共生教育学研究

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>研究論文</th>
<th>标題</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>共生教育学研究</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 核心概念 | 共生教育学研究 |
On Interpreting Society through Changing Texts

Tomochika OKAMOTO*

1. Sociology of Textbook Knowledge

The “sociological imagination” is a concept that can be considered from many different perspectives, depending on the context. This paper organizes methodologies for extrapolating social realities from shared texts using a literature study method as the starting point.

I have been performing the task of tracing the changes to historical descriptions found in school history textbooks. A wide range of materials and methods can be used to understand historical facts, and, from these, historical science consistently produces several truths. However, institutional methods for transforming these truths into legitimate educational knowledge are limited and the acts of transmitting an understanding of history and history education are arguably bottlenecked. The quality of information selected or dismissed to justify a particular image of history merely demonstrates a society’s current characteristics (Okamoto 2001: 4-6). A prominent example of this situation is the textbook certification process practiced in Japan ([Resource 1]).


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On the other hand, justified historical images are not necessarily static. When the educational content is observed by setting a time axis, a text that explains a single incident goes through changes, which leads to the awareness that the evidence used to justify something as knowledge is in flux. From that perspective, the mutually reflective relationship between overall society and school education can be explored: the school education stipulated by society socializes individuals, and those who are socially integrated in this way logically sustain the society.

To this point, I have presented the social phenomenon that underlies the way that concepts and information become known, selected, and discarded, using texts and their evolution as supportive evidence (Okamoto 2013: 35-80). The information restriction originating from the narrative known as “national history” has been the focus ([Resources 2 & 3]).

Therefore, the topic of this paper becomes “Interpreting Society through Changing Texts.” However, it is certain that analyzing texts will, by itself, not be able to extract social realities sufficiently. Sociology is an academic discipline devoted to describing and interpreting phenomena using numerous analytical tools. As such, the continuous combination of varied tasks in order to tackle research topics lies within its premise (Mori, 1995: 220-268). In this sense, there is no intention behind this paper to defend any specific, specialized analytical methods in particular.

2. The Method of Textual Criticism

The reason I came to focus on the changes to texts in order to analyze history textbooks is because I had to distinguish whether texts change or remain unchanged (real cause: Realgrund) from whether the significance of such evidence is being interpreted from the values and norms of the observers (cognitive cause: Erkenntnisgrund). As is well known, intense arguments frequently occur over the contents of historical textbooks, with various pundits expressing their approval or disapproval. However, many of these arguments are influenced by the participants’ observations. The portion of the text that might or might not be at issue and the reason for that choice are stipulated by the values and norms of the observers. Therefore, the directions and results of the arguments are pre-determined, and a discussion on “issues” and “descriptions that should be included” cannot be agreed upon by parties that do not share premises. To make progress, the changes to the analytical subjects should be grasped by focusing on the changes that do or do not occur when updated editions of textbooks are published.

Methods for investigating the evidence for extracting points of argument from the changes to texts are often adopted in literature studies as well when impressionistic criticism is not daringly conducted. With these methods, even the values and norms that support pundits’ impressions and opinions would be included as topics of analysis. The main topics of literature studies are broadly categorized as review/criticism or proofreading/editing, with European literature studies emphasizing the latter as the foundation of the former.

One of these methods is termed textual criticism, which analyzes the
沖縄戦

沖縄本島の北部に上陸したアメリカ軍は、付近の二つ飛行場を制圧し、島を南北に分割した。この間、日本軍は特攻機を投入した航空輸送を試みたが、アメリカ軍の空軍はこれを撃破し、日本軍の特攻機は全壊した。ところが、アメリカ軍の航空輸送は成功し、2万5千人を沖縄本島に投入した。この結果、沖縄戦の勝利が見込まれた。


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<thead>
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<th>表2-1 山川出版社『世界史』教科書における「台湾出兵と琉球領領」</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

differences between texts that emerge because of changes from one edition to the next (Yamashita 1993: 22-33; [Resources 4 & 5]). This task involves identifying the changes in the main text and clarifying the systematic differences between the texts. These literature studies are similar to sociological activities because they reference micro social relationships (i.e., the involvement of writers, editors, and proofreaders) to explain macro social changes and cultural conflicts that would influence the structure of even Shakespeare’s work. In this case, it is important to adopt logic that carefully distinguishes between the focal point of the analysis and the arbitrariness of the observer.

This distinction also is found in research on the sociology of education, in which an analysis of ideologies is present in the educational contents and methods. The sociology of curricula understands educational content from a position other than an educational methodological perspective. In other words, it perceives content as a social construction derived from interaction among social forces and an act that relativizes social context (Tanaka 1992: 109-113).


Furthermore, the sociological study of textbooks has been demanding diachronic research perspectives and methods in order to analyze the educational knowledge that would receive historical and social binding (Kikui, 1987: 20). Therefore, the sociology of education has represented the sociology of knowledge and continuity through performance of this scholarship. Derived from cultural sociology, which originally was a discipline aiming to establish the uniqueness of national cultures, the sociology of knowledge could have originated with an attempt to integrate the numerous cultures (values and norms) of a society by recognizing the relativity of culture from the freely fluctuating perspective (Akimoto, 1993: 136-191). The task of discovering the changes in the educational resources between texts can be positioned as part of that activity.

3. The Potential of Sharing Resources and the Potential Understanding of Logical Composition

The practice and investigation of multicultural education in the United States continue the tendencies of the sociology of knowledge because those activities aim to comprehensively examine the roles of culture for the cohesiveness of society by grasping culture as something relative. The fact that the core of this action includes the multicultural education movement, started by the large-scale history textbook criticism campaign of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Detroit in 1962, demonstrates that a careful examination of history education existed as a mechanism to transfer culture. Frances FitzGerald’s America Revised is an example of an achievement along these lines (1979). She analyzed 110 history and social studies textbooks published between the 19th century and the 1970s. In particular, the changes to the texts (editions) of An American History by David Saville Muzzey, which has been read by the majority of American citizens, led to the discourse on the driving changes in dominant societal values.

Political sociology is working to grasp the structure of historical consciousness. For example, Eric Magnuson (1997) argued that American history textbooks at the end of the 20th century included the conflict between the “nationalist narrative” and the “leftist narrative,” although these two views were derived from the “national narrative.” In this type of research, textual criticism is effectively functioning with respect to setting the analytical focal points.

The formulization of research methods also is conducted in the multicultural education field (Grant and Sleeter 2009: 128-133). “Storyline analysis” and “picture analysis” in textbook studies are two of the approaches used ([Resource 6]). This approach heightens the potential of sharing resources and promotes the sharing of a logical diagram to interpret those resources. The approach functions to secure the possibility of understanding what information will develop into a discussion, the directions in which a discussion could move, and the logical composition of the output of a study. At its root, this approach suggests an intellectual climate in which a particular format is sought for academic expression, and creativity exudes beyond the sharing of the format (Watanabe, 2004: 49-69).
ISSUES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

Most groups have particular issues that are especially important to them. For example, the study of Puerto Rican, Central American, and Mexican American must include the issue of language. The study of Jewish Americans must examine the Holocaust. Arab American studies should examine the occupation of Palestine as well as the response of Arab and non-Arab communities to the 9/11 attack. The World Trade Center. Gay and lesbian studies must examine different family structures. Women’s studies must deal with the extent to which males and females differ biologically. Disability studies must unpack conceptions of ability, who creates and maintains those conceptions, and how they locate disability in people rather than in social institutions. Two lesson plans, “Wheelchair Sports” (p. 144) and “Poster Design and the Voice of People with Disabilities” (p. 150), address these issues.

ACTION RESEARCH ACTIVITY 4.1

Textbook Analysis

Select one textbook and record the following information:

- Title:
- Author(s):
- Publisher:
- Copyright date:
- Grade level (if known):

Following are guides for six kinds of analysis. Some may be appropriate to your text, some may not. Select all the analyses that can be done with your text. Go through the text page by page, completing each analysis you select. Take your time and do this carefully. These guides show the guidelines that follow and the charts shown in Figures 4.1-4.3.

1. Picture
2. People to study
3. Anthropology
4. Language
5. Storyline
6. Other

Picture Analysis

Picture analysis is used for texts that picture American people in the United States.

1. Using the chart in Figure 4.1, tally the number of people in each picture by race, sex, and disability. The pictures may depict either individuals or groups. You will need to use your judgment on some pictures, but if a picture features one or a few individuals, tally each individual separately; if the picture features a group, tally it in the “group” row. Code each tally according to whether the individual(s) is (are) named or unnamed in a caption or in the surrounding text (N = named, U = unnamed).

4. In group scenes, does any race or sex group consistently occupy the foreground? Provide examples.
5. Can you tell the social class or setting of any of the depicted people? If so, make a note of them.

“People to Study” Analysis

This type of analysis is used primarily for science and history texts. In Figure 4.2, tally the race and sex of each person mentioned in the text. Distinguish between “important famous people,” whose contributions are discussed in the main part of the content, and “extra people,” who are added in boxes or supplementary pages at the beginning or end of the chapter.

Anthropology Analysis

This type of analysis is used for elementary readers, literature texts, music books containing works by different composers, and the like. Across the top of the chart shown [Resource 6] The formularization of textbook research method (Grant and Sleeter 2009: 128-129).

4. On the Sociological Imagination

The potential for sharing resources and interpretive diagrams and for understanding the logical composition of research has already been considered in classical sociological methodologies. The main topic concerns ways to understand the relationships between the values and norms witnessed by an observer of the phenomena and the substance of “what is scientific.”

Max Weber understood the science behind sociology as something that emphasizes the evidence of procedures rather than reproducibility because the phenomena targeted by the humanities and social sciences are characterized by a lack of repetition (Weber 1922a: 115). He argued that sociology is more than the pursuit of regularity of phenomena because it is an interpretive understanding of the actual phenomena (Weber 1922a: 86-89). Therefore, logic was proposed to replace the sequence from objectives to procedures at the level of the actor with the sequence from causes to results at the level of the observer (Sumiya 1970:66). In this case, the nature of concern and its location from the perspective of the person extracting causality in the phenomena should be able to be displayed, with these factors serving as the source of interpretation (Weber 1922b: 237, 259, 278, 286). In this sense, it was observed that the manner of objectivity in sociology was to clearly distinguish...
between real causes and cognitive causes while having the receiver conjecture (imagine) the selective affiliation between/among phenomena (Weber 1920: 83).

In contrast, Eduard Meyer, who also eschews regularity in history, stated that the influences of events should determine which events are considered “history.” Specifically, he believed that some principles and national characteristics become the agents of history, which, in turn, become the subjects of observation. Weber had a different view of this argument, stating that “a certain trend that mixes the ethical observation method and the causal observation method of human behaviors — in other words, a trend that mixes evaluation and explanation — is actually present” (Weber 1922b: 224). In reality, there is “an unlimited diversity for an evaluative determination of attitude toward the subject,” which intends to define an interpretation as “discovering a probable position and viewpoints” (Weber 1922b: 246). Weber defined causal (historical) interpretation as the activity of explaining, in a causal manner, the compositional factors of the subjects being evaluated while analyzing the values of the formative factors (Weber 1922b: 251).

Regarding perceptions of historical events, Weber made the following general observations (Weber 1922b: 252-253). First, to form a value judgment from a contemporary perspective on a specific historical event by no means subsumes the subjects into a specific genus. Rather, a value judgment refers to an observer’s determination of his or her personal attitude toward the subject that exists in a particular characteristic property. The foundation used by the observer to determine his or her attitude or the basis of the perspective that is important to his or her attitude determination is not an abstract concept. It is an emotion and a desire comprising individualistic properties individually organized. Furthermore, in some events, it is an awareness of matters that need to be sollen (moral duty or suggestion) containing a specific concreteness. When an observer tries to express the subject as an historical individual extracted from the contemporary evaluation stage, the following occurs: the observer (along with others) becomes aware through the interpretation of the specific and unique unparalleled form that the subject takes.

Weber explained that the separation between the real cause and the cognitive cause could be understood by recognizing the factors that establish a particular interpretation of the subject. He stated, “the act of me coming into the value analysis stage to form historical individuals from the subjects means that I am exercising my viewpoint that determines the evaluative attitude within a format that has a clear outline” (Weber 1922b: 253). This statement is of great significance because, through the understanding that arises from sharing in this formation, the historical individuals would be conjured up by interpreters.

Building on such accumulation of sociological methodologies, we can understand anew that social science research, as a double hermeneutic, is derived from the accumulation of the intentions to question a phenomenon more than the outcome of that phenomenon (Giddens 1984: 284-285). Textual criticism
(a method for distancing from impressionistic criticism) evokes the imagination to interpret the backgrounds and interpreters of the texts more than the imagination that operates within the texts. This overlaps with “the sociological imagination that men now hope to grasp what is going on in the world, and to understand what is happening in themselves as minute points of the intersections of biography and history within society” (Mills 1959: 7).

This means that “the method of reading internal aspects of people’s lives that writers, as ‘quality observers’ of time, depict from the flow of the story by using literary work itself” (Inoki 2004:10) is valid under such a premise.

Note
This paper is based on the content of a presentation given in the session, Project Studies 3: Literary Imagination and Sociological Imagination, at the 65th Convention of the Japan Society of Educational Sociology in 2013.

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The purpose of this paper is to organize methodologies for extrapolating social realities from shared texts using a literature study method as its starting point. The author has been tracing the changes to historical descriptions found in school history textbooks. When the educational content is analyzed by setting a time axis, a text that explains a single incident goes through changes that lead to an understanding that the evidence justifying the knowledge is changing.

To interpret this type of knowledge transformation, the author insists that distinguishing whether texts change or remain unchanged (real cause) from whether the significance of the evidence is being interpreted through the values and norms of the observers (cognitive cause) is significant. This paper also argues that separating the real cause from the cognitive cause is necessary to describe and interpret social phenomena. This paper aims to demonstrate the logic of this way of thinking, based on an accumulation of methodological arguments in the field of literature studies, multicultural education, and interpretive sociology.