

# Finnish Society and Language (Finnish Language)

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# Finnish language

- Languages of Finland
- Language situation in Finland
- Finnish language: Difficult or different?
- Some characteristics of Finnish language

# Languages of Finland

- The official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish.
- In Turku, approximately 5.4 % of population speaks Swedish as their first language.
- Biggest numbers of foreign-language speakers: Russian, Estonian, Arabic, English, Somali (stat.fi)

# Finnish & Swedish in Turku

(Photos: Hanna Jokela)



# Languages of Turku?



# Languages of Finland

- The Saami (*Sámi* or *Sami*) languages are the languages of the indigenous population of Finland. There are three different Saami languages spoken in Finland: Inari Saami, Skolt Saami and Northern Saami.
- Finnish Romani, Finnish sign language, Finland-Swedish sign language and Karelian have special status.

[www.kotus.fi](http://www.kotus.fi) (Institute for the Languages of Finland)

# Finnish language – Finno-Ugric language family

- There are three language families in Europe: Uralic, Indo-European, and Basque.
- Hungarians, Finns, and Estonians make up the majority of Uralic language (Finno-ugric languages) speakers.
- Finnish and Estonian are Baltic-Finnic languages.
- Estonian and Finnish have the official status of national languages.

- For more information: <https://fennougria.ee/en/peoples/baltic-finnic-peoples/>

# Finnish language – Finno-Ugric language family

- Finnish is also one the Nordic languages – but Finnish is not related to Scandinavian languages.
- Close contacts: Finnish and Swedish have more shared words than, for example, Finnish and Hungarian, even though Finnish and Swedish are not related.



# Some characteristics of Finnish language

- There are **no articles** in Finnish.
- The words have **no grammatical** gender.

• **Hän** on onnellinen.

***She** is happy.*

• **Hän** on onnellinen.

***He** is happy.*

# Sounds

- Most sounds can be either short or long:

Tuli            *fire*

Tuuli          *wind*

Tulli          *customs office*

Tapaan sinut            *I meet you*

Tapan sinut              *I kill you*

# Sounds: plenty of diphthongs

Suomi

soutaa      *to row*

pöytä      *a table*

pyörä      *a bike, a wheel*

kieli      *a tongue/language*

keitto      *a soup*

# Lots of endings and suffixes

- Turku
  - Turun, Turkua, Turussa, Turusta, Turkuun, Turulla, Turulta, Turulle, Turkuna, Turuksi...
- **Vasta-isi-t-ko?** *Would you answer?*

# ***To have -construction***

-lla/-llä -ending:

Minulla on kirja.            *I have a book.*

Hannalla on kirja.        *Hanna has a book.*

# Finnish words: original or international?

- hotelli
- yliopisto
- rautatieasema
- ravintola
- kahvila
- pankki
- lentokenttä
- kirjasto

# FINNISH NIGHTMARES

FINNISHNIGHTMARES.BLOGSPOT.FI - FACEBOOK.COM/FINNISHNIGHTMARES - TWITTER.COM/FINN\_MATTI



WEATHER IS HORRIBLE, BUT THE ONLY SHELTER IS OCCUPIED.

# Politeness strategies and addressing in Finnish

- Highly respected personal space
- High tolerance of silence
- Are there less politeness phrases?



# Politeness strategies and addressing in Finnish

- Addressing:
  - The 2nd person singular pronoun *sinä* is commonly used; the 2nd person plural pronoun *te* is more formal
  - Titles are less frequently used than in many other languages
- Finnish speech culture is similar to Swedish (Scandinavian) speech culture (languages not related)
- Situational and areal variation

Isosävi, J. & Lappalainen, H., 2015. *Saako sinutella vai täytyykö teitellä? Tutkimuksia eurooppalaisten kielten puhuttelukäytännöistä*. Tietolipas 246. Helsinki: SKS.



**TURUN  
YLIOPISTO**

**Kiitos!**

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