

Social Discourse in History Teaching: Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Alma Jeftic

International University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
alma.jeftic@yahoo.com

The results of studies of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Institute for International Textbook Research Georg Eckert in 2008 have shown that teachers consider the content of textbooks and its attempt to express multiperspectivity as the most important criteria for selection.

Two main aims of this study are: to determine the differences in the presentation of significant events from BiH history (disintegration of Yugoslavia, the war in Bosnia 1992-1995) in three history textbooks for fourth grade secondary schools that are currently in use in the Federation BiH, the Republic of Srpska and in areas that teach history according to Croatian curriculum, as well as to observe the ways in which the educational process affects formation of adolescent identity and development of tripartite discourse.

In this paper, a method applied includes content analysis as quantitative method, as well as qualitative method (comparison of content related to description of same event in three textbooks). Special attention is paid to the way in which the textbook authors describe the role of neighboring countries (Serbia and Croatia). Textbooks are analyzed in terms of the language in which they are written, publishers, and the degree to which content follows the guidelines for writing and evaluating history textbooks in elementary and secondary schools in BiH prescribed by the Commission for the Development of Guidelines for history teaching in BiH from April 2005.

The conclusion is that the three textbooks differ qualitatively, especially when describing topics such as the collapse of Yugoslavia and the war in Bosnia (1992-1995). Textbooks do not follow the prescribed Guidelines. Also, tripartite narrative formed through history classes leads to tripartite social discourse and therefore seriously impacts ways to reconciliation and international relations.

Keywords: History, Textbook, Tripartite Narrative, Tripartite Discourse, Identity, International Relations