



The Role of History Textbooks in the Formation of Historical Memory in Educational Literature and the Modernization of the History Education Process in English

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Abstract

Studying the trends in the evolution of the theoretical and instructional foundation of history education that emerged during that time and persist today is related to the modernization of education in general and history education in particular. This article reveals the proportion of heroic to tragic narratives in the English-language history education literature, with a focus on the role of history textbooks in the formation of historical memory of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War. The article's contents can be applied to the creation of new textbooks, article reviews, generalizing historical scientific works, and public discussions regarding the role of history textbooks in a multicultural educational setting.

Keywords: History; Textbook; English Language.

1. Introduction

The reform education is taking place in the context of a reevaluation of global historical processes, which has resulted in a fundamental shift in the way that many current and historical events in Europe, the US, and the global community are assessed. Some historians and politicians saw significant shifts in their understanding of the Great Patriotic War and World War II as a result of this "reassessment." The shift in the role's evaluation can be used as an example to demonstrate the point. Even though the Great Patriotic War was won more than 70 years ago, historians as well as the general public are still interested in the conflict, its causes, and its outcomes. Conversely, the voices of those who disagree that the people who contributed most to the shared victory over fascism are growing more and more audible. A resolution "On the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe" was passed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on September 19, 2019. The resolution's authors claim that the "Nonaggression Pact" and the "Boundary and Friendship Treaty" "divided Europe and the territories of independent states between two totalitarian regimes, which paved the way for the beginning of World War II," and as a result, they should be condemned. It should be mentioned that PACE had previously issued resolutions of this nature. It passed a Resolution on Divided Europe Reunited on July 3, 2009, which attempted to place blame for the start of World War II and its casualties while equating Nazism and Stalinism.

As a result, it is crucial that the academic course "History" address the topics of World War II and the Great Patriotic War. This is caused by two factors: first, as was already mentioned, this is one of the most talked about and contentious issues in the modern world; second, students enrolled in this course come from different countries and regions. As a result, two of the primary goals of teaching the "History" course are helping students from different countries and regions adjust to American society and acquire the historical perspectives found in English-language educational materials that are suggested for study in postsecondary institutions. Since "... the image of other peoples or our own image that lives in our soul depends on the way we were taught history in childhood," the historical events presented in textbooks and

their evaluation serve as both an educational foundation and the foundation for the formation of historical memory (Fazliev et al., 2019).

2. Literature Review

Research on history textbooks has, for the most part, focused on the material included in the books and the process used to choose it. Teachers' interpretation of textbooks in an educational setting has received little attention (Lässig, 2009). While the contents of history textbooks are the main focus of this study, I also try to highlight the substantive and cognitive aspects of that content. Ultimately, I hope to close the gap between textbook narratives and their use by shedding light on how teachers as professionals relate to and interpret the stories presented in textbooks. In my view, a history didactical approach to textbooks should not only concentrate on content and dissemination but also on reception. Various perspectives in textbook research bring different problems and possibilities (Otto, 2013). While some research has been done on how historical texts are received (Wineburg, 2001), there is still a dearth of studies that concentrate on history teachers, who are among the main historians in any given society, and how they view textbooks. As such, this work represents an effort to contribute to the underresearched field of textbook studies.

Prior studies on Swedish history textbooks have focused on the way in which the Cold War era is portrayed in the texts: Holmén (2006) conducted a comparative and longitudinal analysis of the ways in which the United States and the Soviet Union were portrayed in history textbooks in Sweden, Norway, and Finland from the 1930s until 2004. Holmén discovered that during the entire period, and especially after the 1980s, Swedish textbooks generally gave a negative portrayal of the USSR. The USA is portrayed in the studied textbooks in a more nuanced manner. Although the stories clearly reflect a Western or American viewpoint on foreign policy, they frequently concentrate on social issues in American history, especially after the 1970s. It's interesting to note that these changes in trend appear to be related to Sweden's position toward the USSR and USA during the Cold War (Dalsjö, 2014). Although the current study confirms some of Holmén's findings, its scope is both broader and narrower. This study is more comprehensive than others because it examines how history textbooks from a single nation present the emergence of the Cold War. Additionally, it looks at how these narratives are presented and what content they contain. Finally, it adds a receptive dimension by examining how active lower secondary school teachers interpret these narratives (Thorp, 2015).

3. Methodology

The unresolved status of modernization history education is revealed by the analysis of discussions and debates surrounding the topic. This leads us to hypothesize that creating a new history textbook that meets society's needs and reflects scientific achievements is the primary means of resolving this issue. The educational and methodological framework of the historical education era served as the foundation for the article's analysis. The comparative-historical method, which most fully reveals the methodological principle of historicism, as well as other general scientific theoretical methods of analysis, synthesis, and analogy were used to test the hypothesis. According to the analysis, a sizable portion of the historical educational literature that is currently available ignores a variety of sources published in the 2000s, new methodological and historiographic approaches, and the development of a harmonious multicultural consciousness (Lyudmila et al., 2015).

4. Results

Historians have debated the issue of historical textbook "quality" for many years. Negative rather than positive historical narratives dominated textbooks published in the 1990s of the 20th century, which did little to advance civic engagement and patriotism. While the state started to focus more on education at the start of the twenty-first century and made an effort to align history education in particular with the demands of state development, certain issues persisted. Textbook content, particularly historical texts, is heavily influenced by the state's chosen historical memory and society as well as its sociopolitical climate. When opposing value systems collide in people's minds, during a period of dramatic socio-cultural shifts, traditions and stereotypes are broken, history and particular historical events are rethought, and the evaluation of the actions of different historical figures is altered. Furthermore, distinct historical representations and interpretations can coexist in the collective memory; although the characters and storylines in each of these narratives may be the same, their meanings will differ.

Consequently, historical events are reconstructed, interpreted, and purposeful "forgetting" occurs. Furthermore, as stated by Etkind (2004), "the struggle for the content of historical memory is like a military theater, where different forces and means perform strategic and tactical actions." The issue of historical memory gained prominence in the public domain and was studied by all cultural sciences by the end of the 20th century. For historical memory to form, three conditions must be met: The first three are: 1) forgetting the past; 2) interpreting the same facts and events in different ways; and 3) discovering phenomena in the past that are of interest due to current issues in society. Individuals frequently overvalue certain events and forget others. Furthermore, we can comprehend how a society perceives itself in history by understanding the reasons behind what it "forgets" and "remembers" about its past. On the other hand, disregarding historical facts can happen accidentally or as a result of intentional manipulation of public perception. However, forgetting is a necessary component of historical memory. While eliminating "unnecessary information" can distort historical perceptions, it also prevents the restoration of a coherent, integral picture of events, turning history into a disorganized collection of facts.

The construction of historical image is one of the current concerns in historical science. Textbooks that solve the identification problem and use data from historical science to write about the past reflect this past. Furthermore, historians addressed the problem of identity in various ways at different times. For example, during one period, the nation's history was primarily focused on the history of its working people—the demos—while during another, the history was written as a collective biography of the ruling dynasty. Moreover, memory is a sort of "spiritual activity," selective and creative, aimed not only at understanding the past but also at its transformation; this is why Berdyaev claims that memory is not merely a passive reproduction of the past. There are multiple explanations for why and how different societies choose to present their histories in textbooks. One could argue that the content of the textbooks is "subordinated to the specific control mechanisms of the state and/or the dominant elites and is part of the process of forming a nation and loyal citizens," as Schissler and Soysal (2005), for example, believe. "In textbooks we find out what society wants to pass on to future generations," the same authors continue. Because of these facts, scholars see curricula and textbooks as nationalized representations of historical events (Dzherasi, 2013; Pustovalov, 2002; Sakharov, 2004).

Hundreds of documents that had previously been kept in closed storage in both domestic and foreign archives were made available to the public by the new edition. The real motivations and objectives of the war against the USSR were exposed on this exceptional documentary base, which is made up of 50 archives, and the misconceptions regarding its "preventive war" were dispelled. It revealed the legitimate nature of the USSR's war for the right to existence, independence, and territorial integrity and demonstrated that the objectives of the war against the fascist bloc were in the vital interests of both our country's people and the peoples of other countries. Facts and figures demonstrate that the Great Patriotic War was the primary element of World War II, carrying the bulk of the fighting against allies in Europe. The study examines the strategic alliances with the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition as well as the function of the military-technical and financial support given by the allies under the Lend-Lease program. It reveals the nature of the war on a national scale, examines the role played by the government, political parties, military forces, public organizations, and religious institutions in organizing the forces of the entire nation to defeat the enemy, as well as the origins and motivating factors of the fight against the aggressor and the character of the battle in the enemy rear. The costs of the war, its outcome, and the material and demographic losses sustained during the armed conflict have all been calculated (Bokhanov et al., 2016).

According to British textbooks, the events leading up to the 1939 invasion of Poland marked the start of World War II. Along with other major allied states, Great Britain plays a significant role in the war. The fact that "Great Britain stood alone, but stood firmly under the leadership of Winston Churchill" in 1940–1941 is emphasized, serving as a model for the rest of the world. Furthermore, they stress that the conflict involved liberalism, fascism, and communism in addition to nations and states. Although not a turning point in the war's trajectory, US entry into the conflict is acknowledged as important. The results of the war are likewise evaluated differently. According to official narrative, which is represented in English-language historical literature, it was they who faced the greatest resistance from their European allies. The Anglo-American air campaign against military, industrial, and urban targets, as well as the allied landing in Normandy and the invasion, are highlighted in detail in American textbooks that explain the defeat of the Third Reich. (Cherchill, 2011).

Textbooks portray American relations during the latter stages of the war as unclear. In addition to providing the chance to deliver a crushing blow and foster post-war relations, Eisenhower's decision to halt his forces at the Elbe River also appears to have been made in order to preserve the lives of American soldiers. Additionally, "the colossal self-

sacrifice of people during the war" is mentioned in only one textbook. Stalin is blamed in most textbooks for the dissolution of the Grand Alliance. The Soviet Union as a whole is described as a country led by a "cruel dictator" who wanted to make pay, to retain the territories obtained under the Non-Aggression Treaty of 1939 and secure a free hand to create "friendly" governments along the country's borders, as well as expand influence in the world. This is true despite the fact that the people were known for their high degree of self-sacrifice and that a significant portion of their industrial and agricultural capacities were lost. Consequently, the United States' fight against the threat of "tyrannical regimes" emerges as the central theme of World War II. According to textbooks, America is a champion of democracy that produced valiant combatants who turned the tide of battle and freed humanity. Both British and American textbooks carry over the legacy of the Cold War because they instill in students a disdain for their role in World War II. Strange as it may seem, there are common problems in British textbooks that directly affect the war participants. As a result, the peoples of the British Commonwealth and the Empire made no mention of their contribution to victory in English textbooks. Abstract "British forces" and "British victories" are typical to be mentioned, even though Great Britain has used the resources and support of all the Commonwealth peoples (Derevyanko et al., 2016; Volkogonov, 1985).

5. Discussion

The President of the Federation responded sharply to the PACE resolution (Putin, 2020). He said that "such" papers "... carry dangerous, real threats, with its obvious intention to cause a scandal," in the review article honoring the Great Victory's 75th anniversary. Ultimately, it was approved by a very reputable organization. And what it showed was a calculated strategy to topple the post-war international order, whose establishment was the duty and honor of the nations whose representatives supported this fraudulent proclamation today. Consequently, they affected the Nuremberg Trials' outcomes and the global community's endeavors to establish global international institutions following the triumphant 1945. In this context, it is also important to note that the very process of European integration—during which the necessary institutions, such as the European Parliament, were established—was made possible only by the lessons drawn from history and its precise legal and political analyses. And the foundations of all of post-war Europe are being destroyed by those who purposefully challenge this consensus. In essence, Putin (2020) brought the moral aspect of the issue to light. It is cruel to defile and make fun of memory. When statements about the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II list every member of the anti-Hitler coalition except for the USSR, then villainy can be calculated, hypocritical, and quite conscious. Desecrating monuments honoring those who fought against Nazism and justifying such despicable acts with fictitious slogans about opposing unwanted ideology and the supposed occupation are examples of cowardice and villainy. When people who disagree with neo-Nazis and Bandera's heirs are put to death and burned, villainy can get really bloody.

6. Conclusion

The writers of history textbooks may cite foreign evaluations of the World War II era to support a number of their arguments. As an illustration, Winston Churchill has maintained time and time again that "the army was the one who liberated the guts from the German military machine." Speaking after returning from the meeting of the foreign ministers of the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain, Secretary of State C. Hull emphasized in his report to the US Congress that "we must always remember that with their heroic struggle may have saved the allies from a separate peace with the Germans." A peace like that would have degraded the allies and made way for the war that would last for the next thirty years. The study of the Great Patriotic War and World War II has not yet come to an end. Nevertheless, textbook chapters on the bloodiest conflict in human history must be written. Not only should these sections be written with a more comprehensive source and historical foundation, but the overall idea should also be modified. We hope textbook writers will take into consideration Etkind's (2004) belief that "a historian should rejoice and grieve with his people."

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