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The Erased in Slovenia: Is There an End to the Story?

The term “Erased” refers to a part of the population in the Republic of Slovenia that has been erased in 1992 from the official population registry. A critical analysis of the given discourse confirms that the erased were not removed from the registry due to their immanent characteristics or behaviors (background, ethnic or regional, social status, being late for filing claims to obtain the citizenship in Slovenia) but due to the existence of the discourse about Slovenians which has brought about a creation and interpretation of laws, and thus allowed the removal/erasing of the particular group in question as well as other subsequent connotation regarding the term “the erased”.

Key words:

the erased, discourse, Slovenia

Introduction

This paper will present a problem of the erased as a brief account of up to date research on this phenomenon. My own research, included in my MA thesis “The Erased in Slovenia as discourse phenomenon: a pragmatic approach”, was focused, among other things, to the process of a discourse construction regarding the erased in Slovenia; my main source was material obtained in public media.¹ The same approach will be used in this paper, with material extended to the new ones. Also, I will take into account certain journalists’ research, since several journalists were among the first ones to reveal the existence of the erased and hence have tried to draw some attention to the problem. Scientific research followed a few years later. The Institute of Ethnography, SASA, has joined this research in 2007, in the framework of its project on ethnicity. The complexity and secrets of the phenomena has directed the research: first, contacts needed to be established with the erased

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ones, then do the interviews, then dig into legislation regarding their status, review politicians' statements about the erased, then do the analysis of the public, etc. These allowed an insight into this phenomenon as well as chronology of events. The analysis of these texts shows that even though the erased exists as a political, administrative, social etc. problem, the prevailing explanation is in its discourse,² that is, re-formation of the erased as a discourse phenomenon in accordance with the current Slovenian politics carrying a central line. This central line will be a subject of analysis especially, where the analysis is based on principles of pragmatic linguistic and critical analysis of discourse, as the two compatible scientific disciplines.

Previous research about the phenomenon of the erased

In February 1992 more than 25000 inhabitants of Slovenia were left without their personal documents and thus without the basic human rights (Jalušič 2007, 14). This was for the most part, hidden from the public until 2002, when “the erased” (in the further text without quotation marks)³ started a legal and political campaign to reveal their own position and to obtain again their anti-constitutionally taken rights (Gregorčič 2007, 93). The Slovenian public rejected the fact that the erasing has ever happened and afterwards, a tendency to justify this act ((Dedić, 2003). The erased were presented as opponents to Slovenia, its independence and development (Mekina 2007, 158). The ruling coalition, as well as opposition and the majority of Slovenians did not contribute to the solving of this problem but have even acted against the ruling of the Constitutional court, the first state institution to recognize the existence of the erased (Sever 2004). Only in 2008, the government has shown efforts to solve this problem which in turn created a huge media attention and various obstructions by right wing parties and individuals (for instance, take a look what is happening with ministry of internal affairs of the republic of Slovenia, Mrs. Kresal: http://www.rtv slo.si/modload.php?&c_mod=rnews&op=sec tions&func=read&c_menu=1&c_id=195802&tokens=Kresal).

Several journalists dealing with human right issues in Slovenia were among the first to point out to the problem of the erased.⁴ “The first examples of erasing

² It will be shown that the erased ones are a product of a discourse on the Slovenians (a young nation on the road to form its own identity); hence their existence in a form of a real phenomenon is secondary (in a sense of time chronology or event in cause and consequences). A discourse has a power to create a reality – called “performance” feature of discourse in the critical analysis of discourse. The most acknowledged paper on this subject is by Austin (1990/1962). The erased appear to be a product of this power- discourse performance. Additionally, this theory holds that a discourse may present things created by itself as being ancient, or, it presents its own “performance” features as constant (see Šumić-Riha 1988).

³ In pragmatic linguistic, typography is clear: a word or term without quotation marks accentuates marked, a word with single quotation accentuates a phrase, while double quotation accentuates a meaning (often metaphorical). (Levinson 1995 [1983]).

⁴ More detailed account on erasing and accompanying consequences, accounts of the erased etc. see Crojnh 2008.

and prohibition of entering the country were described in 1992, while in 1994 it became clear we are dealing with a special category, that is, the erased” (Mekina 2007, 158, translated to Serbian by M. S.). The term ‘erased’ appears so in 1994 (Mekina 2004) and since then it is used to refer to this specific population whose numbers and some other features remain under cover; the known fact is that the term designates individuals who were erased from the registry of permanent Slovenian population in 1992. Thus, even at that time this phenomenon was put in the context of human rights violations. This is confirmed further by the reports of Helsinki monitor from 1994, since its foundation, as well as by reports of Department of Human Rights since 1995 (compare Pistotnik 2007, 209).

However, this problem did not receive much of the media or public attention until 2002, even though there was an ardent discussion among some social circles (for example, in 1999 the Constitutional court of Slovenia confirms the ruling on anti-constitutional erase, and demands from the government a set of regulations which would solve this issue). In addition to attorneys at law, the erased were discussed in the assembly but without much media attention. Only in 2002, when the erased stepped up in front of the public under the organization “The erased population of Slovenia”, the public has become “bombed” with various information on the erased. At that time, the first scientific inquiry had begun.

First, it was necessary to establish on what basis the erased were removed from the registry; this and other relevant issues are discussed in a book “*Izbrisani. Organizirana nedolžnost in politike izključevanja*” (ed. Dedic, 2003), where three authors, Dedic, Jalusic and Zorn review violations of the Constitution, laws and other legislations relevant for this particular case. Jalusic (2003) in the paper from this edited edition “Organizirana nedolžnost”, defines the erased ones as a product of the creation of the new state Slovenia and new national identity. The erased are thus experienced as unnecessary, a remain from the former home land, as something barbarian which can only cause harm to the Slovenian development. Jalusic notes that Slovenians in general have bad stereotypes about the erased which implies further the underestimation of the act by lowering its intensity or significance. Dedic (2003) in her paper discusses discrimination in process when filing for Slovenian citizenship, and provides numerous examples regarding the case of the erased. She emphasizes various attempts to legitimize these kinds of illegal actions, that is, a conscious attempt by certain lawyers belonging to the ruling political circles to legitimize discrimination.

Zorn (2003), in her paper “Politike isključevanja v nastajanju slovenske državnosti” reviews personal histories of the erased, opposing in this way, to the majority’ cultural insensitivity. For such attitudes, Feldman (1996) coined the term cultural anesthesia, defining it as concealment of unpleasant and illegal experiences of those who are constructed in cultural Others. This term belongs to another phrase, normalization, omnipresent in political sciences, and refers to presentation of things/issues as being in normal/regular state of the affairs but opposes human and civil rights (poverty, asylum seeking, ghettos etc). In addition, in the cases of cultural anesthesia, there is a tendency of concealment since no one wants to dis-

cussed or hear about it – speaking up would disturb representations of everyday life, on appropriate order (Zaviršek 2000).

After these papers, the literature on the erased is growing; one of the latest examples is a collection of papers by Beznec (ed. 2007), *Zgodba nekega izbrisa*. A context in which the erased are placed is being extended: in 2003, it was a context of national (the state, identity) as well as legal one (human rights violation in the specific case in Slovenia), while since 2007, the phenomenon becomes incorporated in various, wider aspects, ranging from contemporary civil and political rights of each and every individual (such as ideas on health insurance, rights to apatriote, rebellion against system, right to migrate, right to work, personal income...), to bureaucracy and its political features, all to representation of the erased as a part of world common affairs (the erased are being connected with different social and natives' movements, need to change global world order). All these perspectives contribute to articulation of the phenomenon of the erased.

In Slovenia, the public opinion and attitudes about the erased is taking a long time to alter. The act of erasing and thus the erased are still being a “don't” and many in fact justify the act; however, since the last elections in 2008, when the left wing prevailed, there are more and more of those who point out to the problem and urge to its solution.⁵ These attitudes follow political changes in Slovenia. In 2004, there were numerous accounts directed against the erased (they were labeled as aggressors, betrayers, barbarians who ought to be expelled from the country, and who don't deserve the citizenship or a right to live in Slovenia and who only take advantage of the state...), which was also the position of the right wing opposition at the time; this option won the election in the same year. Since the change in government, there are more of those who hold that the ruling of the Constitutional court should be obeyed in returning the rights to the erased. At the time when the world economic crisis was announced (and its influences on Slovenia in 2009), the court ruled the erased should be given compensation for the time period they were unable to work in Slovenia; this corresponded with an increase of the erased complains and their public presentations; this has caused in turn, accounts where the erased are presented as manipulators who only want to drain the state to its bankruptcy – obviously, the issue returned to the beginning, to the state of the affairs from 2002, as well as representation of the erased as the threat and opponents to the Slovenians and their state.

Media coverage depends on a house politics; in the left wing and government newspapers, the erased are represented as being discriminated against; in left wing pro-government media, depending on a period (the left wing government erased the erased in 1992 and stayed in power until 2002, proclaiming negative accounts), attitudes are being altered about the erased (today, all these media proclaim obedience to the Court ruling and defend representatives of the Slovenian government such as Kresal from the attacks of the right wing opposition). In the right wing

⁵ On the government see <http://www.dz-rs.si/index.php?id=91> especially http://www.vlada.si/si/o_vladi/prejsnje_vlade/

orientated media, the representation of the erased and their problem did not experience many changes during all these years. In general, the public today is much more aware of the problem, many individual life stories have been published and there are less and less of those who support erasing as a real phenomenon, even though denial on a discourse line still exists.

“The Fruitfulness” of the erased phenomenon

The problem concerning the erased points out to several issues. First, there is a strong influence of the current Slovenian politics and certain politicians to administration; this has brought that many who are employed in the administration and ruling institutions, can break and disobey the Constitution (a recent, informal conversation with a state official confirms this: those who tried to oppose the act of erasing and who acknowledged the ruling of the Constitutional Court have lost their functions; materials and documents regarding the erased issue was hidden and perhaps destroyed) (for example, a wire of the former director of Legal affairs, Debelak in 1992, published in Beznec (ed.) 2007: 237; or an appraisal and suggestions by the former Minister of the internal affairs, Bacvar in 1992, published in Beznec (ed.) 2007: 232). Even if it is a normal event, the case of the erased is characterized by the choice of the population being hurt (and not so much about the real people who got affected, but a discourse of ethnic unification being labeled to all of them). This further implies to the necessity of creating “Others” as a counterpart of the identity construction of the ‘new Slovenians’ – where cause and consequences are so intertwined, it became impossible to determine which is preceding the other. Furthermore, this entails to ethnic unification (the term used is an equivalent to a discourse in ethnic unification) of this de facto various but not primarily ethnic “Other”.⁶

In addition, this process implies a transformation of the victims into aggressors and aggressors into victims. All these factors taken together have caused that the status of the erased is still not solved, causing further numerous polemics.

Slovenia is not alone in this matter: many other states also acted in ways which brought about the ethnic unification of the erased. Serbian media, for instance, represented the erased as mostly Serbs, thus taking over the stereotypes from the Slovenian media and public opinion (included is 2004 referendum; see Hrastar 2004). So, the question is: what it is that allows this ethnic unification? The answer is rather simple: the erased are a by product of the Slovenian secession from SFRJ, and as such, they have taken over a general framework of the processes of national state creation, where that national often or almost always is being identified with ethnicity.

⁶ Ethnic composition of the erased is different in various reports. The latest ones is published in January 2009. <http://www.rtvsllo.si/play/znano-natančno-stevilo-izbrisanih/ava2.27190643/> and <http://www.rtvsllo.si/play/posnetek-brez-naslova/ava2.28748423/>

We have seen that the contexts associated with the erased are being expanded: from the national to global. In the next section, using linguistic pragmatism, I will try to show ways of discourse creation which allows this process.

Discourse on the erased: manipulation

If we take a discourse on the erased as a starting point of our research (and every discourse is an abstraction, made of individual statements and communication events), then every publicly claimed, assumed and implicated attitudes on the erased become their designation (implying to the phrase) – ‘the erased’ in the discourse.⁷ Furthermore, extensional characteristics of what has been said, in certain statements take a trade-off with intension. This implies that the sense of what has been said predominate the reference. Hence, the ‘erased’ in discourse cease to identify some series of entities in the world, but primarily identifies a series of senses relating to inter-lexical and inter-lingual relations. In this way, within the discourse aspect of this phenomenon, we actually deal with Saussure’s sign/symbol, made up of those signifier (‘the erased’) and signified, to be understood as concept, sense, intention but not as (attainable or unattainable) an object, reference, extension, we deal with an idea totally inherent to language-system, with something which does not have to exist, to paraphrase Barthes.

The phenomenon of the erased belongs to the domain of rhetoric, domain of probability, where things could but also does not have to be, domain of imposed, linguistic worlds- the domain of discourses (compare Barthes 1990). Every discourse is made up of words, linguistic facts. And, what are words? Given names or labels for things? Tamed senses? The basic idea of pragmatics is that words are “things” to be used, for manipulation, similar to other means of obtaining certain practical goals (in the vocabulary of economic anthropology, words are money, that is, they could be exchanged for all other things, hence they are a universal means of exchange) (Mey 1993). This further means that words, (of course, words used in speech acts), as well as all other phenomena related to them, perlocutionary par excellence. The consequence of these is that there is no such thing as denotation, or a

⁷ The phrase ‘discourse’ implies mostly to the two different but mutually connected senses: a linguistic one pointing out to language forms features above sentence level, its syntax structure, lexical collocation, regularities of text structure (subjects, grammar characteristics in communicational event in taking over certain words, paragraphs etc), and its social features, where language forms are experienced as producing social meanings (Kress 2001, 183). On these see more in van Dijk 1998, 3; Rapport and Overing 2000, 117; Jordan 2005, 120; Mey 1993, Marmariodu 2000. I take ‘discourse’ to be socially produced flow of accounts, where a speech (with a particular place and means) on the erased becomes possible; or, in other words, as simultaneous presence of language use and language production, providing allowed meanings of the phrase. This is so because language in use is perceived as a means to create the erased, understood thus as something that ought not to be (paraphrasing Barthes) but spoken about as something that exists. Direct, separated meanings, participating in the discourse and at the same time constituting it, are being established by it. This means that certain accounts are “made” within the discourse; since there are no regulations in a discourse, there is an open possibility of an individual intervention in certain statements, implying a possibility of change within a discourse.

meaning from a dictionary, something such as “a sign with the defined sense and reference”, something which is true, something which would be “all possible worlds” (to paraphrase Leibniz). It all depends from the current prevailing conventions. The challenge is in this paradoxical effort to determine something which evades every definition (this is similar to efforts of the Ancient rhetoric, who tried to codify speech) (Barthes 1990). This effort could be described as “taming the meaning” (which evades and is unclear by definition)⁸. The phrase ‘the erased’ appears as a metaphor too (the term ‘the erased’ speaks about something else) but also as meta-language (the terms on something else are used when speaking about ‘the erased’), hence these collocations participate in the meanings of the phrase. That is why it appears that not the differences between similar things but combining different things, is what makes a meaning. The divergence between different things is just a result of this operation. In fact, what makes a difference is adding through assigning characteristics to something. According to pragmatic theory, a characteristic is read where expected (Mey 1993). This expectation creates a concept and aim of communication, and especially so meaning-ness, that is, a recognition of things (“attainable or unattainable”, to paraphrase Cobley) so to appears that the signs (as means of communication) a meanings conglomerate (Grice 1989). Consequences to the phrase ‘the erased’ are multiple: if ‘the erased’ is metaphorical (connotative) spoken in terms of some other phenomena, ‘the erased’ is signified (on conceptual metaphors see Lakoff and Johnson 1980). This means that ‘the erased’ represents a

⁸ The term meaning, the way I use it here, is explainable by comparative Saussure’s and referent theory of meaning. To paraphrase Saussure, sign making could be presented as simultaneous articulation of two contigential tails, where one represents undefined field of thoughts while the other is undefined field of sounds. Articulation involves making arbitrary cuts within these fields and their inter-connection in signs with meanings. A concept (the signifier, Barthes’ level of content) and acoustic image (signified, Bathes’ level of expression) are mutually connected in meaningful sign. As Saussure argued, in order to have a separated meanings (and every sign is a system of meanings for itself, and included in language as a system of signs), we have to articulate a field of thoughts which could be equalized with unformatted potential concepts, as well as the field of sounds, which could be equalized with available (material) means of expression, without which the sign would not be comprehensible or communicative. In referent theory of meanings, instead of the concept and acoustic image, we have sense, reference and denotation, where reference and denotation connect words with the world, but not in the same direction, as well as Saussure’s signifier. The unit with meaning is thus perceived from another perspective (compare Dijk 1989, 103...). Using a metaphor of back and forth, Saussure’s signified connects the concept with the sign users, making it so comprehensible and communicative and allowing transfer and shareability. This connection could be explained as being forth. Referent and denotation connect a foggy concept of sense with established objects in the world but not with language users as subjects of communication. This connection could be explained as being back. In both cases, we have unclear conceptual field, which is further being clarified in separate meanings in the process of delimitation, that is, assigning wider but more explicit characteristics: in Saussure’s theory, through connection with direct acoustic images, in referent theory in connection with real objects we speak about.

In clarified field of potential signified (articulation), that is, by explaining unclear senses (assigning denotation and referents), we acquire meanings. This unclear conceptual aspect of meanings is common to both theories, that is, signified is possible to compare with sense (compare Petöfi 1989).

sense of these phenomena. Given that the sense lay in intension, that is, its features cannot be determined (in the opposite case it would become extensional) – this intension is not is not a cluster of characteristics but an operation; if it were a characteristic, then it would be an extension of some other intension – so, ‘the erased’ represents a rule or operation allowing extension assignment (other phenomena, taken to speak in terms and hence represent signifier). This is so because the meaning is only expected, that is, assigned, and represents a relation between signifier and signified, relation and relevance in between ‘the erased’ and phenomena where ‘the erased’ is spoken-in-terms-of some other phenomena, being as just a posterior, situational, “appointed since it was expected”. This means that ‘the erased’ could be spoken in terms of some other phenomena. This range is limited by usage of process of metaphorical abstraction (see Ricoeur 1994). Since this metaphorical abstraction leads toward establishing a certain order (after it destroys the preceding one), it seems that the relation between the phrase ‘the erased’ and phenomena in terms spoken about ‘the erased’, is lead by some superior principle, superior discourse (originator of classification used to be employed, destroyed and re-formed). This superior discourse is a context where this relation is being re-established continuously, where this phrase gains a sense. Inductive procedure in the analysis of individual statements regarding the phrase ‘the erased’ shows that ‘the erased’ is read as being connected with phenomena from the period when the erasing happened. This, of course, is a period when Slovenia has become an independent state. This further limits the range where metaphorical abstraction could take place (and these are: questions about citizenship, nationality, loyalty, patriotism etc). That is, a discourse of superior to the discourse on the erased is the one which relates to “Slovenian-ship”, whatever the meaning could be (understood as ethnicity, or issue on citizenship, or who can live in Slovenia).

Of course, there are attempts to place the discourse of the erased under some other discourses, which could be seen from the most recent scientific papers already mentioned, but also somewhere else: for instance, within the work of some research and activist movements of some European social centers (with the intended perlocutionary effect, to connect the problem of the erased with the current immigrants’ problems throughout Europe), as well as already mentioned discourse on human rights and efforts to define what are human rights in general (in addition to the cited scientific papers, some international organization such as Amnesty International have the same intentions). However, it seems these discourses do not have enough of juridical power to overtake the role of a superior discourse. Moreover, we could question if those discourses dealing with the problem in Slovenia, could escape saturation in the discourse of Slovenian-ship, since they already share some common characteristics such as ethnicity, right to residence, human rights.

The discourse on the erased is formed within this superior discourse, because it was expected. And the opposite, it is omnipresent, discussed and reestablished in individual accounts on the erased. That is why the discourse of the erased is just its perlocutionary and aimed effect.

It follows that the phrase ‘the erased’ cannot have some independent meaning (which is impossible, since meanings is achieved only through actualization of

context where a sign appears, and in addition, only if there is a system of signs), which however does not represent an obstacle for those who use the sign and perceived it as being reificatory, treatable as object, physically existing, real and not only actual (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). This further allows manipulation (different determination of the erased, depending on the aim of speech about them), which is in accordance with inherent, constant (more or less intensive) changes of the superior discourse. This is where discourse formation on the erased takes place, in this possibility to instrumentalize “taming the meaning” of ‘the erased’, depending on current features of discourse where this phrase is being used.

In brief, the erased are but need not to be, even though they are perceived (we become aware of this only when we start to discuss them) as existing due to the acting of the discourse which makes them into objects. Individual accounts on the erased (as well as individually existing persons who are being identified – by themselves or by others – as some erased, whatever that could mean officially or unofficially, if there is any meaning considering that we live in rhetoric world) gain sense (become extensional) only when seen as a part of discourse which is their context and which determines their further operation of intension, which further allows them extension assignment. This means that intension is not contained in the notion of ‘the erased’ and thus does not have an autonomous meaning. That is why ‘the erased’ appears or as an empty linguistic sign, filled by various phenomena (and so becomes something as secondary intension), or ways to talk about other phenomena (thus becoming something as secondary mediated extension). In accordance with these, in the case of ‘the erased’ the signifier and signified are solely a matter of perspective since the sense of ‘the erased’ originates as an effect of the superior discourse, and that is why it’s only secondary, some derivative function of the superior discourse.

Now, for a moment, I can take a stand that ‘the erased’ is a name of some real, existing phenomenon, and the name of some erased people. If ‘the erased’ is a secondary intension, and the erased (one of) secondary extension of the superior discourse about the Slovenian-ship, and if results of the analysis show that the erased are perceived as something alien, other, non Slovenian, then it follows that the erased are ought to be foreigners, others and non-Slovenians. On the other hand, the research within the group of the erased implies different results. In brief, the erased perceive themselves as a part of the Slovenian society (some even as members of the Slovenian ethnic group), even though relatively marginalized and underprivileged. Similarly, the discourse about the Slovenian-ship (and the subsequent discourse on the erased) constitutes the erased as being marginalized while the erased do not have the juridical power to create different discourse, which does not mean that within their discourse, they cannot be heard (this is where I hold tightly to Bachtin’s stand that in even the most authoritarian texts, and a discourse could be seen as a text, even not homologous but analogous, different voices compete for expression and attention) even so their voices are limited and orchestrated by the superior discourse. Moreover, because the erased were created as perlocutionary effect on the discourse about the Slovenian-ship (a kind of alter ego), they are thus necessary intertwined with it.

On the other hand, people who perceive themselves as the erased are not the only notion that the term could be applied to. This means that some aspects of the discourse on the erased could initiate new extensions thanks to the procedure of metaphorical abstraction. These new extensions could stay within the superior discourse or could leave it. If such extensions of the discourse on the erased become a part of other strong discourses, returned 'the erased' (and all that this phrase implies) would succeed in redefining and reformation based on different foundations. For now, it remains intertwined in the discourse of the Slovenian-ship in spite from the mentioned efforts to change the superior discourse.

Conclusion

Words do not have meaning by themselves but depend on their respective usage. This confirms Saussure's stand that a linguistic sign is arbitrary. If it is arbitrary, it is not liberated. It cannot exist for itself but only as a part of the system, while the usage of the signs is not liberated thing by itself. Every linguistic sign, as soon as it becomes actualized, becomes also intertwined within complex network of a discourse. Some linguistic signs are movable within those nets while some others are completely dependable from a superior discourse which has created it. Hence, "the erased" exists as an attribute. And this plain attribute has liberty of movement around various discourses.

"The erased", as something which is a part of the discourse of the Slovenian-ship, has troubles becoming an extension or intension of some other discourse. This will stay so until the superior discourse changes enough (opens up to let, the erased' out, even though it was created to not let them in in the first place).

All these imply that there is still not an end to the story, in spite of the efforts to change the discourse about the erased. They remain antipode of Slovenians, a relict, by-product of the Slovenians' independence, barbarians, some Others, even though they are being connected with some global trends (general human rights, global social movements).⁹ The reason should be seek in the level which overcomes the level of this particular superior discourse. Until a redefinition of the Slovenian-ship takes place, the erased will continue to exist. And this redefinition will take place only in accordance with wider political changes. The erased so remain erased until further notice.

⁹ It is very interesting that the erased are not totally accepted as a part of the discourse about human rights violation even though the attempts to place the erased within this discourse were among the first (Mekina 2007). One of the reasons for this is in the Slovenian legislation which defines rights only to the persons with regular status (which are being of course decreased, as we go from those with the Slovenian citizenship, to those with permanent residence in Slovenia, to those who only recently obtained a residency). The other important issue is that the erased as seen as inhuman (similar to what is happening with foreigners who are not from EU, Roma, asylum seekers etc.). Hence, again it is about the discourse about the Slovenian-ship, who can or should obtain a Slovenian citizenship, reside in Slovenia and acquire some benefits from it.

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Марта Стојић

Избрисани Словеније: назире ли се крај приче?

Кључне речи:

избрисани, дискурс, Словенија

Израз ‘избрисани’ односи се на један део популације Републике Словеније који је 1992. године био избрисан из регистра њеног сталног становништва. Применом критичке анализе дискурса потврђује се теза да ‘избрисани’ нису избрисани због неких својих есенцијалистички схваћених „иманентних“ карактеристика или поступака (порекло – етничко или регионално, социјални статус, неаплицирање за словеначко држављанство у предвиђеном року), већ услед постојања дискурса о словенству који је довео до стварања и интерпретације закона којим је омогућен настанак избрисаних, али и сва каснија придавања одређених значења термину ‘избрисани’.

Речи немају значење саме по себи, већ је оно зависно од њихове употребе. То потврђује сосировско становиште да је лингвистички знак арбитран. Ако је арбитран, онда није слободан. И не само зато што не може да постоји сам за себе, већ само као део система, нити само зато што јер употреба знакова није слободна ствар по себи. Сваки лингвистички знак – чим постане актуализован – постане уплетен у комплексне мреже дискурса. Неки лингвистички знаци могу да се померају по тим мрежама, а други су у потпуности зависни од надређеног дискурса, оног који их је створио. Тако ‘избрисани’ постоји као обичан придев. И тај обичан придев има слободу кретања по различитим дискурсима. ‘Избрисани’, као нешто што је део дискурса о словенству, врло тешко постаје екстензија или интензија неког другог дискурса, бар све до тренутка док се надређени дискурс не промени довољно (и отвори се да пусти ‘избрисане’ напоље, иако је и направљен зато да им не дозволи да уопште уђу у њега).

То значи да се за сада крај приче о ‘избрисанима’ не назире, упркос покушајима промене дискурса о њима. ‘Избрисани’ остају антипод некаквих Словенаца, неки реликт, нуспродукт осамостаљивања Словеније, неки варавари, неко Друго, иако се све чешће повезују са одређеним глобалним токовима (општа људска права, глобални социјални покрети). Разлог томе се мора тражити у равни која превазилази раван овог конкретног надређеног дискурса. Док не настане редефиниција словенства, ‘избрисани’ ће постојати.