

The Internationalization of Japan's Junior High School English Textbooks: Defining Japanese Identity in an Age of Globalization

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Title of the dissertation: *The Internationalization of Japan's Junior High School English Textbooks: Defining Japanese Identity in an Age of Globalization*

Subject/major: Japanese language and society

University name, department name: University of Sheffield; Faculty of Social Sciences, School of East Asian Studies

Degree: Master of Arts (with Distinction)

Year of award: 2007

Abstract

This dissertation explores the politicization of education in Japan. More specifically, it looks at the use of junior high school EFL textbooks to advance or maintain certain ideological or political positions. Texts are examined in light of Japan's internationalization policies in education from the period shortly after the Pacific War to the mid-2000s. This dissertation posits that far from being merely apolitical language primers, the texts are highly political in their focus and content. However, they do not merely represent a single, narrow political objective such as re-militarization. Instead, the texts reflect the influence of the nation's changing international ambitions, the goals of a variety of organizations from both the left and the right, and several pendulum swings between the embrace of nationalism and internationalism. The study examines how the texts and their political messages have changed, particular noting their role in helping to "internationalize" Japan.

Keywords: internationalization; textbooks; TEFL; Japan; politicization of education