



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

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Title: A Discourse Analysis of the Crimean Speech (Vladimir Putin's Testimony)

Programme/year: MISS (2017)

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Dr. Ondrej Ditrych

Criteria	Definition	Max.	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	36
Total		80	73
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	5
Total		20	19
TOTAL		100	92



Evaluation

The presented thesis sets as its objective to conduct a critical discourse analysis of Putin's speeches related to Crimea (2014). The subject's topicality and import are beyond dispute, and the thesis' objectives are clearly stated albeit justification for the research could be made stronger in the introduction. The thesis is well researched and presented, the argument is coherent, sufficiently referenced and logically structured. It features a clear, appropriately selected and sufficiently detailed conceptual and methodological framework, drawing inspiration primarily from Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach. Referencing in this section could have been more dense (on occasions, authors are mentioned without a proper reference). More significantly, and this should be considered the most serious flaw in an otherwise competently conducted discourse analysis, there is no specification of the primary material to be submitted to inquiry and denoted as 'Crimean Speech' either here or in the rest of the thesis. The reader must therefore consult the list of references to discover that the material consists of several Putin's speeches, which however are all referenced in the analysis using a singular marker 'Putin (2014)'. Considering that it is made clear that the thesis would interrogate statements by a single actor in a limited period of time, this does not, however, seriously devalue its conclusions.

The following section consists of a discussion of historical context of the annexation of Crimea. While rather extensive compared to the rest of the thesis, it presents a balanced and detailed account of not history of the Crimea as such, but rather, and more appropriately, of the importance of Crimea in Russia's history and collective memory.



The actual discourse analysis, structured along four identified ‘appeals’, betrays perceptive critical interpretation on the author’s part based on a thorough knowledge of the subject matter and facilitated by linguistic sensibility, even as it does not robustly operationalise the DHA toolbox (and takes more an *inspiration* from Wodak in terms of her critical interpretive position); and emerges as more a polemical piece than one uncovering hidden ideological structures / historical conditions of emergence for Putin’s statements. It is only occasionally that the argument seems to lack an analytical clarity, e.g. when the concept of ‘Krymchane’ is discussed; or makes unnecessary diversions (e.g. when returning to the competing explanations for the transfer of the Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR). That said, the thesis undoubtedly succeeds in showing various modes of manipulation present in Putin’s rhetoric and interrogates them through original, perceptive and critical contextual analysis.

Suggested grade: Excellent

Signature: