

## **Review of the Master's thesis**

# **“The Effects of Cold War Speech in the Post-Cold War World: Identification of the Enemy in the War on Terror”**

### **1. Suitability**

The topic and the research question of the thesis are well chosen in the sense that they improve our understanding of international relations. The thesis addresses recent historical developments in international affairs and foreign policy.

### **2. Structure**

The structure and objectives of the thesis are clear and explicit. The introductory and concluding chapters fulfil their expected function (with few minor deficiencies mentioned below).

### **3. Scholarly content**

- The article is, according to my knowledge of the topic, original and offering new insight into the underlying sources of US foreign policy during the Cold War and especially after 9/11 attacks.
- Methodology is clear and explicit. The author systematically sticks to the chosen method, he systematically utilizes predefined concepts and terms.
- Nevertheless, there are some minor problems:
  - Which texts were analysed? The author only mentions few “signature speeches” (p. 9), but the corpus seems to be larger. At least, I would like to know the number of speeches analysed for each period.
  - The “three periods” are identified neither in the introduction nor in the methodological chapter. The author mentions that he will analyse three periods (beginning and end of the Cold War, beginning of the War on Terror – see p. 9), but this is too vague. The time scope of the analysis should be clearly specified.
  - The terms “conceptual metaphor” and “metaphorical expression” are not defined.
  - There is no need to differentiate between strong and weak metaphorical expressions. I would omit this distinction from the research design.
  - The “division of work” between chapters “Introduction”, “Theory” and “Methodology” is questionable and “reshuffling” of some paragraphs is needed:
    - corpus should be identified in “Methodology” and not in “Introduction”
    - “The importance of language” belongs to theory.

- The existence of “Theory” as a separate chapter is questionable. DA (CDA) is not a theory (at least not in a traditional meaning of the word). I would rather treat DA as a set of methods and theories (or as a set of methods sharing certain metatheoretical and theoretical assumptions). In any case, it does not make much sense to separate DA’s „methodology“ and „theory“, since these two dimensions of DA are closely intertwined.
- “Conceptual metaphors” are already part of the analysis itself and have nothing to do in methodological chapter.
- The author shows good knowledge of academic literature. Nevertheless, references are sometimes missing (p. 13., p. 18).
- Conclusions are innovative, elaborated and coherent. The analysis is well grounded in data. It is a well done discourse analysis (analysis of metaphors).
- But the presentation of the results could be more user-friendly:
  - Chapters V. and VI. deserve short introductory paragraphs which would remind the reader “where he is, what he can expect from this particular chapter and how this chapter fits into broader plan of the whole article”.
  - The charts should present frequencies (relative occurrence) not incidence (absolute numbers). The data about each conceptual metaphor should be related either to other metaphors (frequency vi-a-vis other conceptual metaphors) or to one text (frequency of incidence in a unit of analysis – typical text)
  - Charts inserted in the text convey information which is not important and redundant (weak vs. strong expressions). But the charts should represent information important in the light of the research question: relative importance of the conceptual metaphors (within a particular presidency) and the development in time (comparison across presidencies). Information about the distribution of conceptual metaphors in time should be presented in a graphical form. For example, the conclusions presented on pages 79 and 80 should be presented graphically (line graph with lines representing individual conceptual metaphors, presidencies/time on axis X and relative strength/importance of the conceptual metaphors on axis Y).

**Despite few minor problems, my assessment is definitely positive. The author proved his ability to conduct sound, rigorous and systematic research respecting explicit plan (research design). Very good job for a master’s thesis.**