

## Language of Aggression in the Urban Linguistic Landscape - Observations from Turku

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This paper reports on an exploration into hate speech and swearing in our physical linguistic landscape. Here, we adopt the inclusive definition of 'words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces' for *linguistic landscape* (LL) by Shohamy and Gorter (2008, 1). In our analysis, we focus on the written mode, examining any printed or hand-written texts containing hate speech and/or swearwords in any language visible in the examined space. The investigated urban spaces are located in two areas of the Finnish city of Turku: the core of the city centre and the neighbourhood of Varissuo, known for its ethnically diverse make-up (see, e.g., Laakkonen 2018). The data, which contain approximately 200 images, were gathered between November 2021 and February 2022.

The research questions we aim to answer are the following:

- 1) Are there differences in the quality and quantity of hate speech and other types of aggressive language found in the different areas of the city?
- 2) Where is the aggressive language located, what are the languages of aggressive texts (official languages Finnish and Swedish, English as a lingua franca, other), and are there any indications of authorship?
- 3) Do these text elements operate independently or can some forms of dialogue between them be identified?

Previously, hate speech has been examined, for example, as part of LL studies looking at racist and anti-LGBTQ graffiti (e.g. Wilson 2014, Canakis 2018) and diverse landscapes of crisis and conflict (e.g. Borba 2019). Hate speech studies is an emerging field in Finland (Määttä, Suomalainen & Tuomarla 2020, 190), but we are not aware of any previous Finnish LL studies into hate speech or any LL studies focusing specifically on swearwords. In this paper, our main focus is on the language of aggression but our data also provides further evidence on the diverse non-aggressive pragmatic functions of swearwords (e.g. Stapleton 2010) and highlights the status of English as a lingua franca of sorts of swearing (c.f. Vanvedt Fjeld et al. 2019) and other types of (potentially) aggressive speech.

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