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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Renée Grenarová</b> WHO ARE TEACHERS OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AT THE SECOND LEVEL OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND GRAMMAR SCHOOLS? RESEARCH "EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF TEACHERS OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AS SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN CZECH REPUBLIC".....	7
<b>Sardana Efimova</b> LINGUISTIC STUDY OF YAKUT AND JAPANESE TV NEWS.....	12
<b>Elena A. Kamyshanchenko, Natalia V. Grigorenko, Larisa V. Tsurikova, Andrey P. Peresypkin, Anna A. Merezko</b> CATEGORY OF NEGATION AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN LANGUAGE BY THE VERBS OF NEGATIVE SEMANTICS.....	16
<b>Olga N. Prokhorova, Igor V. Chekulai, Andrey P. Peresypkin, Olga Y. Romashina</b> THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SET EXPRESSIONS WITH THE LEXEME FIRE AS A COMPONENT IN TYPOLOGICAL ASPECT.....	20
<b>F. Androssova, E. Fedorova</b> AUTHOR'S PUNCTUATION MARK IN THE WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY FICTION.....	24
<b>Olga Y. Romashina, Tamara M. Timoshilova, Alexander M. Amatov, Alexey A. Kolesnikov</b> CONCEPTUAL ETYMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ONOMATOPOEIC VERBS OF SPEECH IN MODERN ENGLISH.....	29
<b>Tuiara Permyakova, Varvara Okorokova</b> ARTISTIC FUNCTIONS OF SYMBOLIC IMAGES IN SHORT NOVELS BY N. LUGINOV.....	32
<b>Mohd Mahzan Awang, Abdul Razaq Ahmad, Alfitri, Norlia La Ulu</b> THE IMAGES OF JAPANESE ARMY IN MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS.....	37
<b>Maria Borisova</b> LINGUISTIC SPECIFICITY OF COLOR TERMS IN YAKUT LANGUAGE (IN COMPARISON WITH RUSSIAN LANGUAGE).....	46
<b>Elena Anatolievna Ogneva, Alina Alexandrovna Kutsenko, Yana Igorevna Kireeva, Irina Gennadievna Besedina, Iliia Alexandrovich Danilenko</b> FICTION COGNITIVE COORDINATES.....	51
<b>Elena Fedorova</b> ANCIENT TURKIC BASES OF THE YAKUT KINSHIP TERMS.....	55
<b>Olga N. Prokhorova, Igor V. Chekulai, Jerome Baghana, Irina A. Kuprieva</b> UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS' VERBALIZATION IN DIFFERENT LINGUOCULTURES.....	58
<b>Yuliya A. Drygina, Vladimir S. Pugach, Tatiana V. Perutskaya, Olga V. Dekhnich, Olga Y. Romashina</b> GOAL AS A BASIC COMPONENT OF MANAGEMENT DISCOURSE AND LANGUAGE PECULIARITIES OF ITS REPRESENTATION.....	62
<b>Natalia Alexeevna Andramonova, Liliya Abrarovna Usmanova</b> ETHNOCULTURAL IMAGE CONSTANTS AND THEIR DISCOURSE LITERARY CORRELATES.....	65
<b>Luiza Gabysheva</b> COLOUR METAPHOR AND SEMIOTICS OF THE TRADITIONAL YAKUT DWELLING.....	69
<b>Jerome Baghana, Elena V. Bondarenko, Elena N. Shirlina, Elena V. Sherstyukova, Yuliana Y. Genkin</b> GRAMMATICALIZATION AS ONE OF THE MAIN LANGUAGE SYSTEM EVOLUTION CONSISTENT PATTERNS (ON THE MATERIAL OF THE SET EXPRESSIONS WITH PREPOSITIONAL-NOMINAL GROUPS IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE).....	76
<b>Lena I. Zamorshchikova</b> CONTRIBUTION OF STYLISTIC CONVERGENCE TO REVEALING CULTURAL INTERRELATIONSHIP IN 'WHITE TEETH' BY ZADIE SMITH.....	79
<b>A.A. Aminova, A.A. Khafizova</b> EVALUATIVE NOMINATION IN TRANSLATION.....	85
<b>E.A. Parfenov, I.T. Artemiev</b> SELF-INSTRUCTED DISTANCE E-LEARNING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE FAR NORTH OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.....	89
<b>Igor V. Boichuk, Yelena I. Markova, Yuliya S. Blazhevich, Natalya L. Gusakova, Larisa V. Tsurikova</b> LOCAL COLOR IN OSCAR WILDE'S PLAY "VERA OR, THE NIHILISTS".....	93
<b>Galina Parnikova, Tatiana Varchenko, Anzhelika Sivtseva</b> FORMATION OF THE IDENTITY OF A STUDENT FROM NON-LANGUAGE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS BY MEANS OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.....	96



## THE IMAGES OF JAPANESE ARMY IN MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIA HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

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### ABSTRACT

History shows that Malaya and Indonesia was colonized by foreign countries, both from the west or the east. The important factor for the expansion to occur is the wealth of natural resources which is available in the two countries. Malaysia and Indonesia was colonized by Japan at the same time that was from the year 1942 to 1945. Japanese occupation is a key event discussed in history textbooks of both countries and the event continues to leave an impact, both economically, politically and socially. This study will identify the comparison between textbook history in Malaysia and Indonesia related to the enhancement of the image of the Japanese. Therefore, this study was undertaken to examine the images of aspects of Japanese phrases and illustrations, as well as the visuals between the two textbooks. In Malaysia, the textbooks which are selected in this study are History textbooks for Form 3, while in Indonesia; the chosen textbooks are History textbooks for SMP Volume 2, high school History textbook volume 2, and high school History textbook volume 3. The study was developed by the method of content analysis to analyze the images of the Japanese in these textbooks. The study found that there are similarities between the history textbooks in Malaysia and Indonesia on the topics of discussions about Japanese occupation. Both textbooks take a more dominant stand to discuss the impact of the negative side effects of the Japanese occupation. The ultimate goal of learning the topic 'Japanese Invasion' is the same both in Malaysia and in Indonesia which is to produce patriotic people who love their country.

**Key words:** History textbooks, Malaysia and Indonesia, Japanese Images, Positive, Negative

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Japan has reached an era of rapid development and modernization during the reign of the Meiji. Reforms that had been undertaken by the Meiji government had made Japan a strong military power. Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War and defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (Ismail Said, 2012). This success has prompted Japan to expand its authority beyond including Malaysia and Indonesia. By World War II in 1939, Japan has become one of the strongest country and planned to dominate the entire Asia Pacific region. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941 (Ismail Said, 2012). The wreck of the British military base caused Pearl Harbor could not play a role in helping the Allied Forces.

After the success of the Japanese in destroying the British military base Pearl Harbor, the Japanese launched an attack towards the countries in the Asia Pacific region, including Indonesia which at that time was colonized by the Dutch, and Malaysia which at that time was colonized by the British. On January 11, 1942, the Japanese invaded the East of Kalimantan. Japan took only one month to conquer the whole island of Borneo. Japanese invaded the islands of Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi and Maluku Islands during February and March 1942. Japanese conquest of Malaya happened so quickly as it took only 70 days. Attacks were initiated from two directions, namely, through the east coast and the west coast.

Wealth of natural resources and raw materials which were available in Malaya and Indonesia was the motivation of the Japanese expansion. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an increase in the population in Japan which resulted in imbalanced of space and people as an impact of the increase in usage of agricultural land and as a result, Japan needed more colonies to accommodate and sustain their excessive population (Ismail Said, 2010). The physico-geographical conditions of Japan cause the people not to rely too heavily on agriculture, and Japan had turned their focus on the industrial field. The industrial sector was in need of raw materials and markets. Industrial plans that had been undertaken since the Meiji government in 1868 was a success, which prompted Japan to expand its industrial plan (Ismail Said, 2010). To realize this ambition, the Japanese saw the need to expand their colonies to ensure supply of raw materials and market demand. The situation became more urgent in 1940, when the United States imposed economic sanctions against Japan for refusing to retreat from China. The Japanese managed to capture a part of China after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. The U.S. action had caused the Japanese government that controlled by the military leadership of General Tojo to invade Southeast Asia in order to free Japan from the sanctions.



## 2. THE TOPICS ABOUT JAPANESE OCCUPATION IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

According to the Textbook Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia, a textbook is a book used as a basic primary material and sources of information for the teaching and learning of a subject or field of study. Textbooks are also a reflection of societal values, hopes and aspirations of a nation. In Malaysia, textbooks accommodate things like Unity, Rukun Negara, Social Care and Vision 2020.

Textbooks are written based on the requirements of curriculum, syllabus (*Sukatan Pelajaran-SP*) and syllabus (*Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran-HSP*). Syllabus describes the objectives, content and organization of teaching and learning strategies. Syllabus explains objectives and organization in the school year. Writing textbooks are also required to meet the requirements of the National Education Philosophy which emphasizes the goal of education in order to ensure comprehensive, balanced and integrated development of student potential,

According to Mc Neil (in Sharifah Buyong 1998), textbook is a tool that determines what and how to teach and learn. This statement is also supported by Hussein Ahmad (1995), who pointed out that the main function of the textbook is a reference book in the teaching and learning process of a student either at school or at home. This clearly shows that knowledge is obtained as a result of interaction between teachers, students and materials used in particular textbook as the primary source of knowledge of students in the school.

In the context of the application of values through education, the textbook is a media that can convey ideas, concepts, knowledge, skills and values in a syllabus to be taught to school children (Isahak Haron, 1992). Textbooks also act as a medium to translate the needs of the curriculum to support the objectives of the National Education Philosophy which direct application is to stimulate mental development and character building of the students to become useful citizens. Thus, the textbooks used must be of high quality in terms of content, illustrations and exercises.

In Malaysian history textbooks, the discussion on the topic of 'The Japanese Occupation' is learned by students in Form Three. In HSP History Form 3, the topic of the Japanese occupation is listed under the theme 'People's Struggle towards Independence of a Nation' which features moments of struggle towards independence of our homeland. The experience during the Japanese rule may fuel the spirit of nationalism among the people.

In a text book form three, there is a chapter entitled 'The Japanese Occupation of Our Nation' which reveals to the students about the Japanese occupation and its impacts on Malaya. This chapter discusses the sequence of events of Japanese occupation and focuses on key topics such as the arrival of the Japanese in Malaya, Japanese Occupation, the Japanese Colonial Rule and Policy and the rise of national enthusiasm. After Japan's defeat in Malaya, the British regained control and introduced the Malayan Union. However, the formation of the Malayan Union in 1946 was opposed by the Malays which forced the British colonial rule to replace it with the Federation of Malaya in 1948. Communist threat did not deter the people to fight and seek independence, but the threat became a catalyst to accelerate people's efforts to achieve self-governed nation. The struggle of the people was successful with the Proclamation of Independence on August 31, 1957.

In Indonesia, the topic of the Japanese occupation learned in lower secondary and upper secondary education. At lower secondary level, Junior class VIII, the topic of 'The Japanese Occupation in Indonesia' is discussed in chapter 13 and introduced in semester 2, while at the upper secondary level, the high school focuses on Indonesia and World History. For class XI, the topic discussed is 'The Japanese occupation of Indonesia' while the class XII discusses the topic of 'Around the Proclamation of 17 August 1945' which identifies the Indonesian people's struggle for independence as promised by the Japanese.

In the description of the syllabus of history in Indonesia, the topic 'Invasion of Japan' is to expose students to the Japanese influence on the social, economic and political. The main focus of the discussion as a whole is the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, the influence of the wisdom of the Japanese colonial rule and other forms of Indonesian rebellion, resistance movements through MIAI, underground movement and armed struggle. Each of the resistance which is carried out by the Indonesian people in order to achieve the independence of Indonesia on August 17, 1945 are exposed.

## 3. ISSUES

In the history textbooks in both countries, whether in Malaysia or Indonesia, is inviting multiple perspectives which are featured in a variety of forms both in terms of positive and negative. Japanese rule in Malaysia started in February 15, 1942 until 12 September 1945, while this also happened in Indonesia at the same time in 1942-1945. A short period of Japanese occupation, has transformed the social, political and economic conditions at the time of the two countries. Thus, the researchers have identified two research questions that will explain in more detail with respect to the image of Japan to achieve its objectives and provide guidelines for researchers to find detailed information on the scope of the research that is to be studied.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study basically examines the analysis of history textbooks that focus on Japanese image. Specifically, this study aims to: a) analyze the comparison of image of Japan in the content of history textbooks in Malaysia and Indonesia; b) identify illustrations and visuals in a textbook history of Malaysia and Indonesia with a focus on the image of Japan.



## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted based on the method of analysis on the contents of history textbooks in Malaysia and Indonesia. The method of content analysis is one of the important components in the curriculum because the process is capable of examining and evaluating the knowledge and skills presented in order to achieve the desired goals. Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as an attempt to display an objective, systematic and qualitative information on the content of the written media. Kerlinger (1973) noted that content analysis is a way to study and analyze contents in a systematic, objective and qualitative to measure the changes and differences. Asiah Sarji (1999) states that content analysis is simply to keep track of whatever that is contained in the text, whether the text is read or heard. Therefore, content analysis focuses on what is on the surface or to the external features of a media text in an objective, quantitative and external manner. The study was developed with qualitative research methods to answer the research questions.

## 6. FINDINGS

### 6.1. Analysis of the comparison of the image of Japan in the content of history textbooks in Malaysia and Indonesia

Based on the analysis of the comparison of the image of Japan in the content of the history textbooks in Malaysia and Indonesia, the findings are shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1.** The image of Japan in the content of history textbooks in Malaysia and Indonesia

Image	Malaysian Textbooks	Indonesian Textbooks
Positive Image	The slogan 'Asia for Asians'	Triple A Movement (Japan the Light of Asia, Japan the Protector of Asia & Japan the Leaders of Asia)
	The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere	The Greater East Asia War
Negative Image	Scorched Earth Tactics	Scorched Earth Tactics
	The Anti-Japanese Movement	The Revolt Against Japan
	Forced Labor	Forced Labour as Romushas
	Economic Sanctions	Economic Sanctions

Detailed discussion on the positive and negative images are discussed below:

**Table 2.** Phrases that reflect positive images of Japan from the aspects of phrases

Aspects	Textbooks	Phrases
Asia For Asians Slogan and Triple A's Movement	Malaysia	The slogans Asia for Asians and 'Asian Spirit' clearly characterizes anti-West colonial while framing Japan's image as a defender of the Eastern countries. There are a large proportions of the Malays who did not opposed the slogans but rather welcome it. They were influenced by the Japanese slogans such as Asia for the Asians and the plans of The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. (page 5)
	Indonesia	Movement of invasion followed by Japanese propaganda movement which was known as 'Triple A Movement', as in Japan the Light of Asia, Japan the Protector of Asia, and Japan the Leader of Asia. With this propaganda, the Japanese managed to attract the sympathy of Indonesians to expel the Dutch who had been conquering Indonesia for a long time. (page 140)
'The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' dan 'The Greater East Asia War'	Malaysia	The same goes for the plan of The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere put forward by the Japanese. This strategy was very effective so much so that the presence of the Japanese army was not felt as a new colonizer which took the place of the British colonial. (page 5)
	Indonesia	In Indonesia, for example, the Japanese called themselves 'older brother', propagandized the Pacific War as the Greater East Asia War, and launched Operation Triple A: Japan the Light of Asia, Japan the Protector of Asia, Japan the Leader of Asia. (page 142, SMP Volume 2)
Scorched Earth Tactics	Malaysia	During their retreat, the British military used the 'scorched earth tactic' which destroyed bridges, railroads, roads, farms and mining areas. They did so in order to delay the advancement of the Japanese and cripple the country's economy. (page 10)
	Indonesia	Before submitting themselves to the Japanese, the Dutch East Indies colonial rule conducted scorched earth tactics to destroy the vital objects, especially the installation cost of petroleum. That is the reason why during the earliest time of the Japanese occupation the economy of the country was almost entirely paralyzed. (page 144, SMP Volume 2)
The Anti-Japanese Movement and The Revolt Against Japan	Malaysia	Following the brutal policies conducted by the Japanese in Malaya the local people appeared to go against the Japanese movement which was a reaction against the Japanese. The anti-Japanese movement did not appear only in Malaya but also in Sabah and Sarawak. The anti-Japanese movement operated as a guerrilla against the Japanese. There was a collaboration from the Allied forces, particularly the British. (page 24)
	Indonesia	Resistance and rebellion that occurred might have indicated a rejection of the occupation of Japan among the local people. The Japanese who regarded themselves as the Elder Brother in Asia turned out to be much different from the colonial Dutch. Japan was regarded as the savior of the nation of Indonesia from the strength of the Western nation; however, they did the same thing to scour the wealth of Indonesia. They oppressed and harnessed the energy of the people of Indonesia for the benefit of war. (page 144, SMP Volume 2)
Forced Labor and Forced Labour as Romushas	Malaysia	Most of the people were used as forced labor. They were not given a salary, but was given only food to sustain their life. In fact, there were Malayan laborers who were forced to build 'Railroad of Death' in Thai-Burmese border. (page 36)
	Indonesia	The most miserable group was the Romushas who were the forced labor. They had to deal with the enforcement by the Japanese, especially in the military materials that were to build an airport, defense forts, runways and railways. The romushas received very bad treatment as their health was not secured or guaranteed, and they had inadequate food, while their job was very heavy. As a result, many romushas died at the workplace. (page 146, SMP Volume 2)
Economic Sanctions and Economic Paralysis	Malaysia	Economic control of the Japanese did not bring any good to the people and it only benefitted the Japanese. Corruption, hoarding and black market were going on everywhere. The Japanese currency was printed without any control. This resulted in inflation because there was too much money, but there was lacking of goods supplied in the market. (page 32)
	Indonesia	Japanese dominance in the economy was devoted to the interests of the war. Thus, all activities and economic control of the Japanese occupation was taken by the colonial rule. As a result, almost all areas of the economy was paralyzed because of all of the economic factors were controlled by the colonial rule of Japan. (page 145, SMA Volume 2)



**6.2. Identify illustrations and visuals in a textbook history of Malaysia and Indonesia which focuses on the image of Japan**

Based on the analysis of the illustrations, photographs and visual, the images of Japan in the content of History Textbook in Malaysia and Indonesia are as follows:

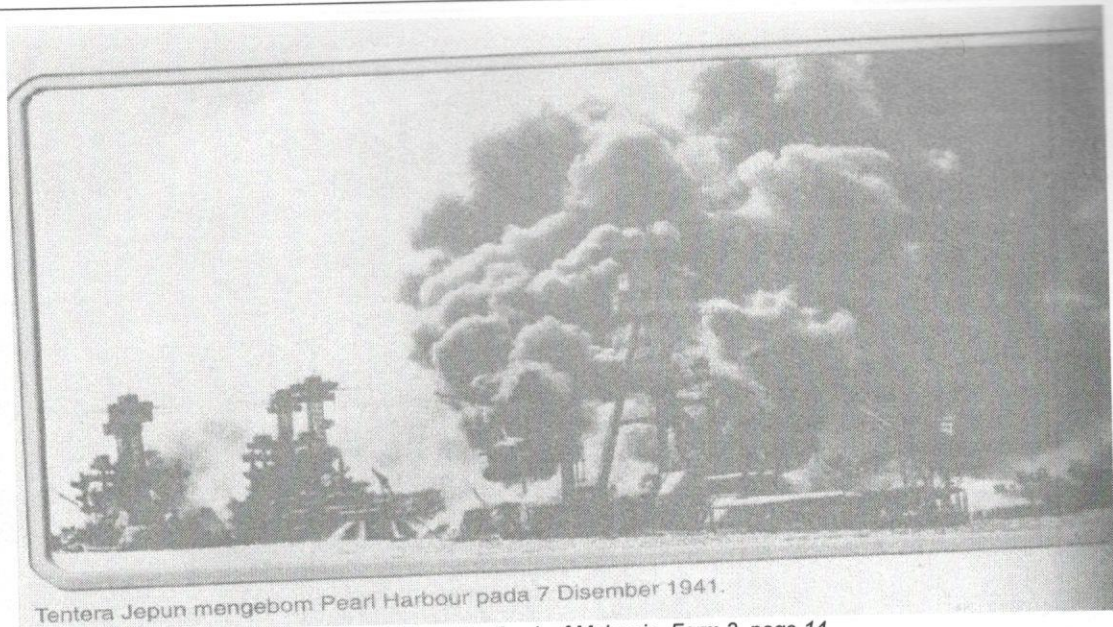


Source: History Textbook of Malaysia, Form 3, page 12  
**Fig. 1. Submission of British power in Malaysia to Japan**



Source: History Textbook of Indonesia, SMP Volume 2, page 144  
**Fig. 2. Submission of Dutch power in Indonesia to Japan**

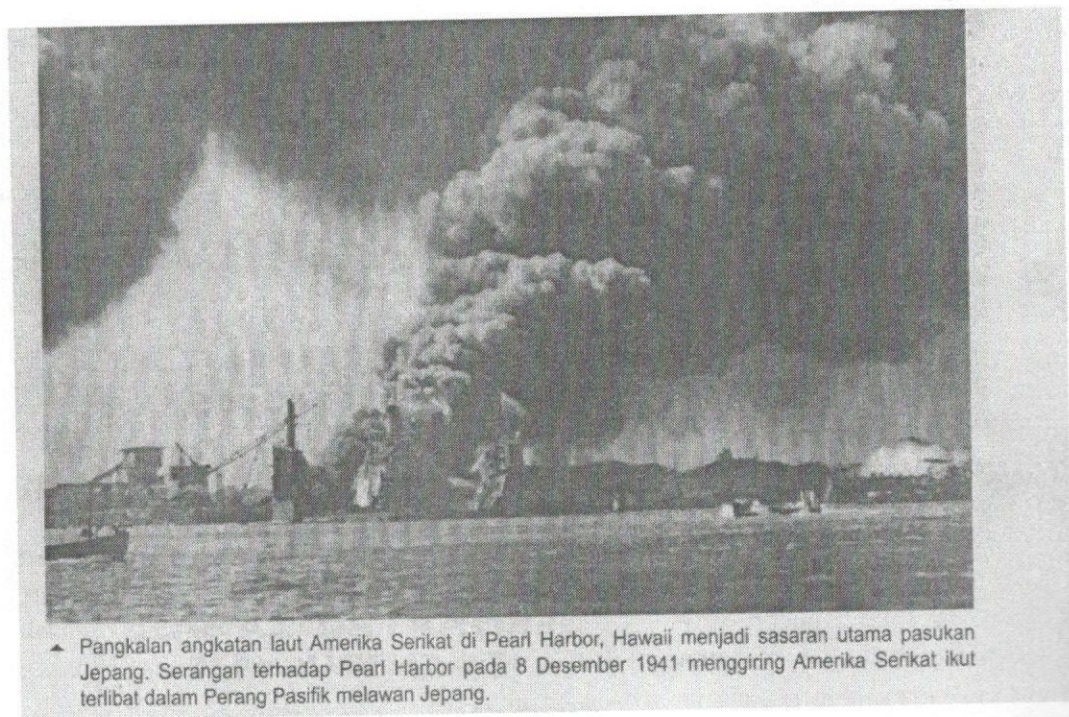




Tentera Jepun mengebom Pearl Harbour pada 7 Disember 1941.

Source: History Textbook of Malaysia, Form 3, page 14

**Fig. 3.** Attack by the Japanese Army on the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in Malaysian History Textbook



▲ Pangkalan angkatan laut Amerika Serikat di Pearl Harbor, Hawaii menjadi sasaran utama pasukan Jepang. Serangan terhadap Pearl Harbor pada 8 Desember 1941 menggiring Amerika Serikat ikut terlibat dalam Perang Pasifik melawan Jepang.

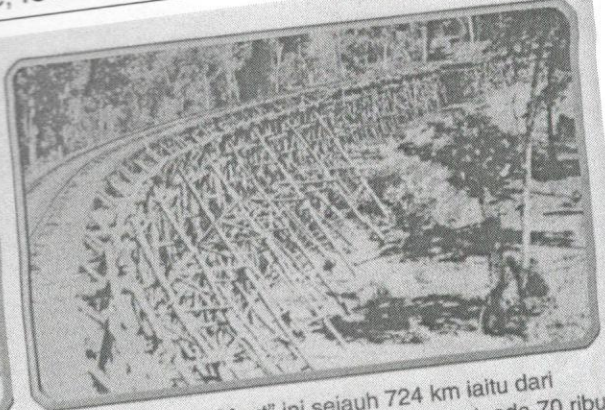
Source: History Textbook of Indonesia, SMA Volume 3, page 4

**Fig.4.** Attack by the Japanese Army on the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in Indonesian History Textbook





Buruh paksa sedang bekerja membina jalan kereta api yang dikenali sebagai "Jalan Kereta Api Maut".



"Jalan Kereta Api Maut" ini sejauh 724 km iaitu dari Thailand melalui Burma ke India. Lebih daripada 70 ribu orang penduduk Tanah Melayu terlibat sebagai buruh paksa dalam pembinaan jalan kereta api ini. Daripada jumlah tersebut lebih satu per tiga daripadanya telah terkorban.

Source: History Textbook of Malaysia, Form 3, page 36  
**Fig. 5. Forced Labor**



▲ Janji Jepang membebaskan bangsa Asia dari penindasan bangsa Eropa tidak terbukti. Jepang ternyata berlaku sama, menindas bangsa Indonesia. Rakyat dikerahkan untuk membantu Jepang membangun kepentingan militernya. Ini dinamakan kerja paksa atau *romusha*.

Source: History Textbook of Indonesia, SMA Volume 2, page 142  
**Fig. 6. Romushas or Forced Labor**





Catuan makanan dikuatkuasakan kepada penduduk tempatan.

Source: History Textbook of Malaysia, Form 3, page 34  
**Fig. 7.** Japanese atrocities against the local people



Gambar 13-5 Jepang memeras habis hasil bumi dan tenaga rakyat. Rakyat menjadi sangat miskin dan menderita. Kelaparan dan wabah penyakit terjadi di mana-mana.

Source: History Textbook of Indonesia, SMP Volume 2, page 144  
**Fig. 8.** Japanese atrocities against the local people

## 7. DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study on the image of Japan in the history textbook of Malaysia and Indonesia as a whole are reflected from both directions of positive and negative. The analyses that were carried out have shown that the positive image shown by Japan at the beginning of the colonization was not to help the local people to get out of the clutches of the colonial administration but actually was propaganda to gain support from the local population. The strategy introduced by Japan by using the slogans 'Asia for Asians' and 'The Triple A's Movement' in Malaya and Indonesia had influenced the people of Asia. Japan's victory in defeating the Dutch in



Indonesia and the British in Malaya had raised the spirit of the people of Malaya and Indonesia at that time, because all the while they had been assuming that these powers could never be defeated. The Japanese occupation in Malaya created national awareness among the people of Malaya. Propaganda introduced by Japan such as "The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" and "The Greater East Asia War" has managed to instigate the realization that their land belonged only to them and any occupation should be resisted. Therefore, there was a raise in confidence level among the population in Malaya and in Indonesia as a result of the opportunities and experiences provided by the Japanese administration.

The exposure of the negative image of Japanese occupation in the history textbook of Malaysia and Indonesia was also discussed from aspects of 'scorched earth tactics', conscription of forced labor, economic sanctions and protests against Japan. The British policy that implemented 'scorched earth tactics' to prevent the advance of the Japanese army had led Malaya and Indonesia to experience economic problems when the mines and equipment were destroyed, the oil supplies were burnt, the food supplies were damaged and the infrastructures were ruined (Mohd Isa Othman, 2002). Roads that were connecting areas on lands and across sea were destroyed and many of these suffered a long-term impact before all of them could be restored. One of the impacts of the Japanese occupation was that the local people had to face economic problems. The economic downturn was such a burden to the population and their daily life became severely impaired. Many young men were forced to work as laborers to build the "Death Railway" which were to link Thailand and Burma.

In Indonesia, forced labor or the *Romushas* were suppressed with heavy work such as building runways and railways, defense fortifications and military logistics. Forced labor in Malaysia and Indonesia suffered the same fate when their health was not guaranteed, not getting enough food which had caused many people to face death. Atrocities carried out by the Japanese in Malaya had fueled anti-Japanese movement which was a reaction by the local people. Among the organizations involved in the anti-Japanese movement was Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), Force 136, the Loyal Malay Regiment (AMS), Pahang Territorial Army, Guerrilla of Kinabalu, Datu Mustapha Guerrilla Team, guerrillas and Sandakan, and resistance at the coastal areas in Sarawak. Resistance in Indonesia erupted when Japan failed to keep its promise to liberate Indonesia. Some prominent Indonesian national movement was launched as underground resistance against the Japanese colonial ruler.

There are many similarities in the findings which are observed in terms of illustrations and visual in the history textbook of both Malaysia and Indonesia. The photo of bombing of Pearl Harbour is found in both the history textbook of Malaysia and Indonesia. Similarly, the image of the colonial surrender to Japan is found in both the textbooks, namely the images of the defeat of the Dutch troops and the British troops. Next, both the history textbook of Malaysia and Indonesia display Japanese oppression and forced labor which was also known as *romushas* in Indonesia. The pictures which are inserted display the population as being forced labor and doing heavy work. Both textbook in Malaysia and Indonesia also feature pictures of atrocities of the Japanese government in both countries. Photos which are shown in these textbooks also show the food shortages for the locals as a result of economic sanctions which were the effects of occupation and war. In educational contexts, these textbooks are important sources for teachers and students. Past study revealed that teachers' creativity in using textbooks will determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning for History subject (Abdul Razaq Ahmad et. al. 2013)

## 8. CONCLUSION

The topics being discussed on the Japanese Occupation in Malaysia and Indonesia textbooks were filled with more negative image compared to positive. This is so because it is meant to awaken the national spirit among the younger generation about the importance of defending one's country from colonial rules. In addition, to create awareness among students about the sacrifices made by the national fighter personalities who were willing to fight to liberate the country from Japanese occupation. There are also many similarities in the two text books on the discussions in terms of content and photos. The location of the two neighboring countries is a reason why there is not much different experience during the Japanese occupation. The subtitle 'Japanese occupation' was used in both the history textbooks in Malaysia and Indonesia in order to achieve the same goal which is to produce people who love the country.

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