Opponent Review of the Doctoral Dissertation

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Title of the dissertation: Language Policies, Attitudes, and Beliefs in Kyrgyzstan

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. István Csernicskó

Opponent: Erzsébet Bárány, PhD, associate professor, Ferenc Rakóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education, Beregszász, Transcarpathia, Ukraine – University of Nyíregyháza, Hungary

1. Choice of the topic and theoretical background

The doctoral dissertation provides deep, comprehensive, high-level scientific investigation of a sensitive topic which aims to analyse the language policies of different governments in Kyrgyzstan. The aim of the thesis is to identify and describe the language policy models and methods used in Kyrgyzstan and the impact of language policy on current students in prominent state universities. The topic is presented in a logical system that the reader can follow, and the structure of the thesis is organised accordingly. Noteworthy are the original creative findings and reasoned authorial suggestions, which describe how Kyrgyz leaders have swung from one extreme to the other in the field of language policy. The author of the thesis declares that language policy is an essential tool for nation-building, but it must be designed and implemented sensitively to a given society's diverse linguistic and cultural realities. By recognizing the role of language in identity construction and promoting inclusive language policies, we can help build more cohesive and harmonious societies.

2. Research methodology

It is Chapter 3 of the thesis that gives a detailed description of the methodology of the research conducted by the author. First, a pilot study has been carried out and is described at the beginning of the chapter. The author claims to have relied on both quantitative and qualitative research methods, mainly questionnaires and interviews as the most widespread investigation tools when studying language policy issues. The author processed his data with the help of the R software, which calculated frequencies, means, standard deviations, p-values, regressions, associations, and correlations, as well as major statistical values like Chi-square, ANOVA, or MANOVA.

The research instruments are presented in the appendix of the thesis in three languages, Kyrgyz, English and Russian. In addition, it is of great help that the interview

transcripts are provided so that the reader can check the validity and reliability of the analysis and interpretation of data. Tollefson's historical-structural approach was applied in the analysis of the language ideologies, policies, and practices implemented in Kyrgyzstan. One of the strengths of Chapter 3 of the thesis is that it explains and justifies all the research methodological decisions made during the study, thus the clarifications leave no space for further questions.

3. Structure of the paper

The dissertation has a logically built up structure. It consists of six chapters, references and appendices. The first chapter focuses on the research topic, the justification for the choice of the topic, the main research aims and questions. The accent here is placed on the "interaction" which goes on between language policy, language attitudes and beliefs in the context of Kyrgyzstan. The second chapter deals with the literature overview. Here I would like to stress something which is not always clearly seen on the modern academic soil, it is Mr. Mambetaliev's brilliant knowledge of scientific works, related to the dissertation, his adequate referring to relevant authors and their ideas. In the third chapter of the dissertation, the methods of investigation are clearly described. Methods of research work are appropriate for the aims and hypotheses formulated in the thesis. The fourth and fifth chapters present the detailed research data, its interpretation and the formulation of the thesis. The sixth chapter contains the conclusions based on interpreting the research results, as well as suggestions and recommendations for further development. The final chapter also gives place for summing-up and reflections.
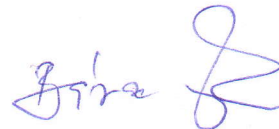
4. Remarks, observations, conclusions

It must be noted that English academic style and formal language is used throughout the dissertation. It is pleasant that the author uses the APA style in the dissertation in flawless text. The numerous excerpts from the interviews help the reader in better understanding the issues under investigation. The reference list appears on 24 pages and contains an amazing number of referred works, 481.

The author acknowledges that his conclusions would be more comprehensive, could he have obtained more data from private universities as well. Hence derives the question, why the author believes that such data would alter the results.

The List of Abbreviations at the start of the thesis (p. vii) is incomplete, e.g. DMM – dynamic model of multilingualism (p. 24) is missing from the list. Moreover, it could have been more reader-friendly if the abbreviations are presented in an alphabetical order.

Recommendation

Based on the above presented criteria, it can be stated that the dissertation proposed by Askarbek Mambetaliev complies with the requirements of a PhD dissertation, hence I recommend it to be publicly defended, thus granting the doctoral degree to its author.

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