



Ústav světových dějin

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: Czoch Gábor

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	1

Short evaluation:

The author uses really different kind of sources in order to analyze and answer his research question, for instance statistical data, interviews, surveys, political documents, school curricula, social media posts, websites, his own participant observations and photographs, and this variety is one of the main value of the thesis. The bibliography consists of relevant (mainly anglo-saxon and turkish) literature to the topic, but it has some deficiencies, especially regarding the process of nation-building, nationalism and their connections with the issues of language and language policies.

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 methodology	2

Short evaluation:



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The research question is very interesting and it is well formulated at the beginning of the thesis. Also, the chosen problem is an actual and politically hot issue (in which the author is personally involved) and this presents several risks. The author tries to manage methodologically this challenge by adopting a critical position vis-à-vis both the Turkish and Greek Cypriote communities, however, the overall good analysis of the problems of language policies in Cyprus after 2003 (which are considered in a larger historical perspective) and the position of English as *lingua franca* slides time to time into a kind of commitment in favor of a political agenda. The problem is not, of course, the engagement of the author itself, but rather that he couldn't always avoid its constraining impacts to his – otherwise – scientific demonstration.

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:

This is a well structured thesis with logically constructed argumentation.

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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	2
4.2 Interpretation of sources and literature in their interaction	2

Short evaluation:

While the thesis has several parts which shows the good skills and the capacity of the author in the analyses and interpretation of their sources and literature, there are unfortunately some weak points as well. One of the most problematic point is the interpretation of the connection



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between national identity and the vernacular or the nation-building process and language issues which is a more complex phenomena than it is presented here. The author mentions the case of Switzerland (p.31) but without any deeper reflection and he continues immediately his argumentation in favor of the decisive role of the language in the nation-building, on the base of his conviction according to which „language and identity cannot be separated“ (p.29) and in neglecting an important part of the literature on this question. The problem is not only to forget the numerous important examples where the nation-building process was based on different elements than the language, but the interpretation of the cypriot case itself demands also to see this relation with a more complex way: in his own presentation, the author himself mentions the problem of linking automatically national identity to the linguistic knowledge (for example: „not every Turkish Cypriote is required from birth to speak Turkish“, p. 52).

It is also very problematic when he claims the following: „Language policies and planning can only be considered as a tool that is used in the reconciliation process.“ (42). It is unnecessary to enumerate the countless cases of the contrary but it is enough to take his own analyse to a demonstration how language policy can play a crucial role in raising, maintaining or reinforcing social conflicts.

An other methodologically problematic point is the survey presented in the 5.2 chapter. One cannot expect a really representative survey in a framework of a master thesis and it is respectable that the author could collect 100 answers to his questionnaire. The main problem here from the point of view of the demonstration is to use only an English questionnaire in order to „maintain my objectivity“, as the author explains his choice. But this decision limits the potential possibilities of the survey. The reader doesn't wonder when the author „found out that all the participants could speak English“ (p.81) and also when this survey show out a positive role of the English language as „a center of the communication and interaction.“ (p.82) The results would have been more interesting if the survey tries to investigate the attitude of non-English speakers as well. It is a misunderstanding to think that including only Turkish speaking people in this investigation would endanger –as the author presumes–the objectivity of the analyse. By the way, from this point of view, it is more problematic that the author didn't present in detail the method of the selection of the participants neither their composition but only claims without further information that: „I also paid attention that the group of the participants are diverse.“(79).



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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)

5.1 Style and grammar	2
5.2 Use of terminology	2

Short evaluation:

In a general way, the thesis was written in a comprehensible style, with a pertinent academic terminology and with a correct grammatical level on the whole, although there are some mistakes and unclear formulations. Although this is not only a stylistic problem, I mention under this point that I found disturbing the lack of references in some parts of the argumentation. For instance, the author presents the evolution of the linguistic situation during the era of the Republic of Cyprus without giving his sources (p.26); there is no bibliographical reference in the otherwise very short presentation of the divided Cyprus between 1974–2003; or he quotes the very interesting example of the multicultural village of Arodes (p.19, p.22) also without any reference. On the contrary, there are cases where the reader meets a superfluous abundance of references, for instance there are three references in one short paragraph on the same part of a text of Hobsbawm (p.32) or even five references in five consecutive sentences on the same book of David Crystal, instead of to amass these references in one footnote. Finally, I can understand the practical reasons to use abbreviations but sometimes it makes difficult the comprehension. Just an example: „Therefore, a Turkish settler in North Cyprus, in the case of use of the ST, can easily be identified based on the language by a TCD speaker. The same rules apply for the GCD speakers in order to identify MSG speakers.“ (p.29)

6. Synthetic evaluation (500 signs):



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In spite of some weak points of the demonstration and formulation, this thesis presents uncontested scientific values. It proposes a really interdisciplinary analysis of the linguistic situation in Cyprus with its social and political issues in a larger historical perspective. The argumentation follows a clear structure and it is based on a great variety of sources. If there are some methodological problems or disputable interpretations, but on the other hand the author has excellent observations too, mainly in the field of the everyday linguistic practices which attest his high anthropological sensibility. I appreciate very much his courage to undertake the scientific investigation of a complex and politically sensible problem and I find the result really valuable and precious with all its elements which merit further clarification and development.

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

In order to complete the analysis, it would be important to give further information on the composition of the survey's participants and the way how they were contacted and selected. How do the author see the problem of the connection between national identity and the vernacular in the case of Cyprus? What we can know about those Turkish or Greek Cypriotes who doesn't speak Turkish or Greek and what is about the population censuses? Are there available data on the national and/or linguistic composition of the island? How the statistical institutions try to approach these questions?

Suggested grade: 2

Date: June 12. 2017

Signature:



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