of processes and participants are based on Eggins' (2004) definitions. All examples given are taken from the U.S. textbook.

Eggins (2004) identifies five main types of processes in English: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, and relational. In this paper, I will present the findings of the analysis of material processes in each of the textbooks. *Material processes* are processes of actions, usually those which are concrete. They constituted the majority in both texts, accounting for 71% of all clauses in the Japanese textbook, and 73% of all clauses in the U.S. textbook. In material processes, there are usually two participants involved: the *actor*, the entity which performs the action, and the *goal*, the entity at which the action is directed. The following sentence is an example of a material process:

(1)  Hitler <u>conquered</u> Denmark.

The material process is realized in the verb *conquered* which is a type of action. *Hitler* is the actor, which did the conquering, and *Denmark* is the goal, which was conquered.

In both English and Japanese, redundant subjects may be ellipsed from a clause. For example, the following sentence contains two material processes, both with the same actor, Hitler:

(2)  In April 1940, <u>Hitler</u> conquered Denmark and <u>overran Norway</u>.

In this sentence, Hitler is responsible for two actions: conquering Denmark and overrunning Norway. Since these two processes are presented in the same sentence, Hitler is not repeated for the second action, as it would be redundant. However, regardless of its omission, there is clearly an actor, in this case Hitler, who "overran Norway." If this sentence were analyzed to have only one actor, then it would appear that Hitler is only responsible for one action rather than two. Furthermore, the second clause would be analyzed as not having an actor at all. Thus, each process was analyzed for its participant(s), and ellipsed subjects that could clearly be identified from a previous clause were included in the analysis so as to reflect the kind and frequency of the participants involved in the texts. In the above sentence, the actor Hitler is analyzed as occurring twice.

On the other hand, ellipsed subjects of passive constructions are often unstated anywhere in the text, and cannot be easily uncovered, unlike subjects ellipsed due to redundancy. Thus,

though the reader may often have an idea of the identity of the subject, the exact identity of unstated ellipsed subjects of passive constructions may be open to question. Further detail on the treatment of such unstated ellipsed subjects will be given in the following section.

*Categorization of Participants by Country*

The participants under examination were first categorized according to which country they are affiliated with. As World War II was an event in which many countries participated, this categorization would allow us to see which countries are incorporated in the narrative of World War II, and to what extent. For example, *Hitler*, *Hitler's troops*, *German forces*, and *Nazi Party* can all be categorized as German participants.

Of course, not all participants have a particular national affiliation. For example, in the following sentence, *dictators* is not affiliated with any particular country:

(3) By the mid-1930s, <u>dictators</u>… had seized control in several countries.

These participants that have no particular national affiliation were categorized under *Other*. However, most participants were found to be affiliated with a country, and those without any affiliation are few in number.

Unstated ellipsed subjects of passive constructions were categorized by country if the national affiliation could be clearly determined from the context. For example, the following sentence is found in the discussion of the Nazi holocaust:

(4) An estimated <u>11 million people were killed</u> in all.

This sentence is a material process written in passive voice, in which only the goal, "11 million people," is present in the construction. Though the actor is linguistically non-existent, the reader can clearly infer from the context that the Nazis are the actors of this sentence. Thus, the actor in this sentence was categorized as an unstated ellipsed German actor. Any unstated ellipsed agents whose national affiliation is unclear or those with no apparent national affiliation were categorized as *Other*.

*Categorization of Participants as Human or Non-Human*

Participants were also categorized according to whether they are human or non-human. As the studies by Barnard (2001), Butt, Lukin, and Matthiesen (2004), and Lukin (2005) show, the categorization of participants as human or non-human would allow us to see what kind of ideology may be reflected through the language. Participants were categorized as human if they physically take a concrete human form, such as *General MacArthur*, *Americans*, and *soldiers*. Participants which physically do not take the human form (i.e., those which are "faceless"), such as *the military*, *aircraft carrier*, and *Japan*, were categorized as non-human. It is important to note that these categorizations are strictly linguistic. For

example, entities such as the military and the government may be composed of actual humans, but they are labels for institutions or groups, and not humans.

As previously mentioned, unstated ellipsed participants of passive constructions were categorized by country when this could be clearly inferred from the context. However, these ellipsed participants were not categorized as human or non-human, as this could not be determined due to their absence. For example, in the aforementioned example, "An estimated 11 million people were killed in all," which occurs in the discussion of the holocaust, the actor is clearly German. However, had the actor been included in the text, there are a number of possible forms that it may have taken, such as *Hitler*, *the Nazis*, or *the government*. Thus, unstated ellipsed participants cannot be categorized as human or non-human, and they are categorized separately as *Unstated Ellipsed*.

## Results

Material processes are the most frequently occurring in both textbooks, accounting for 71% and 73% of all analyzed clauses of the Japanese textbook and U.S. textbook, respectively. This finding shows that the narrative of World War II is portrayed largely through the recounting of actions. Not only are the material processes the most frequent in both textbooks, but their proportions are also nearly the same in each text.

### Actors of Material Processes

As material processes are the most frequently occurring process in both history textbooks, the actors are obviously of importance since they too occur in high frequency in comparison to participants of other processes. By examining the actors of the two texts, we would be able to see whose actions are discussed most, and thus, the perspective from which the story of World War II is told.

*Categorization of actors by country.* All actors present in the main clauses of the narrative of World War II were categorized according to the country they are affiliated with. Table 1 indicates the number and proportion of Japan actors and U.S. actors, while actors of all other countries are given under the category Other. In the following discussion of the results, I will refer to actors which belong to the country for which the textbook is written as *self* actors (in other words, a Japanese actor in the Japanese textbook), and actors of other countries as *non-self* actors (in other words, a Japanese actor in the American textbook).

Table 1 shows that the proportions of the types of actors are significantly different in the two textbooks. Japan actors account for 48% of all actors in the Japanese textbook, and only 12% in the U.S. textbook. On the other hand, U.S. actors account for 35% of all actors in the U.S. textbook, and only 8% of actors in the Japanese textbook. Thus each country participates in World War II to a much lesser extent in each other's textbooks. Instead, in both the Japanese and American textbooks, the majority of actors are self actors, 48% and 35% respectively.Though the tables show that the Other category constitutes the largest proportion in each textbook, no single country included in this category exceeded the number of

Table 1
*Proportion of Actors by Country*

| COUNTRY | JAPAN TEXT | U.S. TEXT |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Japan | 114 (48%) | 37 (12%) |
| U.S. | 18 (8%) | 108 (35%) |
| Other | 107 (45%) | 166 (53%) |
| TOTAL | 239 (100%) | 311 (100%) |

*Note*. Percentage denotations for this table and all succeeding tables are rounded up for simplicity, resulting in occasional totals of within 1% off  from the true total.

Japanese or U.S. actors. Thus, while the textbooks make contrasting choices on who to include in the narrative of World War II, they are nonetheless making a similar *conceptual* choice of including its own country as the main protagonist of the narrative of World War II.

It is curious, however, that the proportion of self actors in the Japanese textbook is much larger than that in the U.S. textbook. Therefore, it appears that the Japanese textbook has a more self-centered perspective, while the U.S. textbook seems to make a greater effort of incorporating entities other than itself into the role of actor, thus telling the story of World War II from a slightly more diverse perspective.

However, a closer examination of the U.S. textbook shows that the term *Allies* is rather extensively employed in actor position. This actor is categorized as Other in the taxonomy used. The following sentence contains an example of an Allies actor:

(5)  …the Allies began bombing Japan.

*The Allies* is the actor which did the bombing, and *Japan* is the goal at which the bombing was directed. While the term *Allies* cannot be analyzed as a U.S. actor as it was a larger, collective entity, the U.S. was an integral—if not leading—force of the Allied powers, and thus Allies actors cannot be interpreted as a completely separate entity from U.S. actors as Japan or Germany can be.

By incorporating Allies actors, perhaps the U.S. textbook is acknowledging and incorporating the perspective of a collective entity which it was part of, rather than attributing all actions participated by the U.S. only to U.S. actors. However, it can also be convenient to use Allies instead of U.S. when talking about aggressive acts such as "bombing Japan," if the U.S. does not want to take sole responsibility for these actions. However, even the U.S. textbook admits, "Most of the Allied progress in the Pacific was made by American troops" (Dallek, Garcia, Ogle, & Risinger, 2008, p. 830). Thus, it is possible that the U.S. textbook uses the term Allies even when certain actions were taken *only* by the U.S.. On the other hand, though the Japanese were part of the Axis powers, *Axis* is never found as an actor (or as any other participant) in the Japanese textbook.

If we combine the number of Allies actors and U.S. actors, they together account for 49% of all actors. This is nearly the same proportion of Japanese actors in the Japanese textbook (48%). Although it is an interesting difference that the U.S. textbook employs less self actors

Table 2
*Proportion of Actors as Human or Non-Human*

|  | JAPAN TEXT | U.S. TEXT |
|---|---|---|
| Human | 57 (24%) | 124 (40%) |
| Non-Human | 153 (64%) | 172 (55%) |
| Unstated Ellipsed | 29 (12%) | 15 (5%) |
| TOTAL | 239 (100%) | 311 (100%) |

than the Japanese textbook, a closer examination reveals that the proportion of actors representing the perspective of their own country is virtually the same in both textbooks.

*Categorization of actors as human or non-human.* The actors of material processes were also analyzed according to whether they are human or non-human actors, regardless of their national affiliation. Table 2 shows the results of this categorization. Ellipsed actors of passive constructions were categorized separately as *unstated ellipsed*, and will be discussed in a later section.

Table 2 shows that there are more non-human than human actors in both textbooks. In the U.S. textbook, 55% are non-human while 40% of the actors are human. In the Japanese textbook, 64% are non-human while 24% of actors are human. As Eggins, Wignell, and Martin (1993) note, history is essentially about people. The fact that there are more non-human than human actors in a text—which is, in reality, about humans—suggests that these textbooks are not representing history in a concrete way that is congruent to reality. The following sentences are examples from the Japanese and U.S. textbooks, both containing a non-human actor. (Abbreviations used in translations of Japanese text: TOP = topic marker, SUB = subject, ACC = accusative marker, P = particle, PASS = passive voice, PAST = past tense.)

(6) Beigun-wa                    Okinawahonto-ni                jyorikushita.

    U.S..military-TOP            Okinawa.main.island-P          land-PAST.

    "The U.S. military landed on the main island of Okinawa."

(7) Japan's expanding empire threatened American possessions.

Though non-human actors are most frequent in both textbooks, the Table 2 also shows that the U.S. textbook has almost twice as many human actors in comparison to the Japanese textbook. The following sentence from the U.S. textbook contains a human actor:

(8) American soldiers planted the U.S. flag at the top of Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi.

In this sentence, the actors who planted the U.S. flag are represented as they are: American soldiers, rather than a generalized non-human entity. Imagine if the sentence above was rephrased as, "*The U.S. military* planted the flag…" or even simply, "*The U.S.* planted the flag…" The U.S. is a rather abstract entity for representing the actual human actors of the event, and thus, such a term would be incongruent to reality. Thus, by more often representing humans as humans, the U.S. textbook appears to be portraying history in a less abstract way, which minimizes the distance between what actually happened and how it gets written. It is interesting to note, however, that the usage of human participants are especially noticeable with proud events in history (such as the aforementioned example of Mount Suribachi) which are often told with vivid detail.

*Categorization of actors by country and as human or non-human.* Table 3 shows that in both textbooks, the self actors are more often in human form than non-self actors. The non-self actors are often portrayed in abstract, faceless terms that seem to make them more distant and unimportant than the self actors.

Consider the difference in the following sentences found in the U.S. textbook:

(9) "Germany then invaded Poland on September 1, 1939."

(10) "Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle led 16 bombers in the attack."

In comparison to a specific human individual like "Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle," "Germany" is quite a general term. Though we intuitively know that actual people invaded Poland and there must have been German equivalents to Lieutenant Colonel Doolittle, the fact that the textbook dismisses this reality and uses a generalized abstract term such as *Germany* shows that it is not so much in the interest of the textbook to humanize German actors (or any other non-self actors for that matter) as they do for self actors. Thus, both of the history textbooks seem to establish the importance of its own country by employing proportionately higher numbers of human actors for its own country in comparison to actors from other countries.

*Unstated Ellipsed Actors*

Ellipsed actors of passive constructions in which only the goal is present were analyzed as *unstated ellipsed actors*. In the categorization of actors as human or non-human, unstated ellipsed actors were a separate category since, due to their absence, they could not be determined to be human or non-human. The unstated ellipsed actors were categorized by country when this could be clearly determined from the context, and those with unclear national affiliations were included in the Other category.

Passive constructions account for 17% of all material processes in the Japanese textbook, and 6% in the U.S. textbook. Not all actors of passive constructions are ellipsed. As Table 3 shows, the proportion of unstated ellipsed actors in the Japanese textbook is over twice as

Table 3
*Proportion of Actors by Country and as Human or Non-Human*

| JAPAN TEXTBOOK | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Japan | U.S. | Other | TOTAL |
| Human | 29 (12%) | 2 (1%) | 26 (11%) | 57 (24%) |
| Non-Human | 66 (28%) | 13 (5%) | 74 (31%) | 153 (64%) |
| Unstated Ellipsed | 19 (8%) | 3 (1%) | 7 (3%) | 29 (12%) |
| TOTAL | 114 (48%) | 18 (8%) | 107 (45%) | 239 (100%) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| U.S. TEXTBOOK | | | | |
|  | Japan | U.S. | Other | TOTAL |
| Human | 15 (5%) | 51 (16%) | 58 (19%) | 124 (40%) |
| Non-Human | 21 (7%) | 50 (16%) | 101 (32%) | 172 (55%) |
| Unstated Ellipsed | 1 (0%) | 7 (2%) | 7 (2%) | 15 (5%) |
| TOTAL | 37 (12%) | 108 (35%) | 166 (53%) | 311 (100%) |

much as those in the U.S. textbook, 12% and 5% of all actors, respectively. Furthermore, 47% of all unstated ellipsed actors in the U.S. textbook were U.S. actors, and 66% of all unstated ellipsed actors in the Japanese textbook were Japan actors. Thus, in the Japanese textbook, not only is there a high proportion of unstated ellipsed actors, but among them, there is a higher proportion of unstated ellipsed actors of its own country (i.e., self actors) in comparison to the U.S. textbook. In the Japanese textbook, the unstated ellipsed Japan actors account for 17% of all the Japan actors, whereas in the U.S. textbook, the unstated ellipsed U.S. actors account for only 6% of all U.S. actors.

As passive constructions in Japanese usually express adversarial meaning (Oshima, 2006), these findings suggest that in the Japanese textbook, passive constructions are frequently employed particularly when Japan is the actor of adverse actions. If, as Loewen (1995) suggests, history textbooks are written for the purpose of fostering pride and patriotism in the nation, the country for which the textbook is written must remain in a positive light as much as possible. Passive constructions are convenient for situations in which Japan is the perpetrator of an adverse event, since the actor can be omitted altogether from the text, and thus, linguistically avoid its responsibility in the event. While it is often clear from the context that Japan is indeed the actor, whether the actor is foregrounded or backgrounded may certainly influence how we perceive the reality portrayed by the text (Clark, 1992).

The fact that passive constructions are not as frequently employed when the actors are not from Japan perhaps indicates that the Japanese textbook is not interested in protecting the image and reputation of countries other than itself. Since passive constructions allow the actor to dodge responsibility (at least on a linguistic level), the Japanese textbook may not want to provide such an opportunity to perpetrators of actions where Japan was a victim. The section in the Japanese textbook titled "Life During the War" clearly exemplifies the different linguistic choices made depending on the context of the situation. A major topic of this

section is the tragic deeds that the Japanese committed against its Asian neighbors during the war. Every material process clause pertaining to this topic (where Japan is the presumed actor) is written in passive voice. The following is a sentence containing two conjoined clauses, both written in passive voice:

(11)  Chosenhanto-de-wa,              soshikaimei nado-ga

   Korean.peninsula-P-TOP,         last.name.change such.as-SUB

   okonaware,    chosenjin-wo     nihonjinka suru seisaku-ga

   did-PASS,       Koreans-ACC    Japanese-like make policy-SUB

   tsuyomerareteita.

   strengthened-PASS.

   "In Korea, such things as changing the Koreans' last names to Japanese were done, and the policy of making Koreans Japanese-like was strengthened."

However, after a string of passive clauses similar to this one, the topic then changes to the U.S. invasion of Japan, and the sentences suddenly switch to active voice:

(12) Beigun-wa                nihonhondoe-no              kushu-wo

   U.S.military-TOP                Japan.mainland.toward-P      air.raid-ACC

   kaishishita.

   began.

   "The U.S. military began the air raids of the Japanese mainland."

(13) (Beigun-wa)           nikagetsuhannochi-ni          Okinawa-o

   U.S.military-TOP                two.and.a.half.months.later-P   Okinawa-ACC

   senryoushita.

   occupied.

   "Two and a half months later, the U.S. military occupied Okinawa."

The transition from a passive to an active construction suggests that the Japanese textbook is not as concerned with concealing the U.S. identity as actor as it is with itself, when discussing adverse events. In these active constructions, we clearly see that the U.S. is the perpetrator of actions which victimize Japan. On the other hand, in the passive constructions where Japan is the perpetrator, the omission of actors has allowed for Japan's role in the event to be backgrounded.

In the U.S. textbook, there is not a particularly high number of unstated ellipsed self actors as there is in the Japanese textbook. This is perhaps due to the fact that passive constructions do not necessarily convey adversarial meaning in English, and thus, do not always function to evade *actor responsibility* as they often do in the Japanese textbook. As passive constructions function differently in the two languages, we cannot necessarily lead to the conclusion that the smaller proportion in the U.S. textbook suggests less bias.

*Goals in Material Processes*

In contrast to actors in material processes, goals of material processes are the participants at whom the action is directed (Eggins, 2004). All transitive material processes necessarily have a goal. However, since there are no goals in intransitive clauses, goals are only found in a portion of all material processes. Nonetheless, goals are just as much a point of interest as actors, as they are the entities being affected by, or in some contexts victimized, in the events described in the history textbook.

*Categorization of goals as human or non-human.* In Japanese textbooks. 61% of all material processes are transitive clauses; in U.S. textbooks, 68% of material processes are transitive clauses. Of the goals in these transitive clauses, a significantly large proportion is non-human goals. Non-human goals account for 88% of goals in the Japanese textbook and 78% of goals in the U.S. textbook. This is a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of non-human actors (64% and 55% of the Japanese and U.S. textbooks, respectively). The following is a sentence from the U.S. textbook with a non-human goal:

(14) In October 1944, Allied forces invaded <u>the Philippines</u>.

In a subject such as World War II where many events are of an adverse nature, the stark nature of reality is somewhat muted when goals that are actually human are linguistically represented as non-human. Consider if the above sentence was rewritten as: "In October 1944, Allied forces attacked Filipino men, women, and children." When the goal of the action, in this case "the Philippines," is changed to a human entity, the action seems to bear more negative weight. As "invaded" is not an appropriate verb to use with human goals, it has also been changed to "attacked" for the sake of accurate prose. On the other hand, if the entities that are being affected are not human, then the responsibility borne by the perpetrator does not seem as significant. This may be a reason for the goals frequently being in non-human form, especially when the majority of actors in both textbooks are self actors involved in adverse events during a war.

Table 4
*Human Goals by Country*

|         | JAPAN TEXT | U.S. TEXT |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Japan   | 7 (47%)   | 4 (9%)    |
| U.S.    | 0 (0%)    | 15 (34%)  |
| Other   | 8 (53%)   | 25 (57%)  |
| TOTAL   | 15 (100%) | 44 (100%) |

As was the case with the analysis of actors, there is a smaller proportion of non-human goals in the U.S. textbook than in the Japanese textbook, suggesting that the U.S. textbook more closely portrays history to reality by employing more human entities. However, though the proportions may be different, the pattern remains the same—both textbooks prefer non-human over human entities in both actor and goal positions.

*Categorization of human goals by country.* If both textbooks favor non-human goals, an interesting question is what kinds of entities are in the less frequent human goal position. Table 4 shows the human goals categorized by country in each of the textbooks.

In the Japanese textbook, there is almost an identical number of human goals which are Japanese and non-Japanese. In the U.S. textbook, there are more non-U.S. human goals than there are U.S. human goals. Thus, there are less self goals in the U.S. text than there are in the Japanese text. Furthermore, there are no cases of U.S. human goals in the Japanese textbook, but 9% of human goals in the U.S. textbook are Japanese. Thus, in both textbooks, American individuals are less (or not at all) in goal position, while Japanese individuals are relatively frequent in goal position.

The above finding suggests that the actual results of the war are directly reflected in the way the war is recounted by each of these countries, regardless of bias. As the U.S. was victorious in the war, this may be why they are more often represented as the active doer of actions rather than having actions done onto them. On the other hand, Japan may often be in goal position where they are victims of the actions as a result of being defeated in the war. This pattern found in both textbooks shows that, while transitivity choices can play a role in constructing a narrative favorable to a certain perspective, it can also reflect real world players and the actual outcome of events.

What is perhaps most striking about the results in Table 4 is the rather high proportion of human self goals in both textbooks. If an entity is being subjected to the actions of another actor, especially in the context of adverse events, the entity is likely to be perceived as being powerless and vulnerable. If textbooks strive to shed a positive light on their own country, then it seems rather contradictory that the majority of human goals are actually self goals. Therefore, the actors acting on human self goals were further examined. The result was that human self goals are rarely (or not all) subject to the actions of non-self actors.

In the Japanese textbook, the actors in the processes with all seven Japanese human goals were, in fact, Japanese. In the U.S. textbook, the actors in 13 out of 15 processes with American human goals were American. Thus, in both textbooks, the human self goals are

interacting largely (or in the Japanese textbook, only) with actors also belonging to their own country.

The following is an example from the Japanese textbook of a material process with a self goal acted upon by a self actor:

(15) Inukai Tsuyoshi shusho-wa,                kaigunseinenshoko-no    ichidan

Inukai Tsuyoshi prime.minister-TOP    navy.officer-P                group

niyotte   ansatsusareta.

due.to    assassinated-PASS

"Prime minister Inukai Tsuyoshi was assassinated by a group of (Japanese) Navy officers."

Not surprisingly, sentences which involve self goals do not always concern adverse events, such as the following example from the U.S. textbook:

(16) The U.S. government awarded [Audie Murphy] the Medal of Honor…

Even with non-human goals, non-self entities appear to be avoided in actor position. The discussion of the Battle of Midway in the U.S. textbook includes an interesting example of such a case. The Battle of Midway was fought between the U.S. and Japan, and is often portrayed as the turning point of the war in favor of the Allied powers. In the discussion of this event, Japan is never in actor position and only in goal position where it is subjected to the actions of a U.S. actor:

(17) The U.S. Navy destroyed four Japanese carriers and at least 250 planes.

In this sentence, the Japanese carriers and planes are clearly being negatively affected by their enemy, a U.S. actor. Immediately following this sentence is one in which the U.S. carrier and planes are now in goal position:

(18) America lost one carrier and about 150 planes.

Though the U.S. is now in goal position, the actor is not a Japanese actor as we might expect from the context. Since the battle was between the U.S. and Japan, we can easily infer that the "one carrier and about 150 planes" was lost due to Japanese attacks. However, the actor of the sentence is not a Japanese actor, but in fact, a U.S. actor. Though it is clear in the previous sentence that the U.S. attacked the Japanese carriers, the second sentence does not make explicit that the Japanese attacked the U.S. carrier. In the whole discussion, no U.S. goals are subjected to actions by Japanese actors or any other non-self actors. If it were the

163

case that actors of other countries were affecting the self goals, then the reader may develop an unfavorable image of the country being acted upon. However, as the self goals in each of these examples given above are only interacting with self actors, this representation of events does not necessarily construct a negative perception of the country and does not interfere with the textbook's goal of fostering pride in the nation.

## Summary of Results

A linguistic analysis of a history textbook from Japan and the U.S. was conducted to investigate the similarities and differences in their portrayal of World War II. Material processes are by far the most frequently occurring process type in each of the textbooks, and are the focus of this paper. The analysis of the actors and goals of material processes reveals several interesting parallels between the two textbooks. Firstly, the analysis of actors by country reveals that self actors occur most frequently in both textbooks. Thus, both textbooks recount World War II mostly from their own perspective. Though this may not be a surprise, this is a direct reflection of the fact that a historical event can be portrayed very differently depending on which country is constructing the narrative. This finding is parallel to those of previous studies (Butt, Lukin, & Matthiesen, 2004; Lukin, 2005; Moore, 2002), which found that bias can be communicated through the centrality (i.e., frequency) of the entity whose perspective is taken. Secondly, the categorization of actors as human or non-human shows that there are more non-human than human actors in both textbooks. This finding is in line with Eggins, Wignell, and Martin's (1993) study which found that history texts tend to employ a high use of grammatical metaphor, and represent people as generalized, non-human entities. However, there was a higher proportion of human actors in the U.S. textbook than in the Japanese textbook, suggesting that the U.S. textbook more accurately portrays the reality of history. It is important to note, however, that the use of human actors is particularly noticeable in the discussion of heroic actions that are often told in vivid detail. Finally, an examination of the actors by both country and as human or non-human reveals that both textbooks incorporate a higher proportion of human actors from its own country in comparison to those from other countries. Self actors, by being represented as human, are concrete and real to the reader, whereas non-self actors, represented as non-human, are abstract and thus distanced from the reader.

An interesting difference between the two textbooks is that there are twice as many unstated ellipsed actors in the Japanese textbook as there are in the U.S. textbook. The majority of the unstated ellipsed actors in the Japanese textbook are, in fact, Japanese. As passive constructions in Japanese often convey adversarial meaning, this shows that the Japanese textbook often employs the passive construction when Japan is the actor of an adverse event.  Such a linguistic strategy is effective for avoiding a negative image of Japan, as omitting the actor linguistically backgrounds its role in the event. On the other hand, the fact that they do not necessarily convey adversarial meaning in English may be why they are not as frequent in the U.S. textbook. Thus, because of the contrasting functions of passive constructions in Japanese and English, the lower proportion of passives in the U.S. textbook does not necessarily mean that it is less biased.

The analysis of goals in material processes also revealed several interesting findings. Firstly, the categorization of goals as human or non-human shows that there are more non-human than human goals in each of the textbooks. In the discussion of an adverse event such as World War II, an action perpetrated upon a non-human goal (e.g., Philippines, naval ships) does not convey the same sense of negativity and burden that could be felt with a human goal (e.g., women, children). This finding is parallel to those of Butt, Lukin, and Matthiesen (2004) and Lukin (2005), who found that favored entities often act on non-human entities so as to avoid the reality of affecting "flesh and blood" humans. Though the U.S. textbook does have a lower proportion of non-human goals than the Japanese textbook, the two textbooks are nonetheless parallel in their preference for non-human over human entities. Secondly, both textbooks have a low proportion of U.S. goals and a relatively high proportion of Japanese goals. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that the U.S. was victorious and Japan was defeated in the war. Thus, transitivity choices are not only affected by whose perspective is taken, but also by real-world players and the outcome of actual events. Finally, the categorization of human goals by country shows that the majority of these are self goals in both textbooks. However, the actors in the processes with these human goals are seldom those of other countries. Thus, these human self goals are never victimized by non-self actors, but instead, largely interact with self actors (usually positively) so as to avoid any negative image of the country they represent.

## Conclusion

The goal of this study was to see how a current U.S. textbook can be evaluated in comparison to a highly criticized Japanese textbook. Findings such as the centrality of the self entity and the high proportion of non-human goals are in line with those of previous studies that have examined bias in highly influential texts (Butt, Lukin, & Matthiesen, 2004; Lukin, 2005; Moore, 2002). Some differences reveal the ways in which the Japanese textbook aims to construct a history that is favorable to Japan, such as its high proportion of passive constructions and unstated ellipsed actors. However, passive constructions in Japanese and English do not function in the same exact way, and the mere difference in numbers cannot lead us to any solid conclusions. Thus, the similarities between the two textbooks are perhaps more compelling than the differences, and according to the findings of this study, the Japanese textbook does not appear to be any more biased than its American counterpart. Though Japanese history textbooks have undergone intense domestic and international scrutiny, the results of this study suggest that some attention should also be given to U.S. textbooks with regard to how they communicate history.

### *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research*

Though several interesting results have been revealed by this study, there are some limitations that should be noted. First, the study focused solely on the main text of the textbooks—any text occurring outside of the main narrative, such as under section headings, in photograph captions, or within anecdotal texts went unanalyzed. Both the Japanese and

U.S. history textbooks are bordered with abundant photographs and supplementary texts on every page. Thus, the findings of this study do not capture all of the textual elements that are part of a history textbook. These marginal texts can be quite informative, and provide interesting information that serves to supplement the main text. It would be interesting for further research to investigate the similarities and differences between the marginal and main texts, and ascertain what kind of special function these marginal texts may have.

Another limitation of this study is that only one textbook from each country was analyzed. It is important to note that the aim of this study was to compare a current American textbook to a particularly controversial Japanese textbook, and the Japanese textbook used for this study is not representative of all middle school history textbooks. Thus, the findings of this study cannot lead to generalizations about all Japanese and U.S. textbooks. Further research comparing several Japanese and U.S. textbooks would be needed to make more general claims regarding history textbooks in these two countries.

## References

Barnard, C. (2001). Isolating knowledge of the unpleasant: The Rape of Nanking in Japanese high-school textbooks. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 22*(4), 519-530.

Butt, D., Lukin, A., & Matthiesen, C. (2004). Grammar—The first covert operation of war. *Discourse and Society, 15*(2-3), 267-290.

Clark, K. (1992). The linguistics of blame. In M. Toolan (Ed.), *Language, text, and context: Essays in stylistics* (pp. 208-224). London: Routledge.

Dallek, R., Garcia, J., Ogle, D., & Risinger, C. F. (2008). *American history.* Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell.

Eggins, S. (2004). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics* (2nd ed.). London: Continuum.

Eggins, S., Wignell, P., & Martin, J. R. (1993). The discourse of history: Distancing the recoverable past. In M. Ghadessy (Ed.), *Register analysis: Theory and practice* (pp. 75-109). London: Pinter.

Fujioka, N. (2005). *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho* [The new history textbook ]. Tokyo: Fusosha.

Goodman, G. K., Homma, N., Najita, T., & Becker, J. M. (1983). The Japan/United States Textbook Study Project: Perceptions in the textbooks of each country about the history of the other. *The History Teacher, 16*(4), 541-567.

Hein, L., & Seldon, M. (2000). Lessons of war, global power, and social change. In L. Hein & M. Seldon (Eds.), *Censoring history: Citizenship and memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (pp. 3-50). New York: M. E. Sharp.

Loewen, J. W. (1995). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong.* New York: Touchstone.

Lukin, A. (2005). Mapping media bias: A multidimensional affair. *Australian Journalism Review, 27*(1), 139-155.

Martin, J. R. (2002). Writing history: Construing time and value in discourses of the past. In M. J. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first*

*and second languages* (pp. 87-118). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

McCabe, A. (2004). Mood and modality in Spanish and English history textbooks: The construction of authority. *Text, 24*(1), 1-29.

Moore, S. H. (2002). Disinterring ideology from a corpus of obituaries: A critical post mortem. *Discourse and Society, 13*(4), 495-536.

Oshima, D. Y. (2006). Adversity and Korean/Japanese passives: Constructional analogy. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics, 15,* 137-166.

Oteiza, T. (2003). How contemporary history is presented in Chilean middle school textbooks. *Discourse and Society, 14*(5), 639-660.

Schleppegrell, M. J., Achugar, M., & Oteiza, T. (2004). The grammar of history: Enhancing content-based instruction through a functional focus on language. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(1), 67-93.

Schleppegrell, M. J., & de Oliveira, L. (2006). An integrated language and content approach for history teachers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5,* 254-268.

Veel, R., & Coffin, C. (1996). Learning to think like an historian: The language of secondary school history. In R. Hasan & G. Williams (Eds.), *Literacy in Society* (pp. 191-231). London: Longman