



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Prathamesh Deshpande

Title: QUECHUA LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND POLICIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COUNTRIES

Programme/year: MAIN 2024

Author of Evaluation (reviewer): Michal Parizek

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	12
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	17
<i>Total</i>		80	35
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	7
	Style	5	4
	Formal requirements	5	2
<i>Total</i>		20	13
TOTAL		100	46



Evaluation

Major criteria:

Prathamesh Deshpande prepared a thesis on education and policies related to the Quechua language used in several states in the regions of Andes. On the positive side, the thesis benefits from an obvious interest of the author in this highly original topic, it presents a synthesis of diverse sources of information, it explores a potentially highly politically interesting topic of language politics and policy. It also covers a broad range of South-American countries, all in which Quechua is represented in larger numbers. I also appreciate that the author opts for what he labels an interdisciplinary approach to the topic.

There are fundamental problems, however. First, the inter-disciplinary approach unfortunately connects closely with what I perceive as an extremely broad scope of the thesis – not in the sense of the breadth of the topic itself, but in the sense of the diverse social phenomena the author claims to be able to analyze. The author writes that „Therefore, an interdisciplinary method is necessary, with which we can understand the historical, sociopolitical, socioeconomic and sociolinguistic and other contexts of the areas where the language is spoken. It is both a societal and political matter regarding the language, therefore the sociopolitical and sociolinguistic factors are the most important while examining the state of the language in the given countries“ (p 8). This makes for a setup that essentially lacks focus and, by implication, has difficulty reaching below the surface on any of the disciplinary approaches.

Second, most fundamentally – and that is ultimately the key reason for my poor evaluation of the thesis – the text fails to connect in any meaningful way to problems of International Relations or even politics more broadly. This is the case in the theoretical part, in empirics, and in the framing of the thesis. *There are certainly internationally highly relevant questions – some of them I outline below.* These IR-relevant questions remain remarkably omitted or underdeveloped in the thesis. *Clearly, this an issue that can be remedied, the IR-relevant material can be brought into the thesis.* Yet it is absent in the current version. In my judgment, this makes it virtually impossible for the thesis to be evaluated as a qualification thesis in IR.



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Third, the thesis is imbalanced in the depth of analysis. It does provide a comprehensive review of the literature on Quechua and it is clearly empirically based on a relevant range of secondary sources. Yet it completely fails to relate to broader debates on language policy, ethnic and cultural identity, or a whole range of connected questions. It claims to adopt a multidisciplinary approach, but it does not really work with key concepts, theories or methods from any of the disciplines (and certainly not IR or political science at large). For example, the section on definitions (p. 9) does not relate to any scholarly work whatsoever. The same applies to the section “Conceptual framework” – I do not find there anything conceptual, and it does not refer to any scholarly frameworks that would define and discuss the relevant concepts. I believe all this can be remedied, but in the current form, I see this as really profound reasons for which the thesis should be not defended.

Fourth, the methodological framework of the thesis remains implicit. The thesis is highly descriptive, which is of course acceptable, but here the description is not structured around any well-defined concepts or a theoretical/conceptual scheme. This makes the description relatively rich in empirical detail, but also devoid of a strong analytical insight and depth.

Fifth, I will now mention several areas where the thesis touches on questions and issues relevant for IR debates, but fails to develop the connection in a meaningful way. I am sure there are other agendas in which relevant IR and political content can be brought in. A) The thesis relates tangentially to how globalization impacts the position of Quechua. There is a long debate on the relation between globalization and identity and community to which the thesis could have related. B) A short discussion of decolonization is presented, especially in connection to Bolivia. Again, decolonization and neo-/post-colonialism are massive topics in IR, and the thesis could have presented a contribution to these debates. This could also be related to the question of anti-capitalism and anti-neoliberalism and the orientation on collectivist ideology in the region, which the language seems to be politically linked to (the author shortly mentions the link). C) The thesis mentions the relevance of the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (p 18), but does not elaborate on how multilateralism or the UN concretely relates to the questions. D) The question of the “standard” Quechua is discussed in connection to Cuzco – given the transnational reach of the language, there may be interesting questions of power dynamics in determining whose variant of the language will be treated as “standard” for the entire community. E) A short discussion on the transnational community and new visibility of Quechua brought about by globalization and digitalization could be connected to discussions of transnational activism, epistemic communities, and the like. These are just examples where possible very strong connections to questions key to IR and politics at large can be relatively easily developed – which I recommend – but are not in the current version.

Minor criteria:

The thesis is relatively well written. It uses a somewhat narrative language, less analytically deep and significantly more sparsely referenced than what academic style usually presumes.



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The range of sources the thesis works with is limited to the works specifically on Quechua, it does not reach beyond to broader related political/social research and IR. Even if one takes a very broad notion of IR and political science at large, it is difficult to recognize in the text attempts to link the thesis to the disciplinary literature.

Unfortunately, the references do not reflect any recognized standard. For example, reference to Hornberger N. & King K. (1996) does not even include the journal name, let alone a DOI or any other link. The links attached to the list of reference go, it appears, to the author's local folder. The thesis needs to adhere to some standard citation format.

Page numbers are missing.

Assessment of plagiarism: No signs of plagiarism.

Overall evaluation: The strength of the thesis is in a choice of a original specific topic and in the ability of the author to review the situation and policies related to Quechua across the region. The key weaknesses lie in the absence of any solid link to IR or political science and thus to elaboration of a politically relevant analysis, in weaknesses in methodology and conceptual grounding. I recommended that the thesis is NOT defended, and that a revised version that remedies these problems is submitted.

I understand that this rather negative review will be disappointing to the student. I want to stress that in my view many of these problems can be addressed and there appear to be relatively simple ways of doing so. At the same time, I do believe the additional work needs to be put into the thesis for it to be defensible.

Suggested grade: F

Signature: