Master's Thesis Review

Student's name and surname: Mustafa Savoğlu

Title of the thesis: *English as lingua franca in Cyprus after 2003: questions of identity*

Reviewer's name and surname: Tamah Sherman

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1. Heuristic (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

1.1 Evaluation of the selection of literature and sources	2
1.2 Complexity of used sources from the perspective of the state of the art	3

Short evaluation:

All of the major points appear to be covered, some more thoroughly and complexly than others. The chapter on the sociolinguistic history of Cyprus seems to be based predominantly on one source: Kamil Z. Özerk, *Reciprocal Bilingualism as a challenge and Opportunity: The case of Cyprus*. In the discussion of connections between language and identity, language is conceptualized extremely broadly (perhaps unnecessarily so, going all the way back to E. Sapir). The literature on Language Planning and Policy (LPP), as well as that on English as a lingua franca (ELF) seems somewhat more sparse. In the discussion of nation-building, given the local context of the study program, it is surprising that there is no mention of the work of Miroslav Hroch.

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2. Research problem and its solution (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

2.1 Choice of the formulation of the research issue respects the task given to the student	2
2.2 The relevance of the goal from the perspective of research area	2

Ústav světových dějin

methodology	

Short evaluation:

The main research problem – the issue of the evolution of language policy and planning (management) in Cyprus following moves to unify the country in 2003 is clearly defined. The data (policy documents including school curricula, texts from job advertisements and web pages, social media posts, participant observation, interviews, surveys, photographs of the linguistic landscape of Cyprus) are interesting, authentic and varied. It would have been good at the beginning for the author to have provided some information about himself and his educational and linguistic background (though there is a brief mention of it in the description of the survey, where all we find out is that he is a Turkish speaker), because he (including his ethnolinguistic identity) is a clear part of the interviews and ethnographic work.

Though the author demonstrates awareness of the shortcomings of the internet survey and provides data on the declared ethnicity of the participants and their ages, he does not mention that the survey was limited to people who know English well enough to fill out the survey, which presumably leaves out a portion of the population. Also, most of the participants were under the age of 45 (though there is an attempt to correlate the use of Greek or Turkish with being over 30). Overall, the quantitative survey results hint at some potentially interesting tendencies, but a larger, more representative study with statistical analysis would have to be done to really draw any conclusions.

3. Thesis structure evaluation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

3.1 Is the structure of the thesis logical?	1
3.2 Does the thesis structure work along the methodology and methods declared in the introduction	1

Short evaluation:

The structure of the thesis is based on three main spheres of life, each of which offers a perspective on the connections between language and identity in Cyprus: politics, civil society, and education. Each of these spheres receives its own analytical chapter, based on slightly different data, making the overall flow of the thesis very easy to follow.

Ústav světových dějin

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4. Quality of analysis and interpretation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

4.1 Analysis of sources and literature	3
4.2 Interpretation of sources and literature in their interaction	2

Short evaluation:

The analysis is coherent in a general sense, but there are a number of weak spots. First, the interview transcripts indicate that the questions were often posed in a way that explicitly reflected the interviewer's stance to the given problem (e.g. p. 75 "If we go back to the part that you said that the events are mostly in English, do you think that it results in the exclusion of the society?"). The author often explains his reasons for asking certain questions in parentheses following the given turn. This could have been presented differently, for example in the methodology section.

Second, there are also a number of individual problematic statements such as oversimplified, unsubstantiated or simply incorrect claims about language, e.g.:

p. 29: "Language and identity cannot be separated from one another."

p. 32: "It is not even necessary to go that far, just imagine a 20 years old speaking to a sixty years old, in most cases their grammar would be different."

p. 40: "Third, English, in comparison to German or French, has more simple grammar rules, and less cases."

p. 40: "As to compare the two models, the Canadian state made it mandatory to speak the both languages; French and English. Therefore, every citizen of the country is at least bilingual."

Finally, page 68 contains the statement "As I analyzed the data, I can see that the number of the students attending the Greek classes is higher than the number of the students attending the Turkish classes." While this may be technically true, the difference in numbers is not great enough to substantiate such a claim.

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5. Quality of the text (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

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5.1 Style and grammar	3
5.2 Use of terminology	2

Short evaluation:

The text is written in a mostly intelligible manner, with occasional formulations whose sense is somewhat hard to follow. Some examples are the following:

p. 34: "Yükselen argues that in many researches it can be observed that they were far from linguistic values."

p. 54: "The both cases clearly supports the idea that, if well planned language can build trust, otherwise it can build a segregated society."

In terms of language and style, the text could have benefited from more careful editing. There are also a number of formal issues which could have been avoided with the use of a spelling and/or grammar checker.

There are also a number of statements which are excessively subjective and evaluative:

p. 13: "However, the history of Cyprus is full of dark and wrong decisions of itself and the others."

p. 50: "Aforementioned, the fact that Cyprus joined the EU as a divided state, made the Cyprus problem more urgent to be solved, and also the division is no longer an option and is unacceptable."

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6. Synthetic evaluation (500 characters):

The thesis is devoted to a relevant and clearly defined research problem. It draws connections between centuries of historical development in Cyprus and the contemporary language situation, in which English as a lingua franca, despite its potential to unite the country, also contributes to the weakening of multilingualism on the island. Despite a few formal and methodological weak spots and problematic individual points in the analysis, it is a valuable springboard for further investigation.

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Ústav světových dějin

7. Questions and comments which should the candidate answer and discuss during the defense:

Based on the research, the author reaches the conclusion that official language policies are needed in Cyprus to encourage the learning of Turkish and Greek (particularly the former) in Cyprus, i.e. an approach to multilingualism which goes beyond what we might call "English as a lingua franca only". What exactly might these policies look like, and what barriers might exist in their implementation in the different parts of Cyprus (north, south)?

To what degree might the problem of the mutual learning of Turkish and Greek attributed to historical circumstances and to what degree can it be seen as a situation typical for contemporary Europe, in which the learning of large languages such as English may be to the detriment of the learning of "neighboring" languages? How might this be compared, for example, to the situation of Czech and German?

What is the economic value of Turkish and Greek outside of Cyprus, and how might it be used to promote their teaching?

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Suggested grade: 2

Date: June 10, 2017   **Signature:**