



HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Title	The Expansion of Knowledge Transmission and Social Institutions in Western Modernity : The State, Literacy, and Formal Education from Medieval to Modern Times [an abstract of dissertation and a summary of dissertation review]
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Summary of Dissertation Review

Title of Doctoral Course : Ph.D. in the field of Education

Name : Tyrel Cameron Eskelson

Person in Charge of Review : Main Reviewer: Professor Takashi Miyazaki

Vice Reviewer : Professor Hironobu Shirozu

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Dissertation Title :

The Expansion of Knowledge Transmission and Social Institutions in Western Modernity:

The State, Literacy, and Formal Education from Medieval to Modern Times

The purpose of this dissertation is, first, to clarify the peculiarities of formal forms of education from the perspective of human history, and second, to explain the conditions under which these forms of education were established and spread in relation to the institutionalization of society.

The typical form of formal education is the school, and needless to say, one of its main tasks is literacy education. Therefore, in order to examine the characteristics of formal education and the conditions for its establishment and dissemination, it is essential to identify the social conditions that lead people to demand literacy.

With regard to the history of popular literacy in Europe, R. Chartier and J.F. Gilmont have typically identified the starting point of popular literacy in the 16th century. In these studies, there is a tendency to focus exclusively on the Reformation (Council of Trent) as a change in social conditions, and on the development of the printing industry, as typified by E. Eisenstein.

In contrast, this paper argues that the development of institutionalization of a society was the social condition that led to changes in literacy rates. This argument is structured as follows.

(1) Based on previous research on human nature and its evolutionary process, the following

various points can be identified. First, informal education is a function included in the nature of humans as social beings. Second, cognitive structures and mechanisms of learning as a result of evolution are universal to humans, and everyday intuitive learning is based on them. Third, however, the content of formal education, represented by the learning of letters, does not conform to this learning mechanism, which has universality. Hence, fourth, evolutionarily, the construction of a secondary domain of learning (what Geary calls the second domain) was necessary, as well as the corresponding special educational apparatus (Chapter 1).

(2) Considered in the context of literacy, we can say that the organization of learning in the secondary domain began with the establishment of the state. Therefore, the roots of formal education can also be traced back to the establishment of the state. In reality, however, the literacy of the people did not begin until about 500 years ago, and the conditions for the spread of formal education cannot be explained solely in terms of its relationship with the state. In providing such an explanation, it is necessary to note the disparity in literacy rates among European countries during the 17th and 18th centuries. Despite the fact that the literacy rates in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom increased significantly during this period, France and Germany showed a tendency toward stagnation, and literacy rates in both countries did not increase until the beginning of the 19th century. This demonstrates the limitations of basing the study on the Reformation and the rise of the printing industry (Chapter 2).

(3) An alternative explanatory factor is institutionalization, which developed with the establishment of the centralized state. The organization of formal education reflects institutional development. The growth of literacy in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands can be explained by the development of comprehensive public institutions consisting of language standardization, standardization of the common law, and guaranteed participation in the free market (Chapter 3).

Previous historical studies of literacy have also pointed out that writing was not rooted in human nature and required schools for special training in its acquisition. Prior studies have also shown that the bureaucracy required writing to govern based on records rather than memory, that it required special schools to train clerks, or that writing, as distinguished from reading, developed from the practical interests of the merchant class along with bookkeeping and calculation.

Compared to the results of these previous studies, the achievement of this dissertation is that it raises the institutionalization of society as an explanatory variable in order to comprehensively discuss the individual events pointed out by the previous studies and the analysis on them. In particular, the attempt to explain the differences in literacy rates among European countries in the early modern period by contrasting comprehensive public

institutions with non-unified and extractive public institutions can be said to offer an original method of analysis. Regarding the evolutionary approach, the author pointed out the inherent difficulties involved in literacy learning based on the results of research on cognitive structures, and also criticized Darwin's theory of evolution for having a logic beyond Cartesian dualism, but not being properly joined to the theory of education and learning due to prejudice caused by social Darwinism. The criticism that Darwin's theory of evolution had a logic that went beyond Cartesian dualism but was not justifiably joined to theories of education and learning because of prejudices caused by social Darwinism also has implications for future literacy research.

However, this study is still a study to derive a leading model based on findings from previous studies. In particular, issues remain regarding changes in literacy rates, which are considered the basis for posing institutional variables. It is expected to be elaborately clarified based on primary data, including a critique of the data.

In Chapter 3 of this paper, it is noted that the historical estimation of the literacy rate itself is difficult and that it is necessary to take into account political and ideological biases related to the promotion of literacy. We look forward to the development of empirical research that overcomes these difficulties.

In addition, the motives of the people regarding literacy learning are understood only in the context of adaptation to institutionalization, and it is desirable to take into account the aspects of criticism and resistance to institutionalization.

However, the Review Committee recognizes the theoretical significance of this paper's review of the vast literature and its challenging and leading model regarding the historical conditions for the establishment of formal education. It deems the applicant worthy of being awarded the Ph.D. in the field of Education.