

Thai Primary School History Textbooks: A Textually-oriented Critical Discourse Analysis¹

Natthaporn Panpothong

Abstract

This study aims at examining Thai primary school history textbooks used as principal materials in classes of social studies nationwide. The approach adopted is textually-oriented Critical Discourse Analysis (Sunderland, 2006). In particular, it provides an analysis that focuses on sets of ideas about children and Thai society repeatedly transmitted to the learners through linguistic devices. The findings reveal that these history textbooks not only transmit knowledge about history but also instruct young children about their place, role, and responsibility in Thai society. Indirect strategies of instruction are preferred over direct ones in the text for every grade. The use of invented dialogues serves as the main device of persuasion and indoctrination. In addition, acts of commissives, expressions of desire, the use of the first person plural pronoun together with the modality markers /tǎn/‘must’ or /khān/‘should’, lexical choices, and presupposition triggers help to convey the intended meaning. With these devices, adults’ instructions are masked as children’s opinions and desires. In these texts, good children are represented as obedient, dutiful, diligent, and proud to be Thai. Other characteristics that might be essential for learning and daily living such as critical thinking, reasoning, etc. are seldom mentioned. Mostly, Thai society is portrayed as unified and harmonious. The six history textbooks examined here appear to play a crucial role in preparing young children to be good members of Thai society. However, from a critical perspective, the textbooks seem to impose a single version of reality to young children. If the aim of primary education is to help Thai children understand social conditions and develop skills necessary for everyday living, a question we should ask here is whether the one-sided information is enough to help fulfill this mission of Thai primary education.

Keywords: history textbooks, language and ideology, critical discourse analysis

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยเรื่องนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาแบบเรียนวิชาประวัติศาสตร์ชั้นประถมศึกษาซึ่งจัดทำขึ้นเพื่อให้เป็นสื่อการเรียนการสอนตามหลักสูตรแกนกลาง ผู้วิจัยมุ่งวิเคราะห์ชุดความคิดเกี่ยวกับเด็กและสังคมไทยที่ถูกนำเสนอซ้ำ ๆ ผ่านกลวิธีทางภาษาในดับทตามแนวคิดวาทกรรมวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์แบบเน้นดับท (Sunderland, 2006) ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า แบบเรียนชุดนี้มีได้นำเสนอความรู้ด้านประวัติศาสตร์เท่านั้น แต่ยังถ่ายทอดความคิดเกี่ยวกับบทบาทหน้าที่ของเด็กในสังคมไทยด้วย กลวิธีทางภาษาที่ใช้ถ่ายทอดความคิดเป็นกลวิธีแบบอ้อมมากกว่าแบบตรง กล่าวคือ มีการใช้บทสนทนาที่แต่งขึ้นเป็นกลวิธีหลักในการสื่อความ และในบทสนทนา พบกลวิธีทางภาษาอื่น ๆ ประกอบ เช่น ใช้วัจนกรรมกลุ่มสัญญาแทนวัจนกรรมกลุ่มสั่งให้ทำ ใช้สรรพนาม “เรา” ร่วมกับคำช่วยกริยา “ต้อง” และ “ควร” ใช้คำศัพท์บางกลุ่มซ้ำ ๆ และใช้รูปภาพสื่อมูลบท กลวิธีทางภาษาเหล่านี้ช่วยทำให้ความคิดที่ผู้ใหญ่ต้องการปลูกฝังให้แก่เด็กถูกนำเสนอว่าเป็นความคิดที่มาจากตัวเด็กเอง ชุดความคิดที่ปรากฏซ้ำ ๆ ในดับทนำเสนอภาพของเด็กที่คิดว่าต้องเชื่อฟังผู้ใหญ่ มีความรับผิดชอบ ชยัน และภูมิใจในความเป็นไทย คุณลักษณะสำคัญด้านอื่น เช่น การคิดอย่างมีวิจารณญาณ การใช้เหตุผล มิได้ถูกเน้นย้ำ ส่วนภาพแทนของสังคมไทยที่นำเสนอคือภาพของสังคมที่กลมเกลียวกัน ในมุมบวก แบบเรียนชุดนี้มีได้ทำหน้าที่ให้ความรู้ทางวิชาการเท่านั้น แต่ยังช่วยในการเตรียมเด็กให้เป็นสมาชิกในแบบที่สังคมไทยยอมรับ แต่หากมองในเชิงวิพากษ์ แบบเรียนชุดนี้ก็มิข้อจำกัดที่ปลูกฝังความคิดแต่เพียงด้านเดียวและนำเสนอภาพสังคมอุดมคติซึ่งต่างไปจากสิ่งที่เด็กต้องประสบในสังคมปัจจุบัน

คำสำคัญ: แบบเรียนประวัติศาสตร์ ภาษากับอุดมการณ์ วาทกรรมวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์

1. Introduction

As van Dijk (1989) points out, textbooks are as influential as the mass media due to their enormous scope. That is, they are used extensively by everyone during their formal education. Additionally, knowledge, ideas, and values transmitted by textbooks are considered as “correct”, “proper”, and “trustworthy”. Like media discourse, educational materials play a significant role in ideological reproduction in society. Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) underline the fact that textbooks participate in defining what counts as legitimate knowledge.

For this reason, educational discourse is one of the domains practitioners in Critical Discourse Analysis have paid attention to. According to van Dijk (1989, 2008), there are a number of critical studies on textbooks in many countries, especially those of the western world and Japan.

As for Thai history textbooks, some of the previous works focused their analysis on representations of neighboring countries. For instance, Chutintaranond et al. (2009) paid attention to the representations of four ASEAN countries as depicted in secondary school history textbooks. The other set of research provided a critical analysis of text using Content Analysis and Historical Approach (e.g., Osatharom, 2001; Arphattananon, 2013). Yet, these studies focused on content without examining linguistic devices used in constructing content. So far, very little has been done on Thai history textbooks from the perspective of linguistically-based Critical Discourse Analysis.

In the Thai public school system, primary school teachers mainly rely on textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education to organize lessons and structure subject matter. While older children might be able to reinterpret or resist messages in textbooks, it is unlikely that elementary students have the potential to oppose to what is taught. Thus, when it comes to the transmission of knowledge and beliefs to young children in Thai society, the authorized textbooks seem to play a crucial part.

The Thai school system has been criticized for stressing unquestioned obedience and not promoting critical thinking (Fuller, 2013). Mr. Pongthep Thepkanjana, the then Education Minister, has admitted that the education system in Thailand has been unsatisfactory and lagging behind other countries in the ASEAN region. Primary school textbooks are undeniably one of the components of this defective system.

The present study aims at examining primary school history textbooks used in Thai public schools nationwide. Adopting the framework of textually-oriented Critical Discourse Analysis, **this study focuses its analysis on sets of ideas about children and Thai society repeatedly transmitted through linguistic devices.**

In the following sections, I shall first describe the theoretical framework adopted in this study. Then, I shall present a detailed textual analysis of the six primary school textbooks. In the last section, I shall provide some discussion and concluding remarks.

2. Theoretical framework and data

The theoretical framework adopted in the present study is Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA. According to Fairclough (1995, 2003), the main objective shared by critical

discourse studies is to 'denaturalize' or 'uncover' ideologies represented as common sense by discursive strategies. As proposed by van Dijk (1989, 2008), the general task of Critical Discourse Studies is to study the way social dominance and mental manipulation are enacted and reproduced through text and talk. Following the perspectives of Critical Discourse Analysis, the present study aims at uncovering ideologies that are represented as non-ideological 'common sense' by discursive strategies in the primary school history textbooks.

Following Beaugrande (1997) and van Dijk (1995, 1998), the term 'ideology' here is defined as a system that sets priorities among ideas and legitimizes certain ones as 'true', 'proper', 'natural', or 'correct'. Ideologies organize and monitor specific group attitudes. As van Dijk (1995, p. 19) notes, "Possibly, ideologies also control the development, structure and application of sociocultural knowledge." As for the term 'representation, it is defined here as the creation of a mental image through language and other domains where meaning can be created (Baker and Ellece, 2011, p. 117).

Another view adopted in this study is the notion of authoritative discourse (AD). As Pinto (2004) defines, authoritative discourse is a monologue that imposes itself on the subordinate. The objective of AD is to instruct, persuade, and control. Textbooks have key characteristics of AD. Their aim is to transmit knowledge, beliefs, values, and ideas without the necessity of a response from an interlocutor.

As pointed out by many scholars (e.g., Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2001; Bloommaert, 2005), CDA presents a diverse picture on the methodological level. According to Sunderland (2006, p. 504), a CDA study can focus on either the textual construal of ideology or the construction of ideology through social practices. **As a textually-oriented and linguistically-based CDA, the present study focuses its analysis on the textual construal of ideology.** Concepts and categories from linguistics, especially from pragmatics, are adopted for a detailed textual analysis. In particular, the analysis focuses on sets of ideas about children and Thai society repeatedly transmitted to the learners through linguistic devices. The actual uses of the textbooks in classroom by teachers and at home by children are not included in the scope of this study.

The data in the present study is made up of six primary school history textbooks that were authorized and published by the Ministry of Education. The textbooks have served as principal materials in the first to the sixth grade classrooms nationwide since 2008.

Each of the six textbooks contains four usual components – preface, content, units /chapters, and bibliography. The same type of text structure is used in every chapter. That is, every chapter in these history textbooks begins with invented dialogues. Then, summaries of main topics are provided. Lastly, suggested activities and exercises for knowledge-check are given.

3. Analysis

3.1 Background

The Thai education system is divided into four levels – pre-primary, primary, secondary, and higher education. As for the primary curriculum, its objectives, curriculum orientation guidelines, as well as measurement and evaluation are prescribed by Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education (Ampra and Thaitae, 2000).

The textbooks and teaching materials used in public schools are governed by the objectives of the primary education. To be exact, the major aim of the textbooks is to form characters encompassing morality, ethics, basic knowledge and ability (Saksung, n.d.). It is stated in the curriculum planning that teachers may select or produce additional materials. Nonetheless, the content of the extra materials must be in conformity with the prescribed objectives and the authorized textbooks. The history textbooks examined in the present study have been used as principal materials in public schools since 2008. Teachers mainly rely on them to organize lessons in classes of social studies.

Generally, messages transmitted by educational discourse supervised by well-known scholars are viewed as trustworthy and credible. According to van Dijk (1989), opposition to messages conveyed by textbooks requires extensive knowledge of other sources of information and the freedom to deviate from established curricula. As stated in previous studies (e.g., Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991; van Dijk, 1987, 1989), textbooks are the only obligatory readings in many communities. As for elementary students in some parts of

Thailand, the primary school textbooks might be their first and only early exposure to readings. Thus, it is unlikely that these young children have the potential to reinterpret or question what is said in the textbooks.

3.2 A textual analysis: linguistic devices and sets of ideas linguistically represented

As prescribed by the Ministry of Education, the main aim of primary education in Thailand is to equip young learners with basic knowledge, understandings of social conditions, as well as skills necessary of everyday living so that they can properly serve as good citizens (Ampra and Thaitae, 2000). A textual analysis reveals that the six history textbooks provide the contents that help fulfill the mission of Thai primary education. That is, these textbooks not only transmit knowledge about history but also instruct young children about their role and duty in Thai society. Let us look into the following example taken from the 1st grade textbook.

Example 1

เรื่องที่ ๕ - ช่วงเวลาวันหนึ่งของฉัน

คุณครู: ...เมื่อวานนักเรียนทำอะไรกันบ้างคะ

วิภา: ตอนเช้าไปวัดกับคุณแม่ค่ะ

อุษา: หนูช่วยคุณแม่ทำอาหารเช้าค่ะ

คุณครู: ดีมากค่ะ ในเวลาที่เรารว่าง เราควรช่วยคุณพ่อ คุณแม่ทำงานบ้านค่ะ

วิชา: ตอนสาย ผมกับคุณพ่อไปเยี่ยมคุณปู่กับคุณย่า แล้วตอนเที่ยง ทานอาหารเที่ยงที่บ้านสวนครับ

วิภา: ตอนบ่าย หนูไปช่วยคุณแม่ขายของอยู่ที่ตลาด แล้วกลับบ้านตอนเย็น

อุษา: หนูช่วยคุณแม่ซักผ้าค่ะ

วิชา: ตอนเย็นกลับจากบ้านคุณปู่แล้ว ผมอ่านหนังสือจนถึงตอนค่ำ แล้วเข้านอนครับ

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๒๘-๒๙)

Translation

Chapter 5– How did I spend my day?

Teacher: Let's talk about what you did yesterday.

Weepa: **In the morning** I went to the temple with my mom.

- U-sa: I helped my mom prepare breakfast.
- Teacher: Very good. We should help our parents with the housework when we have time.
- Weecha: **Later in the morning**, my father and I went to visit my grandparents and had lunch at their farm house.
- Weepa: **In the afternoon**, I helped my mom out at her shop. I got back home **in the evening**.
- U-sa: I helped my mom with the laundry.
- Weecha: **In the evening**, after visiting my grandparents, I studied until **late at night** and went to bed.

(the 1st grade, p. 28-29)

Example 1 is taken from Chapter 5 entitled *ช่วงเวลาดำเนินหนึ่งของฉัน* or 'How did I spend my day?'. Its main objective is to teach the first grade students how to call different time periods of a day. Notice that the terms such as *ตอนเช้า* 'in the morning', *ตอนบ่าย* 'in the afternoon', etc. are printed in bold. However, the invented conversation also serves another crucial function. That is, it indirectly instructs young children about their role and responsibilities.

In terms of the device of instruction, a linguistic analysis shows that direct strategies of indoctrination such as commands, demands, procedural discourse, etc. are rarely adopted in these primary school textbooks. On the other hand, indirect strategies² are mainly used in the texts for every grade. The use of invented dialogues serves as the principal device to transmit beliefs and values to young children. In addition, acts of commissives, expressions or desire, the use of the first person plural pronoun together with the modality markers /tɔŋ/ 'must or /khūan/ 'should, lexical choices and presupposition triggers that are frequently found throughout the invented dialogues help convey the intended meaning.

In the following sections, sets of ideas about children and Thai society repeatedly transmitted to the learners are examined in detail.

² The term 'indirect strategies' in this study refers to linguistic strategies that are adopted to instruct young children in a subtle manner such as using invented dialogues to provide examples or create the illusion that children's voices are included, etc.

The representation of a good child in the Thai history textbooks

All of the history textbooks examined here use invented conversations as we have seen in Example 1 as the main device of instruction. As one might expect, dialogues found in the texts for the 5th and 6th graders contain longer turns and more information. The use of these constructed dialogues creates the illusion that voices or perspectives of children themselves are included in the texts. Simultaneously, the authoritative voice or adults' orders are concealed. As mentioned above, the texts not only transmit knowledge about history to young children but also instruct them about their place, role, and duty as a good member of Thai society. Let us examine some of the examples.

Example 2

เรื่องที่ ๑ – ดวงจันทร์กับวันเวลา

วันนี้เป็นวันเสาร์ดาราไม่ต้องไปโรงเรียน แต่ดาราก็ตื่นแต่เช้าเพื่อจะไปหาแม่ที่โรงพยาบาล พ่อบอกดาราว่าแม่ไม่ได้เจ็บป่วยแต่แม่ไปคลอดน้อง ดาราตื่นเต้นที่จะได้เป็นพี่ จึงคุยกับพ่อถึงเรื่องน้องคนใหม่ตลอดทางที่ไปโรงพยาบาล

ดารา: น้องเป็นผู้หญิงหรือผู้ชายคะพ่อ

พ่อ: ผู้หญิงจ้ะ ดาราดีใจไหมที่มีน้อง

ดารา: ดีใจจ้ะ ดารารักน้อง และจะช่วยแม่เลี้ยงน้องด้วยจ้ะ แล้วน้องชื่ออะไรคะ

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๓ หน้า ๑-๒)

Translation

Chapter 1 – The moon and time

Today is Saturday. Dara doesn't have to go to school. But she woke up early to go see her mom at the hospital. Her dad said that mom was not sick but she had been hospitalized to give birth to a baby. Dara was very excited. She kept talking about her new sibling all the way to the hospital.

Dara: It is a baby boy or girl?

Dad: A baby girl. Are you happy to have a sister?

Dara: Yes, I am. **I love my sister. I'll help mom take care of her.** So, what is her name?

(the 3rd grade, p.1-2)

Example 3

เรื่องที่ ๘ - ศาลาหลังใหม่

ตา: อาทิตย์ที่แล้วมีพายุและลมพัดแรงจนศาลาหน้าวัดพังลงมา ชาวบ้านเดือดร้อนมาก เพราะต้องยืนตากแดดตากฝนรอรถ

ยาย: เจ้าอาวาสกับผู้ใหญ่บ้านได้บอกบุญขอเรียไรเงินและวัสดุก่อสร้าง และขอแรงชาวบ้านให้มาช่วยกันสร้างศาลาหลังใหม่

...

พ่อ: วันเสาร์นี้ฉันจะไปช่วยสร้างศาลาด้วย

แม่: ฉันก็จะช่วยกันทำอาหารไปเลี้ยงด้วย

วันดี: หนูจะช่วยแม่ด้วยนะคะ

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๒ หน้า ๕๗)

Translation

Chapter 8 - A new bus shelter

Grandpa: Last week the bus shelter in front of the temple was blown down by the strong wind. It's really inconvenient since people don't have a place to shelter themselves from the rain and strong sunshine.

Grandma: The abbot and the village head have asked for donations of money and construction materials.

...

Dad: This Saturday I'll be there to help them build a new bus shelter.

Mom: I'll cook and bring my food there.

Wandee: I'll help mom too.

(the 2nd grade, p. 57)

The dialogue in Example 2 is entitled "The moon and time". The main objective of this chapter is to explain to the 3rd graders how to call the time periods between one new moon and the next. Nonetheless, a part of the text is an exchange between Dara and her father about a newborn sister. Apparently, the dialogue is used to instruct a girl about her role as an elder sister.

As for Example 3, the conversation between family members is about the role and duty of both adults and children as good community members. The concept of voluntary mind appears to be an important message conveyed to children. In addition, the concept of /bǝ:kbum/ (to ask for + merit/good deeds) which is a Thai way of soliciting for charity is also introduced in this extract.

As we have seen in Examples 1-3, boys and girls in these texts are assigned different tasks. Housework such as cooking, laundry, taking care of the baby, etc. is represented as girls' responsibility. This gender ideology is repeatedly presented in the text for every grade.

In addition to helping out their parents and teachers, good children are expected to be obedient, dutiful, proud to be Thai, and /kātānjū:/ 'grateful to her/his parents and teachers'. Let us turn to another set of examples in which the representation of a good child is depicted through dialogues.

Example 4

เรื่องที่ ๑๖ – วีรกรรมของบรรพบุรุษไทย

แม่: อารีลองบอกพ่อกับแม่สิว่า ตอนนี้อารีเป็นเด็ก แต่จะทำความดีที่เป็นประโยชน์ต่อประเทศชาติได้อย่างไร

อารี: ต้องเชื่อฟังพ่อแม่และคุณครู ตั้งใจเรียนหนังสือค่ะ

พ่อ: เก่งมากลูก เด็กในวันนี้ก็จะเติบโตเป็นผู้ใหญ่ในวันข้างหน้า เป็นอนาคตของชาตินะ
(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๓ หน้า ๑๑๕)

Translation

Chapter 16 – Thai Heroic Legends

Mom: Aree, tell mom and dad what you as a child can do to contribute to our country.

Aree: We must be obedient to our parents and teachers. And we must study hard.

Dad: Very good, child. Children today will grow up to be adults tomorrow. You are the future of the nation.

(the 3rd grade, p. 115)

Similar to Examples 1-3, adults' instructions in Example 4 are masked as children's wants and opinions through the adjacency pair of question and answer. The main purpose

of the chapter entitled “Thai Heroic Legends” is to tell the story about Thai legendary heroes. However, the dialogue presented in Example 4 which is a part of the text conveys another important message to children. That is, young children can also contribute to the country like those heroes if they are obedient and hard-working. At the end of the text, Aree’s mother explains to her that a child should study hard since s/he can use knowledge gained at school to help the country.

The same message is emphasized again through the voice of teacher in the text for the 6th graders. In Example 5, children are instructed to preserve Thai culture as well as conform to Thai cultural values, especially, the values of generosity, obedience, respectfulness, and /kātānjū:/.

Example 5

เรื่องที่ ๗ – ภูมิปัญญาไทย

หลังจากตอบคำถามนักเรียนเรื่องดนตรีไทยแล้ว คุณครูสรุปว่า:

คุณครู: ดนตรีไทยและเพลงไทยเป็นมรดกล้ำค่าของไทย สะท้อนถึงความละเอียดละไมของบรรพชนไทยเป็นอย่างดี ค่านิยมแบบไทยที่สืบทอดมาแต่สมัยเก่าก่อนก็เช่นเดียวกัน เราควรยึดเป็นแนวทางในการปฏิบัติตนในสังคมปัจจุบันเช่น **ความมีจิตใจโอบอ้อมอารี มีน้ำจิตน้ำใจต่อผู้อื่น คนไทยเป็นผู้มีความกตัญญูทวดเวทิต่อผู้มีพระคุณ เคารพผู้มีอาวุโสกว่า เชื่อฟังบิดา มารดา ครูอาจารย์**

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๖ หน้า ๖๕)

Translation

Chapter 7 – Thai Wisdom

After answering students’ questions about Thai classical music, the teacher concludes:

Teacher: Thai classical music and songs reflect the delicate nature of the Thai people. And so are Thai values. We should adopt these values as our behavioral norms such as **being generous, grateful to those who have shown kindness to us, respectful to one’s elders, obedient to parents and teachers.**

(the 6th grade, p. 65)

As for Example 6, the title of the chapter - “Being proud to be Thai” exactly reflects the main theme. Various reasons provided by the students in the dialogue support the theme and persuade young children why they should be proud of the nation. The authoritative voice is again disguised as children’s opinions by the use of an invented dialogues.

Example 6

เรื่องที่ ๑๗ – ความภูมิใจในความเป็นไทย

- คุณครู: พวกเราโชคดีที่เกิดเป็นคนไทยเพราะอะไรคะ
ก้อย: ประเทศไทยของเราเป็นชาติเก่าแก่ ที่มีประวัติความเป็นมายาวนานค่ะ
ก้อง: บรรพบุรุษของเราสร้างสรรค์ภูมิปัญญาและวัฒนธรรมที่งดงามไว้ให้มากมายครับ
ไผ่: ประเทศของเรามีทรัพยากรธรรมชาติที่อุดมสมบูรณ์ครับ
ยินดี: คนไทยมีหลากหลายเชื้อชาติและศาสนา แต่เราก็อยู่ร่วมกันได้อย่างมีความสุขค่ะ
นิตหน้อย: เรามีพระมหากษัตริย์เป็นศูนย์รวมจิตใจของคนไทยทั้งชาติค่ะ
หนูแดง: คนไทยนิสัยดี ยิ้มเก่ง มีน้ำใจงามและชอบช่วยเหลือเกื้อกูลกันค่ะ
(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๘๔-๘๕)

Translation

Chapter 17 – being proud to be Thai

- Teacher: **Tell me why we are lucky to be Thai.**
Koy: Thailand is a nation with a long history.
Kong: We have beautiful culture and wisdom inherited from our ancestors.
Phai: Our country is rich in natural resources.
Yindi: Thai people are from different races but they can live together in harmony.
Nidnoy: We have the King who is the heart of the nation.
Nudang: Thai people are kind and generous. They like to smile and help each other.

(the 1st grade, p. 84-85)

In addition to the use of invented conversations as the main device, various supportive devices are adopted in these textbooks. The preferred strategies include the use of commissives (promises and offers), expressions of desire, expressions of obligations, the first person plural pronoun /rāw/ ‘we’, and the modality markers /tîn/ ‘must’ or /khūan/ ‘should’.

Let us examine some of the examples in which the indirect devices of instruction are adopted. These linguistic mechanisms help create the illusion that children are willing to fulfill the obligations imposed on them by adults.

Example 7

Commissives (Promises using future tense)

7.1

นารี: ต่อไป **หนูจะหัดห่อขนมด้วยใบตองและสานตะกร้าให้เก่งๆ เหมือนคุณปู่คุณย่านะคะ**
(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๖๙)

Translation

Naree: From now on, **I'll learn** how to wrap food with banana leaves and do basketry.

I'll be as good as grandpa and grandma.

(the 1st grade, p. 69)

7.2

ก้อง: **ผมจะหัดเล่นดนตรีไทยหลาย ๆ อย่างเลยครับ**

สุดา: **หนูก็จจะให้คุณพ่อสอนสีซอ จะได้มีดนตรีไทยและเพลงไทยที่ไพเราะเอาไว้ฟังนาน ๆ**
(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๒ หน้า ๑๑๓ – ๑๑๔)

Translation

Kong: **I'll learn** how to play many kinds of Thai musical instruments.

Suda: Me too. **I'll ask my dad to teach me** to play the Thai fiddle. So, we can preserve beautiful Thai classical music and songs.

(the 2nd grade, p. 113-114)

7.3

วิชา: เพื่อนไม่ชอบอะไร **เราก็ไม่ทำอย่างนั้น ไม่ต้องทะเลาะกันครับ**

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๕)

Translation

Wicha: **We don't** do things that upset our friends. That way **we can avoid** getting into a fight.

(the 1st grade, p. 5)

Example 8

Expressions of desire

สุดา: เครื่องดนตรีไทยเสียงไพเราะมาก **หนูอยาก**เล่นดนตรีไทยบ้างจังเลยคะ

ไผ่: **ผมด้วยครับ** เครื่องดนตรีไทยมีมากมายหลายอย่าง **ยังไม่รู้**จะเล่นอะไรดี

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๒ หน้า ๑๐๙)

Translation

Suda: Thai musical instruments produce very beautiful sounds. **I want** to play a Thai musical instrument too.

Phai: **So do I.** But there are many kinds of instrument, I don't know which one I should play.

(the 2nd grade, p. 109)

In Example 7, adults' directives are disguised as children's commissives³ by two linguistic devices --1) the use of the first person singular pronoun /nǔ:/ and /phǒm/ as in 7.1 and 7.2, or the first person plural pronoun /rāw/ as in 7.3, and 2) the use of the future tense marker /càʔ/ or the negation marker /mâj/.

In Example 8, the modal verb /jà:k/ 'want' is used with the first person singular pronoun /nǔ:/ and /phǒm/ to form expressions of desire.

The promises in Example 7 and the expressions of desire in Example 8 underline the repeated theme in the textbooks. That is, children have the responsibility to preserve Thai culture such as Thai classical music, etc. Also, they should behave in accordance with Thai norms and values such as conflict avoidance.

Example 9

Expressions of obligation

แม่: **เราต้อง**ใช้ภาษาไทยให้ถูกต้อง เช่น ใช้คำพูดให้ถูกต้อง

อุษา: **แล้วก็เขียน**ให้ถูกต้อง พูดควบบกสั่งให้ถูกต้อง**เหมือนที่แม่กับครูสอนด้วยคะ**

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๖๓)

³ Following the classification of speech acts proposed by Searle (1976), commissives include the acts in which the speaker commits her/himself to do something.

Translation

Mom: **We must** use proper Thai such as using proper expressions, etc.

U-sa: And also proper spelling and pronunciation **as taught by you and my teachers**.

(the 1st grade, p. 63)

Another preferred strategy is the use of expressions of obligation as in Example 9. The modality marker /tɔ̃ŋ/ 'must' indicates that it is a requirement children have to fulfill. In addition, as Pinto (2004, p. 656) points out, the use of the first person plural pronoun implicates that it is the beliefs or opinions shared by every member of the group. Notice that the concept of obedience is also suggested in this example.

As shown thus far, the history textbooks not only transmit knowledge on Thai history but also instruct young children on their place, role, and duty in Thai society. Indirect strategies of indoctrination are preferred over direct ones. With the use of invented dialogues and other supportive devices, the authoritative voice is concealed. In other words, adults' imposition is masked as children's cooperation.

In these textbooks, good children who will be the future of the nation are represented as obedient, dutiful, diligent, and proud to be Thai. Notice that all of the children in the texts enthusiastically conform to the role and duty assigned to them by the adults whereas every adult is presented as a person who can always be trusted and relied on.

This repeated theme seems to be in conformity with the conventional concept of a good child conveyed in other types of discourse such as Thai proverbs, Thai didactic literature, the well-known song entitled /dɛ̀k dī:/ 'a good child', etc. Different sayings and idioms in Thai underline the belief that a child must follow her/his elders' instructions. For instance, ว่าง่ายว่านอนสอนง่าย or อยู่ในโอวาท 'A good child must be docile', เดินตามหลังผู้ใหญ่หมาไม่กัด 'Those who follow their elders won't get into trouble'.

To many people, it is not unreasonable to instruct young children to be obedient to their elders since they are more experienced. As pointed out by van Dijk (2008), control is not inherently bad. It can be used for neutral or positive ends, as when parents and teachers educate children.

Nevertheless, in reality being obedient can sometimes place young children in a disadvantageous position since some adults might not be as trustworthy and morally upright as represented in the texts. Unfortunately, this fact is rarely mentioned in these history textbooks. Moreover, the concept of critical thinking and reasoning that might be essential for learning and daily living are seldom promoted.

The representation of Thailand -- Thai society as a Utopian community

A lexical analysis reveals that the word *Thailand* is frequently modified with the words /ʔùdōmsǒmbū:n/ 'rich in natural resources and /kàwkè:/ 'old'. In other words, in these texts, Thailand is mainly represented as a country abundant with natural resources and a long history and ancient culture.

Example 10

พ่อ: ลักษณะภูมิประเทศของเมืองไทยมีพื้นที่หลายแบบ... และมีทรัพยากรธรรมชาติอุดมสมบูรณ์ เช่นแร่ธาตุ ป่าไม้ และสัตว์ป่า

ใฝ่: คนไทยโชคดีมากนะครับที่ประเทศมีธรรมชาติที่อุดมสมบูรณ์และสวยงามอย่างนี้แล้วคนไทยอยู่ที่นี้กันตั้งแต่เมื่อไหร่หรือครับ

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๕๑- ๕๒)

Translation

Dad: Thailand has various geographic features. ... It is **rich in natural resources** such as minerals, forests, wild animals, etc.

Phai: The Thais are so lucky because Thailand is **rich in natural resources and has beautiful scenery**. Since when did Thai people settle here?

(the 1st grade, p. 51-52)

Example 10 is from the chapter entitled "Our Country". Notice that the word /ʔùdōmsǒmbū:n/ is repeated twice to emphasize this image of Thailand. In fact, the word is repeated several times in the text for every grade. The following examples are taken from the 3rd and 5th grade textbooks.

Example 11

ถ้าคนไทยรู้จักนำภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นที่มีอยู่อย่างมากมายมาปรับใช้ให้เป็นประโยชน์อย่างนี้ ประเทศไทยของเราจะได้มีป่าไม้ มีแหล่งน้ำ อุดมสมบูรณ์แบบนี้ไปอีกนาน ๆ

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๓ หน้า ๘๑)

Translation

If Thai people know how to adapt our local wisdom (to preserve the nature), **Thailand's richness of natural resources** will last for a long time.

(the 3rd grade, p. 81)

Example 12

ผืนแผ่นดินไทยทุกภูมิภาคมีความอุดมสมบูรณ์ มีลักษณะเหมาะสมในการตั้งถิ่นฐานเป็นอย่างยิ่ง

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๕ หน้า ๑๙)

Translation

Every region of Thailand is **rich in natural resources**. It's an ideal place for human settlement.

(the 5th grade, p. 19)

Another modifier frequently used in these textbooks is the word /kàwkè:/ 'old'. The word is used with a positive connotation in depicting Thai history and culture. In Example 13, /kàwkè:/ is used to describe the Thai language.⁴

Example 13

ภาษาไทยของเรามีความเก่าแก่ เรามีตัวหนังสือไทยมากกว่า ๗๐๐ ปีแล้ว และเป็นเอกลักษณ์แสดงความเป็นชาติไทย

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๖๒)

Translation

Our Thai language **has a long history**. We have used the Thai script for more than 700 years. It's our unique national identity.

(the 1st grade, p. 62)

⁴ Another crucial message conveyed in this extract is that the Thai script is one of the Thai national identities that children should be proud of.

The topic on a recent decrease in natural resources is not discussed in these texts. Deforestation which has been one of the severe threats to the country's resources is briefly mentioned in the text for the 3rd graders. Moreover, the problem is presented as insignificant. According to the text, it can be solved by adopting Thai wisdom such as the tradition of forest ordination. In Example 11, the term 'the local wisdom' refers to the ritual called /bùatpà:/ or 'forest ordination' that local people have exploited to protect the forest nearby their villages.

The image of Thai society is represented through narratives and invented dialogues. It is mostly portrayed as unified, harmonious, and peaceful. In narratives, a village or neighborhood is presented as a community without social conflicts and without problems. Every community member is generous and morally upright. They have never argued and expressed disagreement.

The representation of Thailand as a country that has plenty of natural resources and a long history and Thai society as a Utopian community leads to the conclusion at the end of many chapters that Thai people are very fortunate and privileged. Thus, we should ภูมิใจที่เกิดเป็นคนไทย 'be proud to be Thai'.

The simplified description of conflictive events

It is worth pointing out that the sixth grade textbook has two and a half pages dedicated to significant political conflicts Thai society experienced in the past. A description of the October 14 student uprising, the October 6 event, and the Bloody May event is provided but simplified. The following example is taken from the description of the Bloody May event.

Example 14

...มีกระแสเรียกร้องให้นายกรัฐมนตรีมาจากการเลือกตั้ง จึงเกิดการปะทะกันระหว่างประชาชนกับเจ้าหน้าที่ จนทำให้มีผู้เสียชีวิตจำนวนมาก

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๖ หน้า ๔๗)

Translation

...There was a demand for Prime Minister who came from an election. So, clashes broke out between the people and officers resulting in a large number of casualties.

(the 6th grade, p. 47)

In the 6th grade textbook, the Bloody May event is covered in only 12 lines. Notice that in the above example, the event is described through existential processes⁵ indicated by the verbs มี and เกิด 'exist, happen' and nominalizations. As pointed out by Oteiza and Pinto (2008), the two linguistic devices permit the absence of agents in a description. In addition, the text makes no specific reference to those responsible for the violent act and the victims. Notice that the term เจ้าหน้าที่ 'officers' is selected instead of the more specific term เจ้าหน้าที่ทหาร 'military officers'. In the description, it seems that the empty-handed protesters and the armed officers suffer equally and both are equally responsible for the violent clashes.

At the end of the description, concluding remarks are provided:

Example 15

จากเหตุการณ์สำคัญที่กล่าวข้างต้น จะเห็นว่าปัญหาความแตกแยกในสังคมล้วนเป็นปัญหาจากความคิดเห็นไม่ตรงกันในการเมืองการปกครอง การแบ่งฝักแบ่งฝ่าย ผสมผสานกับการขาดความซื่อสัตย์ การขาดคุณธรรม จริยธรรม การเห็นแก่ประโยชน์ส่วนตัวและพวกพ้อง โดยไม่นำบทเรียนในอดีตมาเป็นเครื่องเตือนใจ

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๖ หน้า ๔๗)

Translation

Based on the important events mentioned above, we can see that a divided society is caused by political disagreement, us-them polarization, together with lack of honesty, lack of ethics, and selfishness. Lessons from the past have been taken for granted.

(the 6th grade, p. 47)

⁵ According to Halliday (1985, 1994), there are 6 types of process – material (process of doing), mental, behavioral, verbal (process of verbal action), relational, and existential. By using an existential process to depict an event, the incident is explained as the way things happen. Human involvement can be concealed.

In this conclusion, nominalizations without agents are employed to impersonalize the conflictive events. Obviously, the mention of the responsible participants is avoided. Given that the learners are too young to personally experience these conflictive events, this simplified version of the past might not provide enough information for them to understand what happened during those periods of political unrest. Ironically, the text encourages us to learn from the past events in order to avoid the same mistakes.

The description of changes in Thai society

One of the main objectives of primary education in Thailand is to help young learners develop necessary skills to adjust to changes in their community and Thai society (Ampra and Thaitae, 2000). It is found that the history textbooks contain some chapters focusing on changes in Thai society. The first grade textbook has a unit focusing on changes whereas the second grade textbook has a unit entitled 'changes in our community'. For the fifth graders, the textbook has a topic on Thai society in the globalized world. These chapters end with the same conclusion that changes and modernization are normal and expected. Thus, children should learn to adjust to the changes in order to live happily. This message is explicitly stated as in the following examples.

Example 16

เมื่อวันเวลาผ่านไป สิ่งต่างๆก็ต้องเปลี่ยนแปลงไปตามกาลเวลา... เราต้องรู้จักยอมรับสิ่ง
ที่เปลี่ยนแปลง และใช้ชีวิตอย่างมีความสุข

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๒ หน้า ๔๗)

Translation

As time goes by, things are subject to change. ... **We must learn to accept the changes and live a happy life.**

(the 2nd grade, p. 47)

Example 17

การดำรงชีวิตของคนเราก็ต้องมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงไปบ้างตามเวลาและสภาพแวดล้อมที่
เปลี่ยนไป

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๒ หน้า ๖๑)

Translation

Our living is subject to change in some way as time passes and the environment changes.

(the 2nd grade, p. 61)

Interestingly, this repeated message seems to be contradictory to the sense of nostalgia that is reflected throughout the texts. In narratives told to children, life during the grandfather's day is simpler and pleasant. On the other hand, changes and life at the present day are portrayed as unpleasant. Let's look into some of the examples.

Example 18

คุณปู่: ข้าวของเครื่องใช้สมัยก่อนก็เหมาะกับชีวิตของคนสมัยนั้นที่คุ้นเคยกับชีวิตเรียบง่ายตามธรรมชาติ ส่วนของใช้สมัยปัจจุบันก็เหมาะสมกับชีวิตที่รีบเร่งแข่งขันกันของคนในสมัยปัจจุบัน

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๓๕)

Translation

Grandpa: Implements and utensils we used **in those days** were suitable for our **simple life in the past**. But the ones used **these days** are suitable for **the hectic and competitive lifestyle nowadays**.

(the 1st grade, p. 35)

Notice that the lexical items -- /rî:prêŋ/ 'hectic' and /khèŋkhǎn/ 'competitive' -- selected to describe the lifestyle at the present time in the above example have a negative connotation. In fact, when talking about the modern lifestyle, people might have different perspectives. There are other possible lexical choices with a neutral or positive sense such as /rûatrêw/ 'fast', /thānsàmmǎj/ 'modern, etc. Yet, these adjectives are seldom found in these texts.

Let's look into another set of examples in which the sense of nostalgia is reflected.

Example 19

คุณปู่: เมื่อก่อนแถวนี้เป็นสวน มีต้นไม้มาก อากาศดี แม่น้ำก็ใสสะอาด

...

เดี๋ยวนี้ มีคนมาซื้อที่ดิน และชาวนาชาวสวนบางคนก็ขายที่ดินไปหมดแล้ว...

ตรงนั้นมีโรงงานอุตสาหกรรมเกิดขึ้น ทำให้น้ำเสีย อากาศเสียด้วย

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๑ หน้า ๓๙-๔๐)

Translation

Grandpa: **In the old days**, this area was full of orchards. We had **a lot of trees, fresh air, and a clean river.**

...

Nowadays some farmers and fruit planters have sold their land. Over there an orchard has become **a factory**. Industries have caused **pollution of the air and water.**

(the 1st grade, p. 39-40)

Example 20

วิชา: คุณปู่บอกผมว่า **เมื่อก่อน** อ่าเภอของเราแม่น้ำลำคลองหลายสายเป็นที่รับน้ำเวลาฝนตก แต่เดี๋ยวนี้ คลองน้อยลงและบางแห่งก็ตื้นเขิน **พอฝนตก ไม่มีที่ระบาย จึงขังอยู่ตามถนนหนทางครับ**

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๓ หน้า ๕๔)

Translation

Wicha: My grandpa said that **in the old days**, there were many rivers and canals in this area. They served as a drainage system when it rained.

But nowadays, we have less canals. Some have become muddy. When it rains, **the streets are always flooded.**

(the 3rd grade, p. 54)

Example 21

ลุงยอด: **เสียดาย**ชีวิตแบบสมัยก่อนนะครับ จำได้ว่าแต่ก่อนแถวนี้เงียบมาก ตามสวนมีเสียงนก ร้อง เสียงไก่ขัน บางวันเราก็นั่งตกปลาที่ริมคลองหรือไปทอดแหกัน อากาศก็ดี

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๒ หน้า ๔๖)

Translation

Uncle Yord: I **miss** the lifestyle in the old days. I remember that this area was very calm

and peaceful. The sound of birds and fowls can be heard from the orchards. Sometimes we sat along the canal to fish by a rod or a fishnet. The air was also clean.

(the 2nd grade, p. 46)

In Examples 18-21, the representation of life in the old days and life at the present time are juxtaposed. The contrastive pictures are presented by antonymous lexical items such as calm and peaceful vs. hectic, fresh air vs. polluted air, etc. Only negative implications of the urban lifestyle such as industrialization, pollution, floods, etc. are presented in these textbooks.

A presupposition is also used to convey the same message. In Example 21, the word /sīadāj/ 'to miss' is a presupposition trigger (Kiparsky and Kiparsky, 1971) implying that life in the old days was more desirable. It is described as simple, calm and peaceful, and close to nature. Life in the present day, on the other hand, is presented as urbanized, hectic, competitive, and the surroundings are also polluted.

In another set of examples, it is presupposed that not only good environment but also good Thai cultural values have faded away as Thai society has become modernized.

Example 22

แต่ถึงการใช้ชีวิตของผู้คนจะเปลี่ยนไป สิ่งที่เราควรที่จะรักษาไว้ คือ ความมีน้ำใจไมตรี
ต่อกัน ช่วยเหลือเกื้อกูลกัน เพราะจะทำให้เราอยู่ร่วมกันได้อย่างมีความสุข
(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๒ หน้า ๕๔)

Translation

Our lifestyle has changed but **what we should preserve** is the values of generosity and helpfulness. With these values, we can coexist in peace and harmony.

(the 2nd grade, p. 54)

Example 23

ถึงการใช้ชีวิตของคนไทยจะเปลี่ยนแปลงไปจากอดีต แต่สิ่งสำคัญที่คนไทยเราควร
ช่วยกันรักษาไว้ คือ ความมีน้ำใจช่วยเหลือซึ่งกันและกัน

(ชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๓ หน้า ๖๐)

Translation

Our lifestyle has changed. But **our significant tradition we should preserve** is the values of generosity and helpfulness.

(the 3rd grade, p. 60)

In Example 22 taken from the second grade textbook and Example 23 taken from the third grade textbook, children are instructed to preserve the Thai values of generosity and helpfulness. The message is also restated in the texts for older children. The use of the connector /tɛː/ 'but' has an implicature (Grice, 1975)⁶ that the Thai cultural values and the life at the present time are incompatible. In addition, the use of the verb /ráksǎː/ 'to maintain, to preserve' presupposes that the values of generosity and helpfulness are dying out as our life is more hectic in the present day.

As we have seen in Examples 18 - 23, selected lexical items and presupposition triggers are used to depict a negative representation of life at the present time. Modern lifestyle is presented as unpleasant and undesirable while the sense of "those good old days" is reflected throughout these textbooks. It's undeniable that industrial practices have been one of the causes of pollution in Thailand as depicted in these texts. However, very little is said about how industrial development has benefited the country. Moreover, cultural hybridization which is a normal phenomenon, especially in the globalized world, is also presented as a threat to Thai culture. As shown thus far, these textbooks appear to say more negative than positive things about modernization, urbanization, and changes.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Given that young students do not have the knowledge or alternative information to question or argue with what is said in textbooks, previous studies on educational discourse note that primary school textbooks have a strong ideological impact. They play a significant role in persuading and indoctrinating young children.

⁶ Following Grice (1975), I use the term *conventional implicature* to refer to the type of meaning conveyed by the use of connectors.

In the six history textbooks analyzed here, indirect strategies of indoctrination are preferred over direct ones. The use of invented dialogues is employed as a main device of persuasion and instruction. Various supportive devices frequently found in the invented dialogues include the use of commissives (promises and offers), expressions of desire, expressions of obligations, the first person plural pronoun /rāw/ 'we', and the modality markers /tōṅ/ 'must' or /khūan/ 'should'. These linguistic mechanisms help disguise the authoritative voice as children's desires or promises.

A textual analysis reveals that these history textbooks play a significant role in reproducing the conventional concept of a good child and the established representation of Thailand. In the texts, every adult is represented as trustworthy and morally upright and children are instructed to be obedient to them. This theme is repeated in the text for every grade. Moreover, being obedient is also presented as a child's contribution to the country. The concepts of hard-working and being proud to be Thai are also repeatedly stressed. Nonetheless, other characteristics that might be essential for learning and daily living such as critical thinking, reasoning etc. are seldom mentioned.

The image of Thailand in these textbooks underlines the established one as presented in the slogan ในน้ำมีปลา ในนามีข้าว 'Land of fish and rice'. Thai society is mostly portrayed as unified, harmonious, and peaceful. Significant conflictive events Thai society experienced in the past are covered but simplified and impersonalized. As for the topic on changes and modernization, the texts appear to say more negative than positive things. Sense of nostalgia is reflected in many narratives.

The findings in this study indicate that the six primary school history textbooks subtly function in indoctrinating the young members of Thai society. The use of indirect strategies conceal the voice of the authority and makes the concept of being an obedient child sound natural and normal for young children despite the fact that this concept is socially constructed by those in power. Even though control is not always bad as pointed by van Dijk (2008), a crucial question we should ask is whether we would like our children to always follow others' instructions and play a subordinate role. Moreover, being obedient can sometimes place children in a disadvantageous position since some adults might not be as trustworthy and morally upright as represented in the textbooks.

Furthermore, these textbooks also selectively represent Thai society as a community without social conflicts and without problems. In this Utopian depiction, the other side of Thai society is completely overlooked. If the aim of primary education is to help Thai children understand social conditions and develop skills necessary for everyday living, another question we should ask here is whether the one-sided information is enough to help fulfill this mission of Thai primary education.

It is anticipated that with an awareness of some limitations of these textbooks, primary school teachers can attentively use them in an effective manner.

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