Libraries as multilingual spaces: A case study of the linguistic landscape of Helsinki Central Library Oodi

MA Programme in English Studies
Master's thesis

Author:
Sten Taimalu

Supervisor:
Dr Anna Solin

22.5.2025
Helsinki

Abstract

Faculty: Faculty of Arts

Degree programme: MA Programme in English Studies

Study track: N/A

Author: Sten Taimalu

Title: Libraries as multilingual spaces: A case study of the linguistic landscape of Helsinki Central Library Oodi

Level: Master's Thesis

Month and year: May 2025

Number of pages: 44 + appendix (2 pages)

Keywords: linguistic landscape, multilingualism, libraries, public space

Supervisor or supervisors: Anna Solin

Where deposited: University of Helsinki e-thesis database

Additional information:

Abstract:

Libraries in Finland are simultaneously institutional operators guided by state mandates regarding language use, while also functioning as low-barrier-of-entry spaces providing tools to support active participation in multicultural societies. This thesis investigates the linguistic landscapes of multilingual libraries with Helsinki Central Library Oodi as a case study. The aim is to compare languages choices in the signage produced by various operators in the library and compare these results to other linguistic landscape studies conducted in Helsinki. Research into the linguistic landscapes of libraries such as Oodi could shed light on institutional perspectives on multilingualism and the social relevance attributed to various languages by local governmental institutions.

The data consists of photos and notes taken during fieldwork in the library between February and April 2025, documenting a total of 1609 signs in public library spaces. This data was processed to quantify the languages present on each sign along with their locations, functions and materiality. The contents of signage were also considered through qualitative means and analysed using the definition of linguistic landscapes as "the symbolic construction of the public space by means of linguistic codes." Additionally, libraries as institutions were considered through the lens of *third spaces*.

Results showed most of the signage being trilingual and using Finnish, Swedish and English. Finnish was the dominant language of signs in the building, being both the most prevalent and given visual dominance most often. Signs produced by the library contained noticeably more Swedish than those produced by other operators and by previous research in other areas of Helsinki. English was positioned as a lingua franca meant for communicating with people who did not speak Finnish or Swedish, and the presence of 23 other languages was mainly symbolic. Analysis of materiality showed that most signs are adaptable and could be feasibly edited within a couple of days, but no non-institutional signage was found, suggesting heavy management of the LL by library staff. These results somewhat challenge notions of libraries as third spaces, as the visibility of regulars is heavily controlled.

Table of contents

1 Introduction 1

2 Background 3

2.1 Linguistic and semiotic landscapes 3

2.2 Libraries as public spaces 7

2.3 Helsinki Central Library Oodi 9

2.4 Multilingualism in Helsinki 10

3 Methodology 12

3.1 Fieldwork: data collection via photographs 12

3.2 Processing photographs for analysis 13

3.3 Further fieldwork: analysis via notetaking 14

3.4 Ethical considerations and limitations 16

4 Analysis 17

4.1 Naming schemes 20

4.2 Portals 21

4.3 Bookshelves 23

4.3.1 Third floor library space 24

4.3.2 First floor entrance area 29

4.4 Sign materiality and permanence 30

4.5 Digital screens 33

4.6 Other operators 35

4.6.1 Kino Regina / KAVI 36

4.6.2 Helsinki Art Museum 37

4.6.3 The restaurant and café 38

5 Discussion 40

6 Conclusion 44

References 45

Appendices 53

Appendix 1: Coding categories 53

1 Introduction

Linguistic diversity in major cities across the globe has increased noticeably over the past few decades, with many services adapting to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse population. Helsinki is one example of such a city, with nearly 20% of residents speaking a language other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami as their native language (Saarto et. al 2024).

One of the ways multilingualism is reflected in societies is through the visibility of languages in public spaces, for example in the form of signage. Landry and Bourhis (1997) coined the term “linguistic landscapes” to describe this phenomenon, which has developed into a notable field of research using a multitude of methods and foci to chart out the ways language is used to construct meaning in space (Gorter and Cenoz 2023, 56-58). While linguistic landscapes produced by governmental institutions differ from more community-driven landscapes produced for commercial purposes (Kallen 2010), it is still valuable to examine how languages function as symbols in the construction of public space in the eyes of the state. For this purpose, I will use Malinowski and Dubreil’s definition of linguistic landscapes as “the symbolic construction of the public space by means of linguistic codes” (2019, 1).

One type of space towing the line between public and institutional spaces are public libraries. Historically they have been largely viewed as archival institutions for books that allow for peaceful reading spaces but, there has been an increase in the number of social and creative spaces in libraries across the globe (Igarashi et al. 2022). The view of libraries as “low-intensive meeting places” for building community in a manner supporting democracy in multicultural contexts has been gaining popularity (Wyatt and Leorke 2024, 257). By giving free and easy access to both cultural resources as well as digital and social tools, libraries are a key meeting space and resource for people of various backgrounds to overcome social inequalities (Leguina, Mihelj and Downey 2021).

It is thus quite surprising that, despite scholars in linguistic landscape research conceiving of public space as a buffer between the state and private life (Ben-Rafael et al. 2010), there has been remarkably little focus on libraries in linguistic landscape studies. While some projects have included libraries in their analysis of schoolscapes (Gorter and Cenoz 2015) or university campuses (Li 2022; Cao, Liu and Chen 2022), none of them have considered the functions and usage of libraries as a discrete place, viewing them solely through the lens of the broader institution being analysed. This means the that linguistic landscapes of public

libraries, with all the relevance attributed to them in multicultural societies, have been left uncharted.

One example of a library following the trends outlined by Igarashi et. al (2022) and Wyatt and Leorke (2024) is the Helsinki Central Library Oodi (henceforth referred to as “Oodi”). Located directly across from The Parliament House, the building is meant to symbolise the commitment of government to prioritising equal opportunities for residents (Helsinki Smart Region 2016). It is also a very popular location, accounting for over 25% of library visits in Helsinki and nearly 5% of all library visits in the country (Finnish Public Libraries Statistics 2025). This project will examine the linguistic landscape of Helsinki Central Library Oodi, aiming to give a detailed overview of the linguistic landscape of the library and answer the following research questions:

1. What languages are visible in the signage of Helsinki Central Library Oodi and what functions do these languages serve in the space?
2. Does the signage of other operators in Oodi differ from the signs in the rest of the library, and if it does, in what ways?

To answer these questions, I will use linguistic landscape data collected through fieldwork in the library during 2025. I will first go over prior research relating to the topic in chapter 2 to establish the theoretical background for my study. Methodology for data collection and analysis will be discussed in Chapter 3, and the results of the analysis are contained in chapter 4. Implications of the results and avenues of further exploration will be discussed in chapter 5 before conclusions in chapter 6.

2 Background

In this section I will go over relevant prior research to contextualise the current project. In section 2.1 I will begin with an overview of linguistic and semiotic landscape research, before focusing on the linguistic landscapes of Helsinki. Following this I will go over research on libraries as public spaces and institutions in section 2.2 and give a brief overview of Helsinki Central Library Oodi in section 2.3. The chapter will conclude with a very short overview of the languages spoken in Helsinki in section 2.4.

2.1 Linguistic and semiotic landscapes

With the increasing amount of signage and information present in public spaces, linguistic landscape research is becoming both more prevalent and diverse. Gorter and Cenoz (2023) note how the number of publications on linguistic landscapes has skyrocketed from approximately 30 publications per year in the late 2000s to over 200 per year this decade. They attribute part of this recent increase to the COVID-19 pandemic facilitating the production of various guidelines, mandates and digital linguistic landscapes and making them more salient in peoples' daily lives.

The term *linguistic landscape* was used by Landry and Bourhis (1997, 23) in their seminal paper on the impacts the language visible in public spaces has on ethnolinguistic vitality, where they defined it as "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region." A longer definition in the same article limits the notion to "public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings."

While Landry and Bourhis (1997) were not the first to examine linguistic landscapes per se (see Backhaus 2007), they did put forward the first systematic exploration of the concept of linguistic landscapes with an increased focus on language on signage. Although developments in the field have led to some like Blackwood (2016, 647) arguing that Landry and Bourhis' definition should no longer be treated as a baseline, the initial definition they put forward was vital in inspiring future papers that contributed to the development of the field (Hult 2018).

There is no denying the popularity of this early definition, with Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau (2009) claiming that "most papers" on linguistic landscapes quote this, although Gorter (2019) notes that this is an overstatement of its prevalence. Alternative definitions have been

proposed over the years. For example, Gorter (2006, 2) defined linguistic landscapes as "the use of language in its written form in the public sphere", while Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael (2019, 7) refer to "the symbolic construction of the public space by means of linguistic codes." This paper is based on the definition put forth by Malinowski and Dubreil (2019, 1), who conceive of linguistic landscapes as "the geospatially situated domain of material texts and textual practices in public space."

In 2006, four independent papers on linguistic landscapes were published (Backhaus 2006; Huebner 2006; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Gorter 2006), the central findings of which contributed to the early development of the field (Tufi and Blackwood 2010; Van Mensel, Vandenbrouke and Blackwood 2016). These four papers were methodologically very influential, with many of the projects in following years using quantitative approaches to count the number of languages on signs, defining what is sometimes referred to as the *first wave* of linguistic landscape studies (for example Lamarre 2014; Bolton et al. 2020, although Gorter and Cenoz 2023 argue that the boundaries between the proposed waves are unclear and at times arbitrary or inaccurate). The results of early linguistic landscape studies were largely in line with the trends set out in these four papers – majority languages almost unequivocally dominate linguistic landscapes at the expense of minority languages, and the presence of English as a global language was found to be ubiquitous and increasing (Gorter and Cenoz 2023, 22).

Findings related to the position of English followed a similar even with methodological developments in the following years. Topics such as language policy (Shohamy 2015), monuments and museums (Blackwood and Macalister, 2019), the role of English (Bolton 2012) and multilingualism (Gorter 2006) were tackled and woven into linguistic landscape studies. Pavlenko (2010) developed diachronic methods to their extreme, using historical records to map out changes in the linguistic landscape of Kyiv over a 1000-year period, thus highlighting the dynamic nature of linguistic landscapes and the ways social change affects them. Diachronic methods have since also been utilised on a smaller scale for current social issues such as gentrification (Papen 2012; Trinch and Snajdr 2020).

Methodological developments continued through the "multilingual turn" in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics (Conteh and Meier 2014; May 2014), which began to problematise the notion of languages as discrete entities, rather viewing them as resources and repertoires people draw on. In linguistic landscape studies Huebner (2006) was the first to problematise the notion of a language as a static, countable entity based on the ways Thai was being mixed

with English and Chinese in Bangkok. Cenoz and Gorter (2023) ascribe the shift to more qualitative methods to both the overall change in applied linguistics and the prevalence of similar ideas, although many scholars in linguistic landscape studies prefer using the notion of *translanguaging* to describe the social practices of utilising the linguistic and semiotic resources that languages provide (for example, Gorter and Cenoz 2015; Van Mensel, Vandenbrouke and Blackwood 2016).

One alternative term that stemmed from this is *semiotic landscapes*, coined by Jaworski and Thurlow (2010, 2) to describe how "visual images, nonverbal communication, architecture and the built environment" interact with written language. This idea gained traction, with Shohamy (2015) asserting that other semiotic resources should also be included in linguistic landscape studies. One central semiotic feature examined in linguistic landscape studies is materiality – Scollon and Scollon (2003) argue that the robustness of materials used in the sign suggests how prevalent the content of the sign is meant to be in the landscape. Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) were among the first to go beyond visual components, examining smellscapes, soundscapes and mobility as part of semiotic landscapes through the lens of metrolingualism. This approach has received some criticism from scholars thinking it is too broad and removes explanatory power from linguistic landscape studies (Pütz & Mundt 2019). However, as Pennycook (2010, 69) has noted, fully separating text from image is not particularly sensible.

As neither *linguistic landscape* or *semiotic landscape* has a specific agreed-upon definition, and the boundaries (or existence of a boundary) between them vary greatly, this study will use the terms largely interchangeably. With the *linguistic landscape* being notably more popular to the point where certain edited books on semiotic landscapes favour the term linguistic landscape (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010; Pütz and Mundt 2019), it will be treated as the baseline.

Another contentious topic in linguistic landscape studies is the lack of methodological consistency and theoretical canon, problematised, for example, by Spolsky (2009) and Canakis (2019) (also often noted in literature reviews, e.g. Protassova 2021). Gorter and Cenoz (2023, 57-58) argue that the field should continue to adopt ideas and frameworks from other disciplines to continue theoretical development, viewing this heterogeneity as an asset instead of a drawback. The goals of scholars in the field remain largely consistent, with the following description by Shohamy and Ben-Rafael remaining an apt overview.

> The main goal of LL studies is to describe and identify systematic patterns of the presence and absence of languages in public spaces and to understand the motives, pressures, ideologies, reactions and decision making of people regarding the creation of LL in its varied forms'. (Shohamy and Ben-Rafael 2015, 1)

Efforts to consolidate methodologies into frameworks and models have been made in recent years. One example is the Multilingual Inequality in Public Spaces (MIPS) model (Figure 1) put forward by Gorter (2021; Gorter and Cenoz 2020), which aims to provide a cyclical framework for examining the interrelation of signage in linguistic landscapes with sign production practices and the impacts on people seeing those landscapes.

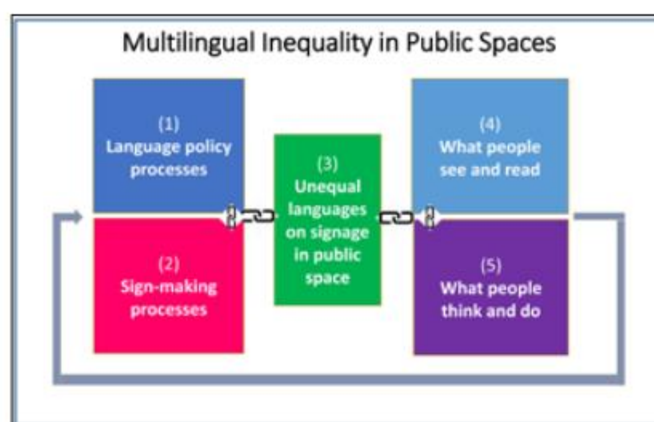

Figure 1. Multilingual Inequality in Public Spaces (MIPS) model.
(Gorter 2021; adapted from Gorter and Cenoz 2023, 81)

The model sets out with the idea that languages are not represented equally in public spaces (as has been consistently shown in linguistic landscape research), with these inequalities being motivated by language policies with various degrees of codification and the processes of sign making. These policies and sign making processes are influenced by the ideologies, discourses and behaviours of people in the spaces, which are in part influenced by the unequal distribution of languages on signs. Accounting for these various processes allows for a more holistic exploration of phenomena related to language on signage in public spaces (Gorter and Cenoz 2023).

While signage in public spaces in Helsinki is not controlled by explicit top-down policies like in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Manan et al. 2015), public institutions such as libraries are subject to certain governance, such as the Language Act (423/2003) requiring them to provide services in Finnish and Swedish. Other institutions may have language policies of their own

directing language use (e.g. universities, explored by Li 2022), but as noted by Risku (2024), commercial operators are less likely to be bound by such policies.

Research into LLs in Helsinki has charted the visibility and role of languages in various domains. Analysis of both shopping centres (Kontio 2021) and street-level advertisements (Risku 2024) found that English was very prevalent in commercial linguistic landscapes, but largely functioned symbolically, with signs in Finnish generally containing more detailed information. Both studies also found very limited use of Swedish in the commercial landscape of Helsinki. Pienimäki, Väisänen and Hiippala (2024) found that attitudes towards English in the linguistic landscape of Helsinki tended to position it as an easy way to accommodate multilingual and multicultural communities who do not speak Finnish fluently, although some resistance to the overreach of a "foreign language" was also noted.

Research into more institutional operators aiming to serve international audiences found more nuance in the way languages are used. Although the signage in prominent churches showed the use of English as a lingua franca, Finnish was notably more prevalent, and a number of other languages could be identified at many locations (Zhang 2024). Museums generally produce more trilingual signage in Finnish, Swedish and English, with a few museums also containing signage in Russian (Mujunen 2024). Mujunen did find variation in the amount of English and Swedish used and noted that Finnish was oftentimes given visual precedence over other languages. Li (2022) examined the compliance of signage in the University of Helsinki to the trilingual policy, and while a preference for Finnish was noted, the amount of signage in English and Swedish was significantly higher than in commercial areas.

2.2 Libraries as public spaces

With globalisation leading to increasingly diverse societies, institutions play a central role in stabilizing relations between different groups of people and managing social change (Ahmed 2012). In this mediating process, libraries have become a vital space in supporting integration (Johnston 2018). Historically libraries have largely been conceived of as archival institutions for books where visitors are meant to be quiet, but this has been challenged by a notable increase in the number of social and creative spaces in libraries across the globe (Igarashi et al. 2022). By giving free and easy access to both cultural resources as well as digital and social tools, libraries are a key meeting space and resource for people of various backgrounds to overcome social inequalities (Leguina, Mihelj and Downey 2021), which in turn has led to

an increasing view of libraries as spaces for community building as a foundation for "democracy in a multicultural context" (Wyatt and Leorke, 2024, 257).

The increasing social role of libraries has led to a slew of research into libraries as *third places* (Aabø, Audunson and Vårheim 2010; Aabø and Audunson 2012; Bilandzic and Foth 2013). First coined by Oldenburg (1989), *third places* are defined as places that facilitate social interaction and relaxation in locations that are separate from home (*first place*) and work (*second place*). Oldenburg defined a number of criteria for third places: They do not place importance on an individual's social status, must be easily accessible to the people who occupy them and not obligate those occupants to stay there, have a number of regulars who set the mood of the area, are cozy and playful, elicit conversation and give occupants a sense of belonging. Examples may be non-commercial such as public parks, or commercial, such as coffee shops.

Wyatt and Leorke (2024) note that Oldenburg's definition explicitly excluded libraries for being excessively institutional, but scholars in library sciences adopted the term nevertheless as a framework to argue for the value of library space (White and Martel 2022; Montgomery and Miller 2011; Houghton, Foth and Miller 2013). It is, however, not inherently equal to other third places – for example, Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen (2003) note that people may not be going to libraries with the intention of socializing but find a social space that reflects the local community. On the other hand, it cannot be fully distinguished from home and working life (especially given the increase in commercial activity in libraries noted by Wyatt and Leorke 2024) and facilitates meetings between more diverse groups of people than commercial third places (Aabø, Audunson and Vårheim 2010). A change can be noted both in the way third spaces are conceived, and in the ways people use libraries.

Despite scholars in linguistic landscapes conceiving of public space as a buffer between the state and private life (Ben-Rafael et al. 2010), research into libraries has been limited in both amount and in scope. Gorter and Cenoz (2015) were seemingly the first to examine libraries in their study on multilingual schoolscapes in the Basque Country, in which they highlight the need to examine linguistic landscapes in educational contexts, including libraries. While they do include school libraries in their dataset, these are treated as any other room in an educational facility. Similar approaches are taken by Li (2022) and Cao, Liu and Chen (2022), who include libraries in their analysis of multilingual university campuses, with Li analysing two libraries on the University of Helsinki centre campus for their compliance with the

institution's language policy, while Cao, Liu and Chen briefly discuss the semiotic connotations of library signs at Wuchang Shouyi University. All of these projects have focused on libraries as part of educational institutions and given little attention to the unique qualities of libraries as public spaces.

2.3 Helsinki Central Library Oodi

Helsinki Central Library Oodi (Finnish for 'Ode') was opened to the public in 2018, becoming the largest public library in Finland. Designed by ALA architects, the library is located in central Helsinki and placed directly across from the Parliament House and is meant to symbolise the commitment of the government to the people by providing lifelong learning opportunities (Helsinki Smart Region 2016). Oodi has won numerous awards for architecture, including the DETAIL prize (Oodi 2021), and cultural significance including an international cultural heritage award (Oodi 2020). The library was also named Public Library of the Year in 2019 by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA 2019). At nearly 2,5 million visitors in 2023 (Saarto et al. 2024) and 2024 (Oodi 2025), it makes up for over 25% of all library visits in Helsinki and nearly 5% of all library visits in the country (Finnish Public Libraries Statistics 2025). It also functions as a tourist destination, with guided tours of the library being a fairly common occurrence.

Spaces were designed to be adaptable so changes to library functions can be made based on changes in demands for libraries (YIT 2018) The building is divided into three distinct floors, each with its own functions. Renovations to the entrance area took place less than a year after the completion of the library (Oodi 2019), and five years after completion library leadership were interviewed about their plans to reconsider what services Oodi provides (Malminen 2023). Some changes in the layout and signage of Oodi can be observed when comparing the current landscape to images in the Oodi 360° service. One example of a service that has changed is found on the balcony on the first floor, which used to be an involvement event space for the Urban Environment Division until late 2020, after which it was converted to a youth space.

The library is divided into three distinct floors, each with their own functions. The ground floor largely functions as a lobby area, opening out towards the railway station and Kansalaisaukio square. It contains many library services one might need quickly, such as information services, drop-in computers that cannot be reserved, printing and photocopying,

and a few bookshelves for bestsellers. There are also chess tables, a café, a movie theatre, an auditorium for events.

The second floor is dedicated to providing spaces and tools for various types of work. There are different kinds of working areas, such as meeting rooms that can be booked, studios for music production, gaming spaces and even a kitchen. The urban workshop is a DIY space that contains a variety of machinery that can be used, such as 3D printers, laser cutters, heat presses and sewing machines. Nestled between the other two floors, it has notably lower ceilings and smaller windows.

The third floor is most akin to a traditional library, with several bookshelves, and areas with seating for more peaceful working and reading. It also contains a space for book talks, a play area and event space for children, a café, and provides access to The Citizens' Balcony overlooking the Kansalaisaukio square.

2.4 Multilingualism in Helsinki

Finland can generally be spoken of as a bilingual country, a sentiment that is enshrined in both the Finnish constitution and supported by the Language Act (423/2003) and the Strategy for the National Languages of Finland (2012), which both assert that the national languages of the country are Finnish and Swedish. In practice, only 33 municipalities are bilingual, with the rest being considered monolingual Finnish or Swedish (Ministry of Justice). The constitution also ensures that Sámi and Roma people have the right to maintain and develop their languages. The Sámi Language Act (1086/2003) expands on this by ensuring speakers of Sámi can use their language in official contexts in the areas with higher numbers of Sámi speakers, though some services may extend to other areas (Saamelaiskäräjät).

There are, however, many speakers of foreign languages in Finland. Helsinki, for example, has experienced rapid increases in the number of foreign language speakers in the 21st century (Kaupunkitieto), with nearly 20% of Helsinki residents being native speakers of a foreign language in 2024 (Saarto et al. 2024) and projections suggesting the number of foreign language speakers could nearly double by 2040 (City of Helsinki 2023). The most widely spoken foreign languages are Russian, Somali, Arabic, English and Estonian, followed by Chinese, Kurdish, Farsi, Spanish and Vietnamese. Helsinki is seemingly adapting to this reality through services being geared towards foreign language speakers, and bilingual

education being offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, North Sámi, Swedish, Russian and Estonian (City of Helsinki).

While English is only the fourth most spoken foreign language in Helsinki, it has a much stronger position in many facets of Finnish society as a lingua franca (Laitinen et al. 2023), though it is not marginalising the national languages as of yet. One field of research where the prevalence of English is noticeable is linguistic landscapes, where English has a strong position as a language of advertising (Kontio 2021; Risku 2024) and is perceived as a lingua franca for people who do not speak Finnish (Pienimäki 2024).

3 Methodology

In this chapter I will go over the data and analysis procedures used in the study. Section 3.1 will cover the initial fieldwork based on familiarising myself with the spaces in the library and photographing signage. Section 3.2 will then cover the processing of these photographs and the establishment of analysis categories. Further fieldwork comprised of note-taking and more holistic analysis of the space will be discussed in section 3.3, and section 3.4 will go over ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 Fieldwork: data collection via photographs

Photography was chosen as the ideal method of data collection for a number of reasons (outlined in Gorter and Cenoz, 2023: 129-151), such as the ease of collecting sufficiently high-quality photograph data and enabling off-site analysis and further contextualisation. Linguistic landscape data was collected by walking around public spaces in the library while taking note of signage and the linguistic landscape more broadly. Photos were taken by systematically going through the various areas of the library and photographing all signage. Images were taken on a Pixel 6a smartphone due to convenience of access and sufficient quality for the analysis of most signs. Photographing using a phone is also less conspicuous and would thus reduce the risk of bothering other visitors.

Most of the photograph data was collected during February 2025, totalling 196 images. Not all signs were photographed, as signs prohibiting the photography of certain areas made photography impossible, or the number of near-identical signs was too numerous to make the analysis of photographs feasible. The process for recording said signs will be described in section 3.3. Supplementary collection via photographs was conducted intermittently between February and April of 2025 whenever I visited the library. Some new signage was recorded, but given the irregular nature of the visits, specific times of supplementary data collection were not noted down as it could not be used for diachronic analysis. In some cases, seasonal signage had been removed or replaced. In such cases, removal was noted down and replacements were photographed. This led to the collection of an additional 59 photographs, totalling to 255 photographs.

Some photos taken for the analysis were later deemed to not be composed in a manner that was ideal for presentation in this thesis. In cases where the composition of the image could carry more information about the context, and the sign was deemed to be a valuable example

for highlighting the results, the sign was located and rephotographed. The signs had not been changed in any such case.

3.2 Processing photographs for analysis

Data processing began in February 2025 by transferring the image files taken up until that point from the mobile device onto a computer, where the photos were placed into one folder. Subfolders were created for each floor of the library, and images were sorted into the appropriate folders based on the location of the signs. Before analysis the images were scanned to ensure that they did not include any people in the background, and if they did, these sections of the image were either cropped, blurred or blocked out in GNU Image Manipulating Program (GIMP).

The images were examined one-by-one, with features of each sign being noted down in an Excel spreadsheet. Features included in the processing were the location, function and perceived permanence of the sign, along with all languages present in the sign including the order and number. Any cases where one language was given visual dominance over others through a larger font size or bolding, for example, were recorded, along with any relevant multimodal features such as colours, images or symbols that were relevant for meaning construction. Notes were also taken about the interrelatedness of signs and whether the signs seemed to deviate from the convention set by other similar signs. An identifier was given to each unique sign covering some of this information according to the following formula:

$$PP0_FFF1(D)_LLLLnnn$$

'PP' covers the permanence of the sign, with classifiers for permanent, temporary, digital, and two types of semi-permanent signage (seasonal, moveable), followed by the variable '0' denoting floor number (1-3). The first three characters following the first underscore denote the perceived function of the sign, with the following number '1' noting the number of languages on the sign. This number may be followed by a 'D' if the sign is multilingual, and one of the languages is given visual dominance over the other (i.e. through a larger font size or bolding). The four characters following the second underscore denote which languages are on the sign, with the options corresponding to the three most common languages (Finnish, Swedish and English) along with an "other" classifier. These were ordered based on their organisation on the sign, with priority first given top-to-bottom, and second left-to-right.. If a language was not present in the sign, the letter for each absent language would be marked

with an X. The final three characters ('nnn') were reserved for identifying numbers, with the first analysed image of each unique code being numbered '001' and being increased by one for each subsequent sign. Identical signs were counted in a separate column in the spreadsheet. The discrete categories in use can be found in Appendix 1.

Each image file was renamed according to the code for the sign it contained. Image files containing multiple signs were named after the first sign from the left, and each sign in the image was recorded separately in the spreadsheet with a column dedicated to tracking which signs were in which images. If changes were made to the coding system, images were re-evaluated, and the name was changed to match new classifications.

A separate suffix system was derived for collections of near-identical signs and those in semantic assemblages. This system was used to combine signs for analysis purposes, as some signs work in collaboration with each other or are numerous enough without substantive differences between them to be logged individually.

$$_aY(YYY)(nn)$$

'_a' was used to mark the sign belonging to a specific semiotic assemblage, with the 'Y's being replaced with aunique identifier relating to the function of the assemblage. 'nn' were used as a separate numbering system if identical assemblages or collections appeared in multiple distinct locations.

This coding system was mainly used to ensure I remained vigilant during the data-collection process and carries little value in terms of data presentation, and as such, will not be presented during the study.

3.3 Further fieldwork: analysis via notetaking

After processing the photograph data and establishing the coding mechanism (described in 3.2) for images, certain areas where photography was not allowed (many areas in the urban workshop such as gaming spaces on the second floor as well as the drop-in computers on the first floor), or more commonly, areas where near-identical signs were so numerous that images would be difficult to distinguish from each other (for example bookshelves, garbage cans), were recorded via notetaking. This consisted of roughly marking down the areas the signs appeared in on a digital map of the floor and making an entry for the signs in the Excel spreadsheet according to the way signs analysed from photographs were coded. This included

features not apparent from the code, such as languages other than Finnish, English and Swedish. The suffix system for near-identical signs was also used (described in 3.2). The 52 further images taken were largely done during the coding and notetaking process in areas where photography was allowed, either due to noted changes or to document a sign that would be useful to have recorded. Further observations about trends and deviations from the patterns established through previous observation during fieldwork in the signage were written down in a note-taking app.

Digital screens were also largely documented via observation and note-taking. This was preferred mainly due to the location of most screens being in busy paths of travel. Additionally, the bright surroundings and refresh rate of the screens often caused poor viewing angles and a flicker effect in images. Each screen was observed, and the coding and note-taking process that has been previously described was used for each image visible on each screen. Screens were observed until the coding and note-taking process for each image had been completed, along with one additional observation of each image to verify the code and notes were correct and comprehensive. Photos of representative examples were taken intermittently from some screens to clarify analysis, though due to the aforementioned quality issues, these will not be presented in the study.

The total number of signs analysed is shown in Table 1. Operators grouped under “other” include non-commercial operators such as the EU, the City of Helsinki, Oiva and the Helsinki Art Museum, or commercial operators with very limited signs and space allocated to them, such as the hearing loop company Qlu (2 small signs) or the poetry critique website Runografi (3 small signs).

Number of signs	*Library*	*Cafés*	*Cinema*	*Other*	*Total*
Photographs	275	27	11	40	**353**
Coding + Notes	1120	14	2	13	**1149**
Digital Signs	68	20	5	14	**107**
Total	**1447**	**61**	**18**	**67**	**1609**

Table 1. Number of signs recorded in Oodi with each data collection method according to operators responsible for the signs. The large number of identical or near-identical signs on the third floor contributes to the large number of signs collected via notetaking.

All signs were simultaneously analysed with the insights gained from the processing of photographs in mind. A frame analysis model by Kallen (2010) was initially used as the starting point for conceptualising spaces in the library, though only *portals* and *the wall* remained relevant for the final analysis, and each will be discussed when relevant. Other

categorisations were derived from the data during the analysis procedure based on the data analysis based on the principles of frame analysis (Goffman 1974). Space in the library was analysed utilising Oldenburg's definition of *third spaces* (1989) and working with Malinowski and Dubreil's definition of linguistic landscapes as "the symbolic construction of the public space by means of linguistic codes" (2019: 1). In this way, the functionality and social implications of signage could be considered on a wider scale. Materiality of signs was analysed based on principles discussed in Scollon and Scollon (2003).

3.4 Ethical considerations and limitations

Potential ethical issues regarding the study are limited. All signs photographed were in spaces that were open to the public at the time of data collection. Photographs were not taken in areas where signs prohibiting photography were present. Photographs were taken in such a manner that would minimise the amount of people visible in them, with only wide images representing the distribution of signage in the space containing people, and any traces of people were cropped out, blurred or blocked out via an image editing program before data was processed further. Data collection via photography was done during the least busy hours in the library to ensure other visitors would not be disturbed.

Limitations of the study include the primarily synchronic nature of the data collection, which does not cover for changes in the linguistic landscape of Oodi over time. This is especially true for digital screens, the content of which can be changed quickly and be more static during certain days than others. With the project also being a case study of a particularly new and large-scale library, it is not representative of all libraries in Helsinki or Finland more broadly, and certainly not libraries globally. I chose not to collect language policy documents from Oodi or the Culture and Leisure Division of the City of Helsinki due to the complex process of acquisition and limited value they would provide to the project given the focus of the analysis. This study also does not cover practices regarding management of the linguistic landscape such as the management experiences of library staff. Audioscapes along with the perspectives and practices of visitors are also not within the scope of this project.

4 Analysis

In this chapter I will go over the results of the data analysis. I will first provide a brief quantitative overview of the signs analysed, before going into qualitative analysis of the signs in the subsections. The quantitative overview will cover the number of languages and multilingual signs in the library and on each floor.

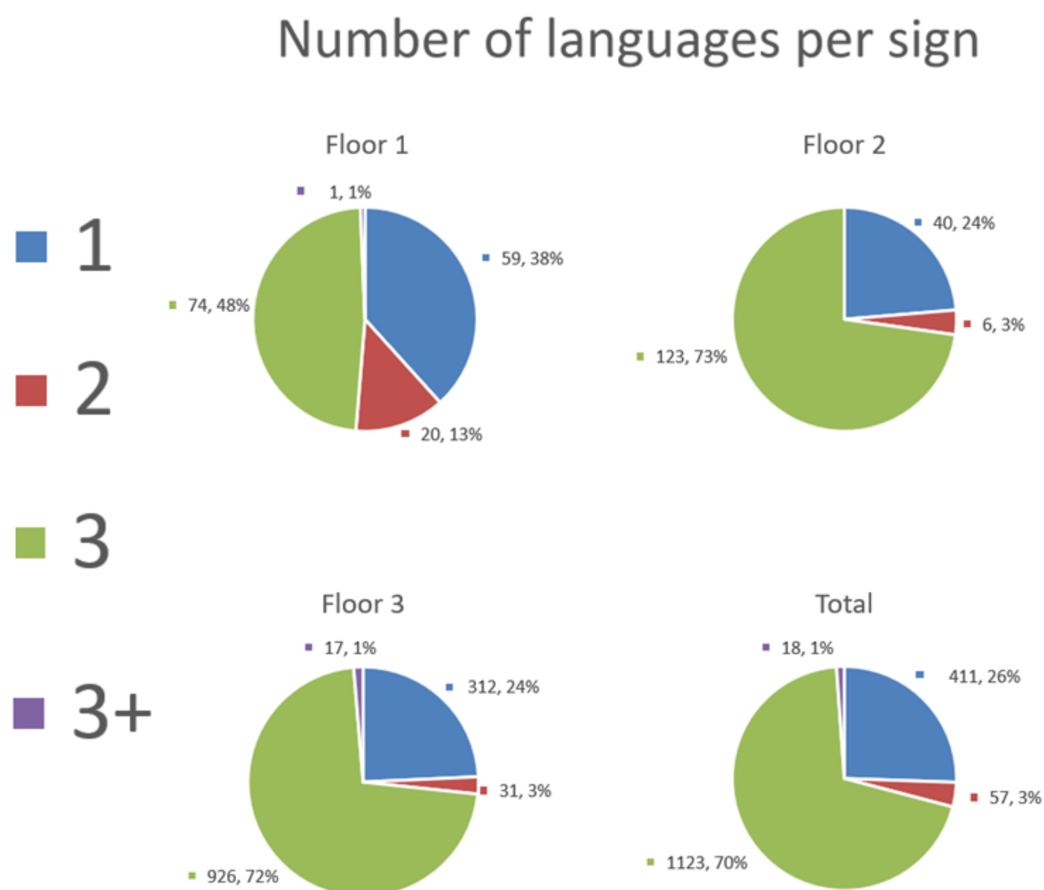

Figure 1. Pie charts showing the number of languages on each sign, per floor and overall.

The total number of signs recorded was 1609, with 1198 multilingual signs and 411 monolingual signs, as can be seen in Figure 2. A majority of the signs (1123) in the library were trilingual, and Finnish, Swedish and English were by far the most common languages on signs, as can be seen from Table 2, with Finnish being placed first, followed by Swedish and finally English with one exception of a sign placing English after Finnish over Swedish. Monolingual signs were also numerous, totalling to 411, while bilingual signs were somewhat

rare, only making up 57 signs. 18 signs contained more than three languages, with the highest number recorded on a singular sign being 11.

Floor	*Number of Signs*	*contain Finnish*	*contain Swedish*	*contain English*
1	154	142 (92%)	85 (55%)	93 (60%)
2	169	160 (95%)	130 (77%)	130 (77%)
3	1286	1170 (91%)	1000 (78%)	947 (74%)
TOTAL	**1609**	**1472 (91%)**	**1215 (76%)**	**1170 (73%)**

Table 2. The number and percentage of signs on each floor containing Finnish, Swedish and English respectively

The majority of signs containing languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English (categorised henceforth as "other languages", as it was categorised in library signage) were found on the third floor (mainly discussed in sections 4.3 and 4.4 along with subsection 4.6.3). Two examples were found on the first floor (discussed in section 4.5 and subsection 4.3.2), while no signs containing languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English were identified on the second floor. A total of 26 languages were identified, including one sign with three Sámi languages and two signs with two explicitly labelled varieties of Kurdish, Kurmanji and Sorani . The 23 "other languages" were found on a total of 70 signs, which comes out to approximately 4,3% of all signs, and only 15 of them were monolingual. Multilingual signs with other languages tended to place said other language first, followed by Finnish and then Swedish. Three exceptions to this trend included a digital greeting graphic in 8 languages which placed Finnish, Swedish and English above the five others, one bilingual Finnish and French sign which used Finnish first, and signs naming plants on the third floor which placed the Finnish name above Latin.

Language use in signs largely followed grammatical and spelling conventions, with lexical errors noted in only two signs. All languages could be identified through context clues or understanding of the script, with most signs not in Finnish, Swedish and English explicitly listing the language being used. In addition to this, only one case of language mixing was identified (discussed in section 4.6). Visual dominance via bolding or larger font sizes for one language over others was identified in 623 multilingual signs. 590 or nearly 94% of these signs were small topic signs (referred to hereafter as label-signs, discussed in section 4.3.1) on bookshelves, which if discounted would only leave 33 other multilingual signs with visual dominance given to one language. In 20 cases, the visually dominant language was Finnish,

with one example being found for Russian, French, Ukrainian, Arabic, Turkish, Chinese, Farsi and Nepalese along with two for Kurdish and three for English. Of these, only English, Ukrainian, Russian and French were not dominant on the aforementioned label-signs.

Language in sign	Monolingual	Multilingual	Total
Finnish	282	1197	**1472**
Swedish	58	1157	**1215**
English	56	1114	**1170**
Northern Sàmi	0	1	**1**
Inari Sámi	0	1	**1**
Skolt Sámi	0	1	**1**
Russian	5	14	**19**
Somali	0	6	**6**
Arabic	0	6	**6**
Estonian	2	7	**9**
Chinese	0	6	**6**
Farsi	0	6	**6**
Kurdish*	0	7	**7**
Ukrainian	0	8	**8**
French	2	6	**8**
German	3	6	**9**
Danish	0	4	**4**
Norwegian	0	4	**4**
Italian	1	4	**5**
Spanish	1	2	**3**
Turkish	0	7	**7**
Dari	0	2	**2**
Vietnamese	0	6	**6**
Japanese	1	6	**7**
Nepalese	0	2	**2**
Latin	0	5	**5**

Table 3. The number of signs containing text in each of the identified languages, separated into monolingual and multilingual signs.

The following sections present the qualitative analysis of the signs and are organised according to the various spaces and sign types identified during data collection and processing. Section 4.1 will go over the naming schemes in the library, while section 4.2 will

cover entrances, paths of travel between floors such as escalators and elevators as well as signs helping visitors navigate the library. Section 4.3 will discuss signage on bookshelves. Section 4.4 goes over materiality and permanence of signs in the library, and Section 4.5 will cover digital signage. The chapter concludes with section 4.6 contains discussions of signage produced by other operators.

4.1 Naming schemes

This section will discuss naming schemes for spaces in the library. I will begin with general trends and then progress through library-operated spaces before comparing them to other operators.

In general, names for spaces in the library were descriptive and available in three languages – Finnish, Swedish and English (examples visible in image 3). Some spaces had proper names, where the general trend was to have a name in Finnish with a translation into Swedish and use the Finnish name in English. Examples of these include Maijansali (Maijasalen in Swedish), Kuutio (Kuben in Swedish) and Oodi (Ode in Swedish). There are however numerous exceptions to this trend. The third floor contains two spaces which are only given a proper name in Finnish – playground Loru and the Saarikoski rug. In both cases, the Finnish name is used in all three languages, while the descriptor of playground or rug is translated.

Another exception is the learning space Aura, where the proper name has the same meaning in all three languages, although it also refers to plough in Finnish. Nevertheless, a conclusive distinction cannot be made about what language the proper name is in, and the descriptor is translated in all three cases. One exception to the Finnish name trend is the lofted area of the first floor containing the youth space. Until late 2020, the space was referred to as Brygga (Swedish for “pier”) and functioned as a public event and workshop space for the Urban Environment Division. After conversion into a youth space, maps no longer refer to it by the proper name, instead using the descriptive “Oodi’s youth space” or referring to it as a loft. The metal Brygga sign still remains over the entrance to the space, as is visible in Figure 4. The only space with proper names in three languages is The Citizens’ Balcony, which has a separate name in Finnish, Swedish and English.

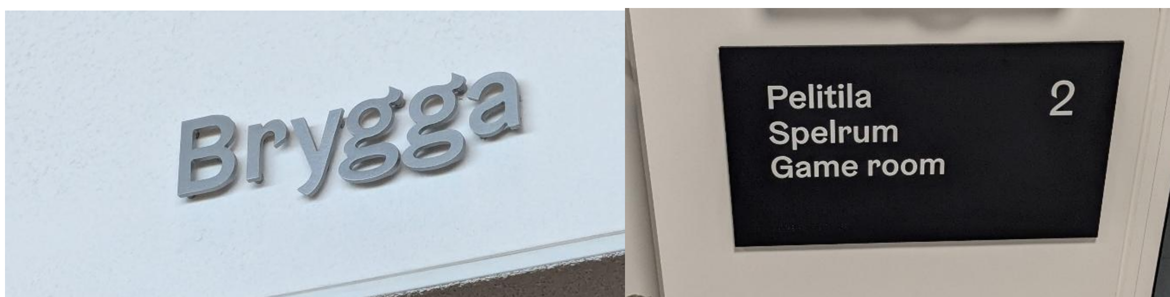

Image 1. Photograph on the left contains the “Brygga” sign over the entrance to the youth space. Photograph on the right contains the sign outside game room 2.

Other operators do net seem to be compelled to follow the naming practices of the library. For example, the restaurant and café are referred to as restaurang Oodi and Kafé Oodi in Swedish, thus only using the Finnish name for the building. The EU-operated Europa Experience differed noticeably from the English name in Finnish and Swedish, which instead utilised the name of the library (EU@Oodi in Finnish and EU@Oden in Swedish). Unlike the food establishments, it used the Swedish name if the library, which is also conjugated into the singular definite case to follow Swedish grammar rules. The cinema, which was named Kino Regina, remained the same in all languages. The city-operated immigration and civic service advice desk named Helsinki-info, followed general naming trends in the library more closely, not distinguishing between Finnish and English but using the Swedish name for the city (Helsingfors-info) in their signage.

4.2 Portals

Kallen (2010: 43) defines portals as “points that provide exits and entrances from the immediate linguistic and physical environment to environments elsewhere.” In this section I will go over signs falling under said definition. I will begin with entrances to the library, followed by paths of travel between floors and maps before finally discussing other signage helping visitors navigate through the library.

The library has three entrances on the first floor, with one on each of the southern, western and northern sides of the building. Each of these entrances contained an identical trilingual decal, listing the title of the library along with opening hours, followed by the Oodi logo and a bilingual Helsinki logo. The southern entrance (towards Eero Erkon katu) also had a digital screen facing outward with greetings and information (which will be discussed in section 4.5).

The main paths of travel between the three floors are two sets of elevators, an escalator along the eastern edge of the building and a dual spiral staircase. The staircase does not contain any signage informing users about what is contained on each floor, but it does contain artwork which will be discussed in subsection 4.6.3. Both sets of elevators on each floor contained similar signage, with a three-floor trilingual map on one side, and a monolingual Finnish list of facilities on each floor between elevators. One set also contained a staff-only elevator, which was marked both on the doors and next to the elevator call button.

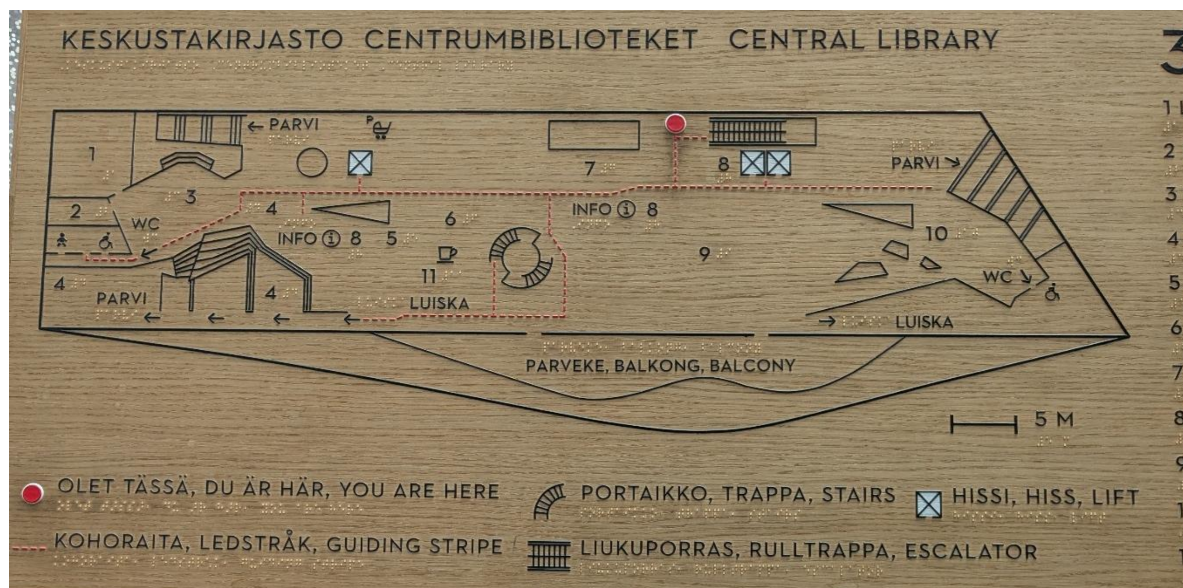

Image 2. Half of the tactile floor map from the third floor, containing the map area with tactile bumps for the guiding stripes and the location of the map. Not pictured is a trilingual legend towards the right.

The escalators contained no signage, but next to the entrance/exit point on each floor was a tactile floor map which can be seen in image 3. These maps were fully trilingual and also contained braille in all three languages for visually impaired visitors, along with a raised section highlighting where guiding stripes lead to. The first floor contained little signage pointing towards the location of various services, with 13 signs noted as specifically assisting navigation. There were two black signs with fluorescent lights highlighting the locations of the restaurant and Maijansali auditorium, though only the latter used text, which only read Maija. A tall stand sign next to the book return window was pointed towards the southern entrance. The layout is fairly straightforward, with service desks near one entrance and the book return across from the western entrance.

The third floor did not include many signs pointing towards specific areas, though there were stands in front of the escalator and elevators pointing towards the areas for different types of

content (image 9 in section 4.4). Navigation was mainly assisted by numerous shelftop topic signs (discussed in more detail in subsection 4.3.1), and tall stand signs highlighting the position of checkout machines. While there was a total of 158 signs meant to assist navigation, 145 of them were these shelftop signs, leaving only 13 other types of portal-related signs. A handful of bookshelves contained maps at the ends of them showing which shelves contained what type of books, but these were quite small and not located in areas where they would be obviously apparent. Most signs meant for navigation were trilingual, other than the monolingual signs between elevators and some shelftop signs in the fiction and "other languages" sections.

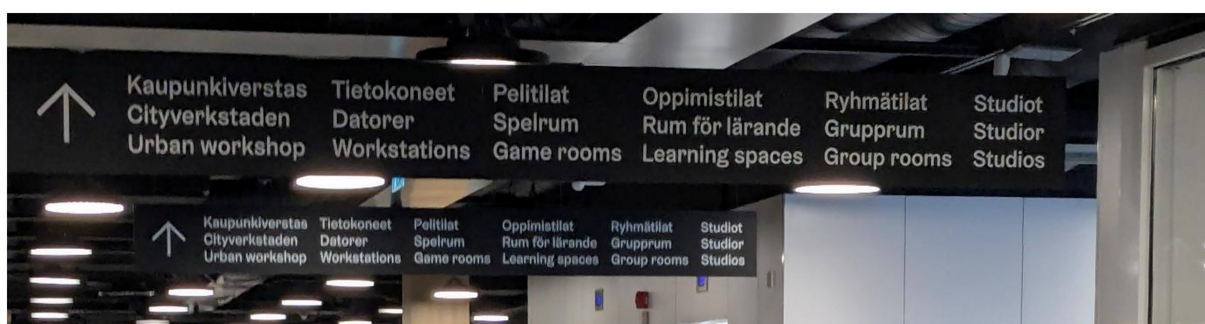

Image 3. Ceiling signs pointing towards different areas on the second floor.

The second floor contained noticeably more signage helping visitors navigate around in relation to the total amount of signage, at 49 signs, which is likely due to the more closed-off architecture and number of spaces. There were numerous labels on doors noting the names or functions of different areas and signs both on walls and hanging from the ceiling pointing towards different spaces (Image 3). These signs and labels were trilingual in Finnish, Swedish and English, unless a space did not have a name in one of the languages.

4.3 Bookshelves

The vast majority of bookshelves in Oodi are located on the third floor, with only a small handful being placed near exits on the first floor. Bookshelves on the third floor are dual-sided, with most containing at least one sign on top of the shelf denoting the contents, and more specific signage at both ends of each shelf containing a shelf code and examples of what the shelf contains. I will first go over the signage of bookshelves on the third floor in subsection 4.2.1, starting with the large fiction and non-fiction sections before discussing relevant examples from smaller areas. In section 4.2.2, I will cover the bookshelves located on the first floor.

4.3.1 Third floor library space

The vast majority of signage on the third floor were attached to bookshelves. To effectively go over the signage for the bookshelves on the third floor, signs were classified into unique types. These types are visible in the following figure:

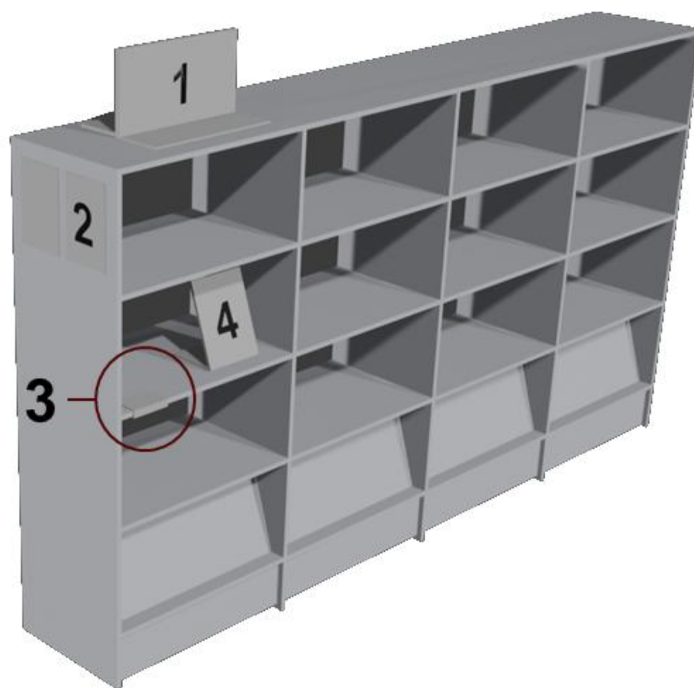

Image 4. An approximate 3D model of the bookshelves on the third floor, with the four primary sign types highlighted.

Top-signs (1) are placed on top of the bookshelves and contain broad categories of the type of books contained in said bookshelf. These signs are L-shaped and only contain text on one side, but were always placed in pairs to look double-sided. End-signs (2; visible in images 6 7) are found at both ends of each bookshelf, and contain more detailed information about the content of each shelf, along with a shelf code to make finding the books you are looking for easier. Label-signs (3; visible in Image 5) are small signs placed on individual shelves on the bookshelf, which are more detailed about the content of each section of the bookshelves. The final type are stand-signs (4; visible in image 7), which were plastic stands often taking up nearly half of a shelf section. Shelves are dual-sided which will be distinguished between by using the term *side* when necessary. In addition to bookshelves, some books were placed on island-style tables, which instead utilised a different type of stand-sign (image 8).

Signage in the fiction section was monolingual. Shelves were organised alphabetically by the author's last name, and books in different languages were separated into sections of their own. Top-signs and end-signs aligned with the language of the books in the shelf. Shelves with books in Finnish only had signage in Finnish, and the same was true for shelves with books in English. One minor exception occurred at the border between literature in Finnish and Swedish, where one side was dedicated to Swedish and the other to Finnish, and while the end-signs reflected this, both top-signs used the Finnish "Kaunokirjallisuus." While the vast majority of the top-signs are identical on both sides, there are cases where they vary or are left blank on one side.

In distinct contrast to the monolingualism in the fiction section were the reservation shelves and the non-fiction area, both of which were fully trilingual. All end- and top-signs in these sections are in Finnish, Swedish, and English, in said order, and no language is given visual dominance via other means. End-signs were always fully trilingual, while top-signs would combine languages if the word was identical, as was the case for the history section where the sign read "Historia" and "History", thus not distinguishing between Finnish and Swedish.

Label-signs were numerous, totalling 681 small individual signs which followed the pattern of trilingual for non-fiction and monolingual for fiction. Label-signs seemed less adaptable than other sign types – no bilingual signs were found, and trilingual signs did not omit additional versions if there was no distinction between a word in the languages, as can be seen in image 5.

Image 5. Trilingual label-sign in the sheet music section reading "Piano" in three languages.

Text on all monolingual label-signs was bolded, but the bolding was reserved only for the first line on trilingual signs. As the sequence of languages was always Finnish-Swedish-English, this gave Finnish visual dominance over the others in addition to the preferential ordering. All such signs in the non-fiction section were trilingual, even if no books in one or two of the languages could be observed in the shelf.

The section containing young adult literature and multimedia items such as movies and graphic novels sheds more light on the monolingualism principle in the fiction section. Top-signs varied in the languages used, varying between mono and trilingual depending on the availability of items in the category. End-signs were more detailed – for example, while the top-signs for young adult literature were fully trilingual, end-signs varied based on the contents of each shelf, as can be seen in image 6. Label-signs on the individual shelves themselves generally followed the pattern of fiction and non-fiction of being monolingual for fiction and trilingual for non-fiction.

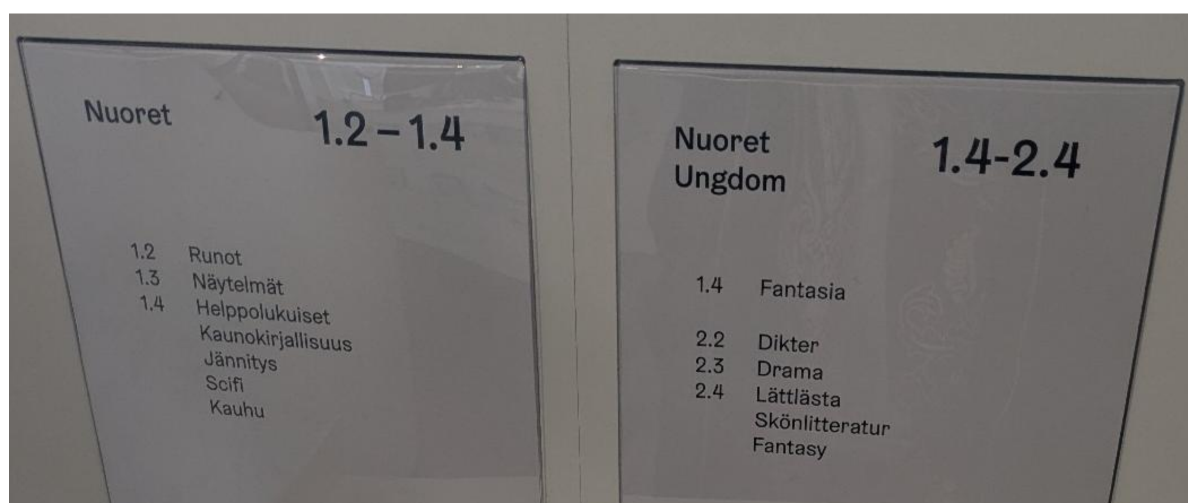

Image 6. End-signs in the young adult section. The sign on the left is monolingual Finnish, while the sign on the right is bilingual containing both Finnish and Swedish.

Monolingual label-signs in languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English were also noted, such as signs containing French, Spanish, Italian, German and Russian in the shelves for comic books and graphic novels. These languages were not present on the sign at the end of the shelf in this section. Another slight inconsistency was noted in the board games section, where the top-sign was only in Finnish, while a sign painted onto the bookshelf instructing visitors to only take one game at a time was in Finnish, Swedish and English. At one end of each shelf was a cart for recent returns, all of which were labelled in line with the language used for the shelves – monolingual for monolingual shelves, bilingual for bilingual shelves, and trilingual for trilingual shelves, except for one unlabelled cart in the non-fiction section, and one cart with English labels in front of a shelf for books in Swedish. While these carts could easily be moved, no changes in cart locations were observed during fieldwork.

Signage for books in languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English varied noticeably more. One example is Sámi, which was placed at one end of the Finnish fiction section near

the escalator. While there is a top-sign noting the location of literature in three Sámi languages, the end-signs do not mention the presence of literature in Sámi. Most books in other languages are placed in separate sections, with two dedicated shelves in the youth literature section and a separate section behind the non-fiction section containing both fiction and non-fiction for adults. In these shelves, the end-sign noted which languages were present in each shelf (image 7).

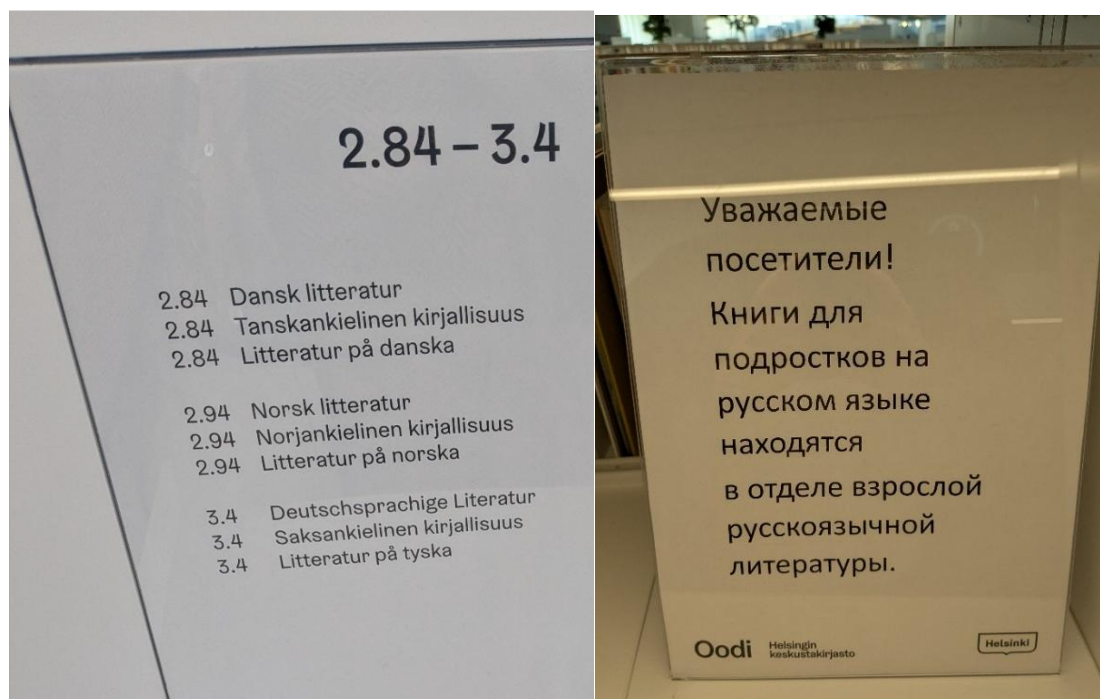

Image 7. Left photograph contains a multilingual end-sign on a shelf containing books in Danish, Norwegian and German. Right photograph contains a stand-sign containing text in Russian with monolingual Finnish Oodi and Helsinki branding at the bottom.

These signs were trilingual, first using the language that the books were in, followed by the same information in Finnish and Swedish. If a shelf contained books in multiple languages, these were listed subsequently on the same sign, with each language having Finnish and Swedish translations below them. Shelves for books in Estonian, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian were given monolingual top-signs in the respective languages. Of these, Italian and Spanish share a shelf and shared a top-sign, and one side of the shelves labelled as German in the top-sign also contained books in Danish and Norwegian, which was acknowledged in the end-sign, though label-signs were only found for Danish and Norwegian.

The shelf containing books in German showed some inconsistencies in the language use. The top-signs highlighting the location of books in German read “Bücher auf Deutsch” (Books in German), whilethree of the four end-signs instead read “Deutschsprachige Literatur”

(Literature in German). The latter option was the version used in the youth literature section, along with the side containing only books in German. The side of the shelf also containing books in Norwegian and Danish varied, with one end-sign using “Deutschsprachige Literatur” (Seen in image 7) and the other “Bücher auf Deutsch.” The Finnish and Swedish versions of the signs did not differ from each other, nor did the shelf code. Examination of the books on the shelves did not suggest the distinction was between fiction and non-fiction.

Ukrainian, Turkish, Arabic, Farsi, Dari, Kurdish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Nepalese and Somali were located in shelves with a trilingual Finnish-Swedish-English “other languages” top-sign, with the multilingual end-signs containing information on what languages can be found on each shelf. Use of label-signs was somewhat inconsistent and showed inaccuracies in the end-signs as well. The shelf dedicated to Turkish, Arabic, Farsi and Dari did not contain a label-sign for Dari like it did for the other languages, while the shelf dedicated to Kurdish and Chinese in fact distinguished between the Kurmanji and Sorani varieties of Kurdish via label-signs. This latter shelf also contained a label-sign with literature in Vietnamese, which the end signs placed on the opposite side.

Shelves for books not in Finnish, Swedish or English in the children’s section all used the trilingual “other languages” top-signs, with the same principle being used for signs at the end of the shelf. One shelf was dedicated to books in Russian, which also contained a mostly monolingual stand-sign in Russian (image 7) which read that some books had been moved to the shelves in the adult section. While the text itself was fully in Russian, the branding at the bottom of the page contained the title of the library in Finnish.

While Ukrainian literature was in a shelf labelled “other languages” in the top-sign, the end-signs shelf revealed that the shelf did not contain books in any other languages, using the same format as other signs in the area. The return cart in front of the shelf also contained a sign in Finnish noting it was for Russian non-fiction. Next to the shelf was a table containing selected books in Ukrainian with a sign of its own (image 8), first using Finnish, Swedish and English to denote the contents of the table, followed by visually dominant “Українська література.” The bottom of the sign only contains the Finnish title and name of the library, along with the monolingual Helsinki logo.

Image 8. Photograph on the left contains a tabletop stand-sign highlighting books in Ukrainian. Photograph on the right contains a tabletop stand-sign highlighting librarian recommendations.

The most varied group of signs in terms of language choice, order and visual dominance were similar types of stand signs. These signs were often located on bookshelves or tables containing books, and either advertised events or were recommendations by library staff. Figure X contains an example of a staff recommendation with a mistranslation into English, where the Finnish and Swedish words for “delicacies” have been turned into “dishes” in English. The signs tended to have consistent visual elements, such as font choices, logo sizes and image borders, suggesting there are templates sign producers would use. Based on the variance of these stand-signs, it is likely librarians have a significant amount of freedom regarding the use of templates for these types of signs. Such signs also varied noticeably between visits, suggesting they are not designed for long-term use.

4.3.2 First floor entrance area

The first floor contains three distinct types of bookshelves, two near the entrance on Eero Erkon katu and one next to the entrance on Kansalaistori square. The first is a selection of up to four bestseller and paperback shelves placed on top of robot docking stations. Each shelf has a trilingual decal at the end, noting the contents of the shelf and encouraging visitors to borrow the books. This encouragement varied between languages, with the Finnish “Lainaa tästä” (borrow from here) referring to the location of the books, the Swedish “Låna gärna” (feel free to borrow) focusing on the readiness of the visitor to borrow a book, and the English

version using wordplay with the phrase “Check me out”, working as both an invitation to peruse the books on the shelves and borrow books by checking them out. One shelf contained a small, monolingual Finnish sticker reading “Älä poista” (Don’t remove) in all caps, the function of which was unclear. The robot docking stations also include a trilingual warning label,

The second type of bookshelf was a table containing more paperbacks which cannot be reserved ahead of time. Signage here follows the conventions of the fiction section on floor 3, with replaceable stand-signs such as the ones in image 8 containing information about the contents of the table along with the borrowing time and inability to reserve said books. The library logo at the bottom of the sign matched the language of the sign itself.

One table was placed separately from the others near the entrance to Kansalaistori square. shelf is seemingly used for themed selection of books, though the data collection found it is not always labelled. During initial data collection the shelf was unlabelled, but during a subsequent visit it contained a staff recommendation sign celebrating International Francophonie Day. The day was presented first in French and then in Finnish, with other parts of the sign being monolingual Finnish. The table continued to be unlabelled on subsequent visits.

4.4 Sign materiality and permanence

This section will also cover physical signage that was not categorised into any of the previous three sections and could not be neatly categorised into distinct groups that would warrant a section of their own. As such signs were numerous enough to warrant discussion, they will be presented through the lens of materiality. Such signage was either advertising events unrelated to books, requesting feedback, providing instructions for behaviour or the use of tools and services, or warning against spending time in certain places.

The materiality of signs was not particularly diverse. The vast majority of signs were either printed onto paper and placed into various types of protective plastic (images in subsection 4.3.1 and image 9), or decals on walls or stands (image 9). Decals tended to provide information about the services that were available in the area or aided with navigation, while paper signs oftentimes contained information about events or specific instructions for the use of services or visitor behaviour, such as prohibiting photography. This means that most of the signage in the library could either be changed out relatively easily.

While paper signs could be conceived of as relatively transient and easy to remove and edit, many of these signs seemed to be relatively fixed in their position, with the exception of the stand-signs exemplified in image 8, which varied greatly between visits. Changes in stand-signs such as the one in image 7 were not noticed during data collection, suggesting these are preferred for more permanent solutions than the stand-signs in images X and X.

Even small stand-signs such as ones on the sewing area on the second floor prohibiting photography and instructing visitors to not disturb anyone using the machines remained in largely the same spots between visits. Similarly, no changes were noted in any of the signs related to bookshelves, though these were not rigorously checked between visits. The stand-signs, end-signs and label-signs are all made of paper and could be exchanged relatively easily if need be.

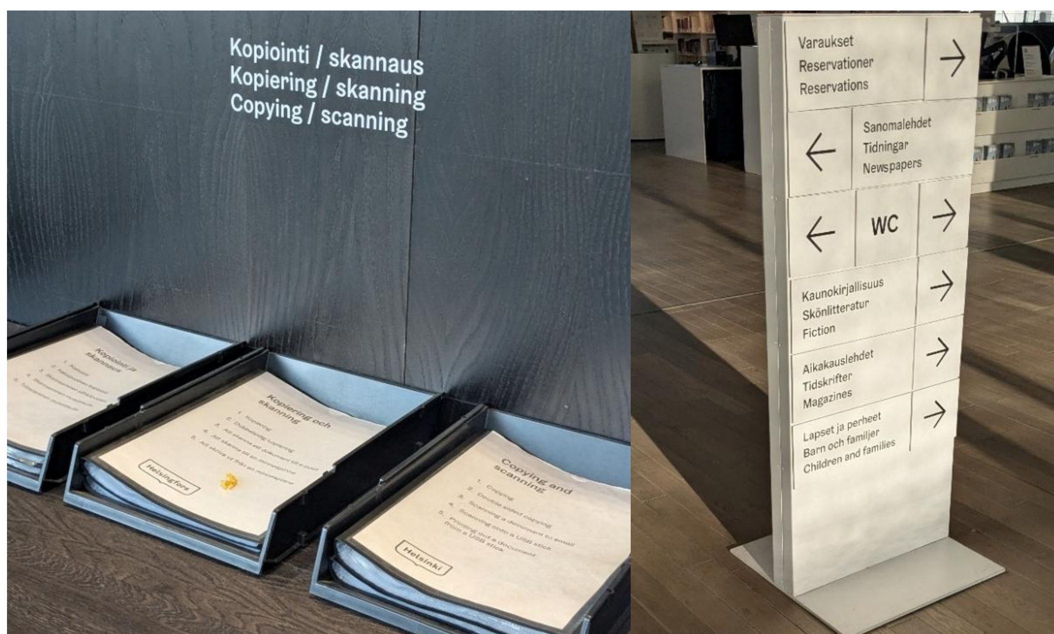

Image 9. Image on the left is from the copying area on the first floor, containing a trilingual decal on the wall denoting the function of the area and monolingual instructions in binders. Image on the right contains a trilingual navigation sign from the third floor.

Decals are a notably more permanent solution to producing signage than paper, as removing a decal and replacing it would likely take some amount of effort. However, most of the signage produced via decals in Oodi would be relatively easy to edit. If edits need to be made, most of the surfaces these decals are placed on are either black or white, and a sticker could feasibly be produced to make an edit without removing the decal. One such case was noted on the first floor, with a black sticker with white text on the wall informing visitors what days the cinema holds screenings, suggesting a change in schedules. In addition, many of the decals in Oodi

were not placed on permanently affixed surfaces. For example, the navigation sign visible in image 9 is not mechanically attached to anything and could be easily moved if someone decided it should be. The individual arrows and text sections are also printed onto separate slabs, which have then been attached to the stand and could likely be replaced should the layout of the floor change without needing to produce a completely new sign. This suggests signage has been produced with a relatively high amount of adaptability in mind. Much like with paper signs, changes in decal signs were minimal during data collection.

Some decal signs were deemed seasonal due to being materially robust enough to be permanent, but functionally not needed at all times. One example of this is the chair in image 10 meant for removing shoe spikes placed at the entrance to the library during wintertime, with a supplementary sign explaining why removing shoe spikes is necessary. These were removed from the lobby and the other two floors relatively quickly after the snow melted in springtime. Other examples of such signage were warnings about construction work or non-functional elevators, which were large and robust enough to not have been produced in a rush, while simultaneously being easily available when needed.

Image 10. A chair instructing visitors to remove shoe spikes, along with a tall sign prohibiting the use of shoe spikes visually and noting the floor on the 3rd level is wooden.

The most permanent signage was related to portals (discussed in section 4.2). Most of the maps showing the layout of the floors were printed onto large wooden slabs (such as the tactile map in image 2) and attached to the floor or walls very robustly. Similarly, a neon sign

highlighting the youth area or Maijansali as well as the metal signs noting the locations of Brygga (image 1) and the Europa Experience on the first floor would likely be costly and laborious to replace and remove. This may be one potential reason the Brygga sign remained even after the services on the balcony were changed. Another surprisingly robust type of signage were garbage cans, all of which were made of metal and used the same type of decals as other signage.

The consistent font and colour choices suggest that there are, at the very least, style guides that library staff follow when producing signage. This would likely make production of new signage relatively straightforward and ensure library staff can easily manage the linguistic landscape. There is a notable lack of signage produced by any external parties who do not occupy permanent space in the library, suggesting that the management of the linguistic landscape is in fact, fairly rigorous. This is supported by the relatively good condition of all signage, with the only cases of damage or wear noticed were one decal in the magazine section being slightly damaged (the bottom half of the letter ‘g’ was missing) and the plastic casing for one label-sign being slightly cracked (visible in image 5).

4.5 Digital screens

Data collection for digital screens was done during one day to ensure some degree of standardisation regarding the number of digital signs in the library. Of the 107 digital signs analysed, a vast majority (92) were on large, integrated vertical screens which flipped through a variety of images. Notably, slightly over half of the digital signs (56) were monolingual. Only one digital sign contained languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English. This was a screen pointing out of the southern entrance which read “welcome to the library” in Finnish, Swedish, English, Russian, Estonian, Arabic, Somali and Sorani Kurdish. Kurdish is the tenth most commonly spoken language in Helsinki, while the other seven languages on the sign make up the seven most common.

Many of the digital signs were located near entrance areas to floors. The third floor contained only one such sign, which scrolled through upcoming events on the Saarikoski rug. During data collection, all of the upcoming events on the screen were in Finnish. A similar trend of events being advertised only in Finnish extended to most other screens, such as one near the western entrance and three screens advertising events on the second floor. One graphic was recorded on both the first and second floor advertising events in English. All event advertisements were monolingual, except one with an English title and Finnish description.

One screen on the second floor was dedicated to showcasing the artwork that has been relocated to Oodi from the Helsinki Art Museum. The screen rotated through graphics showcasing the artworks along with a graphic containing a QR-code, which links to further information on the artworks. The link to further information was trilingual in Finnish, Swedish and English. Much like with events, all of the eight graphics providing information about the specific artworks were only observed in Finnish.

Information about spaces and instructions for behaviour tended to be presented trilingually. Digital signs would either contain the information in Finnish, Swedish and English, or cycle through monolingual signs in each of the languages consecutively. Generally, no language was given visual dominance over others. The exceptions were two screens, one on the first and second floor, both of which contained a graphic with facts and figures about Oodi. The screen on the first floor displayed the information in three languages, with Finnish given visual dominance via bolding of the font, while the screen on the second floor contained the information only in English. One notable exception to the trilingual cycle was an advertisement for the national accessibility library Celia, which only had graphics in Finnish and Swedish.

Other types of digital signs included a projected screen onto the wall of the lofted youth space in the first floor lobby area, a large tv-screen on the Saarikoski rug, and digital screens next to bookable spaces on the second floor. The projected screen contained some purely visual materials, but also had a large four-point code of conduct for visitors of the library and an advertisement for the "book heaven" on the third floor, both of which cycled through Finnish, Swedish and English. Screens on the second floor next to bookable spaces contained instructions for how to reserve each of the spaces in Finnish.

The screen on the Saarikoski rug itself was more akin to a large TV, and contained information regarding the contents of the screen in Finnish, Swedish and English along with brief advertisements of the events. The screen was only turned on at the time of one visit during the data collection period, and remained off on all other occasions it was observed. Finnish was given significant visual dominance through a noticeably larger font size for the information about the contents of the screen, and the events being advertised were all in Finnish. The space divider behind the screen contained the trilingual title of the library, along with the bilingual name and Helsinki logo.

The synchronic nature of the data collection regarding digital screens may have led to the over- or underrepresentation of specific languages, as the events being organised during the time of data collection may have weighted the presence of Finnish. The form used to apply for open events is available in Finnish, Swedish and English, so it is possible more linguistically diverse events would have been organised and advertised at a different time. This assumption is supported by the trilingual information screen and space divider by the Saarikoski rug and the presence of multilingual physical event advertisements (mentioned in section 4.4). Determining the amount of events held in different languages at different times of the year and the share of advertisement events in each language receive on these screens is outside the scope of this study.

4.6 Other operators

This section will cover signage produced by other operators in Oodi. The main non-library operators in Oodi are the Kino Regina cinema operated by the National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI) discussed in subsection 4.6.1, and a commercial restaurant and café operated by Food&Co discussed in subsection 4.6.3. Artwork in the library is managed by the Helsinki Art Museum and will be covered in subsection 4.6.2. There were also a handful of signs produced by the hearing loop company Qlu (1 trilingual map, 1 bilingual Finnish and Swedish sticker) and the poetry critique website Runografi (3 small monolingual Finnish signs on a bookshelf), but these signs were not easily visible and as such, do not warrant much analysis. The library also contains the Europa Experience operated by the EU. The 12 physical signs observed for the Europa experience were all trilingual, while all 5 signs on the digital screen outside were monolingual Finnish.

The City of Helsinki also operates a digital support service point along with the Helsinki-info desk. It is, however, difficult to accurately distinguish signage produced by the library and other city operators, and it is unclear whether the employees are employed by the library, so analysis of these will be limited. Much of the advertising for these services was in Finnish, along with the signage surrounding the feedback terminal for Helsinki-info. One of the banners for Helsinki-info did provide the only case of language mixing identified in the library with a sign promoting language assistance seen in image 11.

Image 11. Banner for Helsinki-info utilising language mixing.

4.6.1 Kino Regina / KAVI

Kino Regina is located on the first floor near the northern entrance and is relatively difficult to spot unless standing in the restaurant area. Signage for the cinema is very limited, with only 16 signs found in total, of which 14 were monolingual Finnish. The bilingual signs consisted of a bilingual Finnish and Swedish sign highlighting the location of the ticket booth (figure X), and a trilingual sign in the ticket booth informing visitors it will be opened 30 minutes before the first screening of the day. Most of the signs were either information about screenings, or instructions on behavioural standards in the theatre. There were also two exhibition pieces with signs covering their history, including an old projector and nearly 100-year old seats.

The lack of Swedish in signage is notable since, as according to the KAVI website, the organisation operating the cinema is an agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture that is meant to be a national archive for audiovisual material and promote audiovisual culture. This means it has certain degrees of legal requirements for its operations, and the apparent lack of a policy mandating the use of Swedish, especially for the signs discussing historical paraphernalia, is thus quite surprising. This also makes the absence of English less strange, as the institute is likely more focused on Finnish-speaking residents.

Image 12. Image of the Kino Regina ticket booth while closed, with a bilingual sign labelling the function of the space.

4.6.2 Helsinki Art Museum

All artwork in Oodi is managed by the Helsinki Art Museum (HAM). Signs attributed to HAM totalled 19, and all were at least trilingual. For many of the sculptures found on top of bookshelves on the third floor, there was no description of the piece on any signage surrounding them. The names of the artworks were, however, translated into Finnish, Swedish and English, leading to some pieces such as *Corail* to have a name in four languages. Rugs inspired by icons of Finnish literature had signs placed into shelves, which featured an image of the rug along with lengthy descriptions of the pieces in Finnish, Swedish and English. *Divina Proportione* by Ai Weiwei has a sign explaining the piece nearby that is in six languages – in addition to Finnish, Swedish and English it also had texts in Chinese, Russian and Somali. In this case, the name was not translated into each language.

The dual spiral staircase is also an art project titled *Dedication*. The inner wall of the banisters has 381 words painted on it, which were selected from public submissions on the library website during construction. The entrances to the staircase on each floor contain a trilingual sign containing the names of the artist and the piece along with information on the meaning of the artwork and a link leading to translations of the words. There is a slight inconsistency between languages, with the Finnish version noting the website contains translations in nine

languages, while the Swedish and English sections note translations being available in Swedish/English and nine other languages. The website does have the words available in ten languages, one of them being Finnish, which the phrasing implies would also be a translation.

4.6.3 The restaurant and café

Food&Co operates a combination restaurant/café on the first and another café on the third floor. The restaurant on the first floor extends between the western and northern entrances and has two separate counter areas for the lunch restaurant and café, while the café on the third floor is smaller and centrally located at the western edge of the floor next to one exit to The Citizens' Balcony.

Signage in the third-floor café was notably unvaried. Most of the signage consisted of small stand signs in Finnish and English on tables which noted they were reserved for customers of the café. One table instead had two different small signs also instructing guests to return their dishes to a designated area. Four signs on the counter had similar instructions for customers to not leave their dishes on tables or the counters (Figure X). A piece of tape with an arrow on it had been added to more robust trilingual sign, while the two monolingual Finnish and English signs clipped together seem like they were produced due to non-compliance with the policy. Three signs warned customers against filling up their water bottles at the tap, two in Finnish and one in English. A digital screen cycled through advertisements which were mainly monolingual, with seven graphics being in Finnish, one in English and two in English and Finnish.

Image 13. Three signs instructing customers to return their dishes, one trilingual Finnish, Swedish and English with a piece of tape containing an arrow on it, along with monolingual Finnish and English signs clipped together.

The first-floor restaurant also contained a digital ad screen with the same distribution of languages on the signs, but no small signs on tables. Instead, there were notably more signs scattered through the area showing the menu or pointing out the names and allergens of the food items available, most of which were only available in Finnish. The café area also contained magnetic notice boards, each of which contained six signs. Of the 12 signs, 8 were monolingual, while 10 contained Finnish and 6 contained English. Three of the signs containing English used it solely for branding purposes, as no practical information could be gained from the text (Figure X right). Two signs were drawn on chalkboards (Figure X left), with one being monolingual Finnish and the other in Finnish and English, although Finnish was given visual dominance and contained extra information by noting this also applies to coffee served at lunch.

Image 14. Left image is a chalkboard with information about coffee refills. Right image contains a branding poster with different slogans in English and Finnish.

Use of Swedish was rare in the food establishments. Each of the individual kitchen areas had a bilingual Finnish and Swedish Oiva-report (a food control inspection ensuring compliance with legislation) on display, and the first-floor café contained an additional advertisement text for a cinnamon bun that was written in Finnish, Swedish and English.

5 Discussion

The analysis charted the linguistic landscape of Helsinki Central Library Oodi, examining the languages present in signage in the building and comparing signage produced by the library to that of other operators. The majority of signs produced by the library were trilingual and relatively adaptable materially, suggesting both consistency in the management of the linguistic landscape and preparation for changes in demands for the functions of libraries.

One of the main ways the linguistic landscape of Oodi differs from other linguistic landscapes previously examined in Helsinki is through the relatively strong presence of Swedish. Unlike commercial spaces where Swedish was barely visible (Risku 2024; Kontio 2021) and institutional contexts where it was generally less common than English (Li 2022; Mujunen 2024), signage produced by the library and city used Swedish relatively consistently in all domains and showed higher usage of Swedish than the University of Helsinki which follows a trilingual policy (Li 2022). While the first floor with the most external operators is the only floor with fewer signs in Swedish than in English, it also contains significantly more monolingual signs at 38% of signs compared to 24% of signs, showing the decrease in the amount of Swedish used coincides with a decrease in multilingual signage.

Despite the relatively strong position of Swedish, Finnish was still given clear dominance in the linguistic landscape of the library, with always being first in the language order, receiving preferential formatting, being absent from very few signs and being the *de facto* language for proper names. Other cases are more covert, such as *Dedication.* As an art piece, it is meant to list all the people the building is dedicated to, and while there are translations available online and the use of Finnish does not explicitly exclude non-Finnish-speakers, the words that are visible in the landscape are only legible if you speak Finnish.

The position of English is also notable. While it is quite ubiquitous in the library, appearing on almost as many signs as Swedish, it is very clearly positioned as a foreign language. It is given some monolingual space of its own in the fiction section on the third floor, but the same is true for many of the languages placed in the “other languages” section such as Estonian, French or Russian. What really highlights the role of English as a foreign language is precisely these bookshelves for “other languages”, where English is completely absent from the signage, and these “other languages” are placed above Finnish and Swedish. One possible motivation for this is the idea that if a person speaking a foreign language goes to look for

these books, they will be able to read the language they are looking for, while Finnish and Swedish speakers should be informed of what is on the shelves. This aligns with linguistic landscape research placing English as a lingua franca in the Helsinki region (Pienimäki, Väisänen and Hiippala 2024; Li 2022), where English is viewed as a convenient way to communicate with people who do not understand Finnish. The one notable commercial operator in Food&Co seems to use English for branding purposes while providing the bulk of information in Finnish, like many other commercial establishments in Helsinki (Risku 2024; Kontio 2021).

This may, however, be overselling the position of these "other languages" in the library. In reality the shelves containing these books are in a much more secluded area of the library, and English is not placed into the "other language" category, thus having an elevated status. Similarly, we see ideologies playing out in the way literature in these other languages is displayed. While languages native to neighbouring countries such as Russian and Estonian are given notable amounts of visibility, German and French are given noticeably more visibility than seven of the ten most spoken foreign languages in Helsinki (Kaupunkitieto), including Spanish. While the number of signs in these languages is not notably higher than for Arabic and Kurdish, for example, the placement of the shelves and visibility of signs containing these languages highlights their presence to a greater extent.

Considering library-produced signage through the MIPS model (Gorter & Cenoz 2021), it is clear there is some degree of pressure to highlight multilingualism and maintain the position of Swedish in the library. It would likely reflect quite poorly on the library as a symbol of the governments' commitment to the people if Swedish was not present. The use of English as a lingua franca also makes sense for a project aiming to be inclusive for all residents, and to take a somewhat more cynical approach towards the scale of the project, a tourist destination and symbol of Finnish architecture. Languages are largely treated as monolithic, and with only one case of language mixing, the linguistic landscape of Oodi does not show much evidence of accounting for more complex linguistic identities. This implies the institutional view towards languages in Finland does not include much flexibility with regard to the practical language use needs of residents.

One issue that must be discussed in relation to research on libraries as spaces is the absence of *the Wall* (Kallen 2010: 43) in Oodi, or a space where . The linguistic landscape is incredibly strictly controlled, with no dedicated spaces to leave any sort of posters, stickers or writing of

any kind. During all of my visits to the library over a period four months, I did not find one piece of written language that seemed like it was not placed there by an institutional actor, even as small as sticker residue or a piece of a receipt. This places Oodi at the heavily institutional end of spaces in linguistic landscape studies, as it seems to reflect the idea that commercial and non-institutional spaces reflect the linguistic reality of local communities more than heavily controlled institutional spaces driven by language policies (Kallen 2010; Risku 2024).

Returning to the MIPS model, the management of the linguistic landscape almost completely cuts off the loop between the fourth and fifth points of what people see and do feeding into the first and second points of language policies and sign production which determine the appearance of the linguistic landscape. While there have likely been changes in the signage and functions of the library over the years, such as the introduction of the youth space or changes in signage compared to the Oodi 360° service, these are done through the lens of institutional perspectives on visitor behaviours and attitudes. More importantly, while individual residents have the freedom to use library spaces freely, they cannot directly contribute to the formation of the linguistic landscape.

One thing that must be considered is the relevance of linguistic landscape data on research examining libraries as spaces. While library sciences have long argued that libraries do fit the criterion of *third spaces*, by virtue of being low-intensity meeting spaces that allow for leisure outside the home (Wyatt and Leorke 2024; White and Martel 2022), they have done so with the baggage of Oldenburg's (1989) original definition explicitly excluding libraries for being too bureaucratic. While the reality of Oodi is that there are almost no limits on what visitors can do in the library, and there are spaces for quiet and solitary as well as noisy and social activities, the extremely institutional nature of the linguistic landscape does bring up questions about the extent of libraries' *third placeness*. If there is no opportunity to directly leave a visible mark of your presence in the landscape, can the space give visitors a true sense of belonging? Given some of the linguistic landscape management is likely due to the amount of tourism in the building, we can also raise questions about Oodi as a cozy space where regulars set the mood.

Thus, this project brings up topics that would warrant future analysis. For one, no other extensive studies on the linguistic landscapes of libraries have been conducted, and given that they are a central space for promoting inclusion in societies (Johnston 2018; Montgomery &

Miller 2018), libraries should be seen as valuable spaces to examine. Comparative data from different regions and from different types of libraries could allow for more holistic exploration of how exactly linguistic landscape studies could contribute research into libraries as spaces. Similarly, exploring more institutional contexts may be fruitful for comparing how institutions perceive the role of languages in society through their mediatory role (Ahmed 2012).

A variety of other methods could be used to examine the ways the linguistic landscapes of libraries function. Interviews or observation of library staff regarding linguistic landscape management and language policy would give valuable perspectives on the ways multifunctional and adaptive spaces function. Similarly, interviews with visitors could provide valuable insights into resident (or in the case of Oodi, also tourist) perspectives on the functionality of library spaces and the capacity for current linguistic landscapes to include them. Diachronic approaches could be used to track changes in library functions over time, while the analysis of soundscapes could bring out the multilingual reality of spaces that are heavily managed.

6 Conclusion

This thesis explored the linguistic landscape of Helsinki Central Library Oodi as a means of conceptualizing libraries as public spaces. The majority of signs were trilingual in Finnish, Swedish and English and materially relatively adaptable. One notable feature is the distinctively large presence of Swedish in signage produced by the library compared to other operators both within the building and other locations in Helsinki. Finnish remains the dominant language in the linguistic landscape, and English is positioned as a lingua franca for those who do not speak Finnish or Swedish. Other languages are present, but their position is largely marginal and largely aimed at being read by people who speak said languages.

The institutional nature of the space suggests there is more value placed on Swedish in government than in commercial spaces, and the library functions as a space highlighting the presence of Swedish in Finnish society. This is somewhat undermined by other operators using spaces in the building, who tended to produce much more monolingual Finnish signage

Combining the results of linguistic landscape analysis with research into libraries as spaces this project suggests a need to further examine the linguistic landscapes of libraries with a diverse range of methodologies. The institutional nature of the linguistic landscape and seemingly heavy management practices pose a slight challenge to the notion of libraries as *third spaces* and necessitate a broader examination of the role linguistic landscapes could have in researching the functionality of spaces. Such research could also provide insights into how governments in various areas see languages and the roles of institutions in maintaining the positions of different social groups.

References

Aabø, Svanhild, Ragnar Audunson and Andreas Vårheim. 2010. "How do Public Libraries Function as Meeting Places?" *Library & Information Science Research* 34 (2): 138-49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2009.07.008

Aabø, Svanhild and Ragnar Audunson. 2012. "Use of Library Space and the Library as Place." In *Library & Information Science Research* 34 (2): 138-49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2011.06.002

Ahmed, Sara. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life.* Duke University Press

Backhaus, Peter. 2006. "Multilingualism in Tokyo: A Look into the Linguistic Landscape." In *Journal of Multilingualism* 3 (1): 52-66. 10.1080/14790710608668385

Backhaus, Peter. 2007. *Linguistic Landscapes. A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853599484

Ben-Rafael, Eliezer and Miriam Ben-Rafael. 2019. *Multiple Globalizations: Linguistic Landscapes in World-Cities*. Brill.

Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, Elana Shohamy, Muhammad Hasan Amara and Nira Trumper-Hecht. 2006. "Linguistic Landscape as Symbolic Construction of the Public Space: The Case of Israel." In *International Journal of Multilingualism* 3 (1): 7-30. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668383

Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, Elana Shohamy and Monica Barni. 2010. "Introduction: An Approach to an 'Ordered Disorder'." In *Linguistic Landscape in the City,* edited by Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, Elana Shohamy and Monica Barni. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847692993-002

Bilandzic, Mark and Marcus Foth. 2013. "Learning Beyond Books—Strategies for Ambient Media to Improve Libraries and Collaboration Spaces as Interfaces for Social Learning." *Multimedia Tools and Applications* 71: 77-95. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-013-1432-x

Blackwood, Robert. 2016. "Conflict, Exclusion and Dissent in the Linguistic Landscape." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 37 (6): 645-647. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2016.1173874

Blackwood, Robert and John Macalister. 2019. *Multilingual Memories: Monuments, Museums and the Linguistic Landscape*. Bloomsbury

Bolton, Kingsley. 2012. "World Englishes and linguistic landscapes." In *World Englishes* 31 (1): 30-33. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2011.01748.x

Bolton, Kingsley, Werner Botha and Siu-Lun Lee. 2020. "Linguistic Landscapes and Language Contact." *The Handbook of Language Contact (2nd ed.)*, edited by Hickey, Raymond. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119485094.ch14

Bruyèl-Olmedo, Antonio and Maria Juan-Garau. 2009."English as a Lingua Franca in the Linguistic Landscape of the Multilingual Resort of S'Arenal in Mallorca." *International Journal of Multilingualism* 6 (4): 386-411. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710903125010

Canakis, Costas. 2019. "Further Advances in Linguistic Landscape Research: Language and Identity-work in Public Space." *Punctum* 5 (1): 264-270. https://doi.org/10.18680/hss.2019.0016

Cao, Huizhi, Yuqiao Liu, and Huiying Chen. 2022. "Mapping the Linguistic Landscape in a Chinese University." *Open Access Library Journal* 9 (12): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1109585.

Cenoz, Jasone and Durk Gorter. 2006. "Linguistic Landscape and Minority Languages." *International Journal of Multilingualism* 3 (1): 67–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668386

City of Helsinki. n.d. "Bilingual Education." https://www.hel.fi/en/childhood-and-education/basic-education/enrolling-and-applying-to-school/weighted-curriculum-and-basic-education-in-different-languages/bilingual-education. Accessed 21.5.2025.

City of Helsinki. 2023. "Uudenmaan maakunnan vieraskielisen väestön ennuste vuosille 2022–2040." *Tilastoja* 23(5). https://www.hel.fi/static/kanslia/Kaupunkitieto/23_08_31_Tilastoja_5.pdf.

Conteh, Jean and Gabriela Meier. 2014. *The Multilingual Turn in Languages Education*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783092246

Finnish Public Libraries Statistics. 2025. "Search statistics." https://tilastot.kirjastot.fi/?lang=en accessed 15.04.2024.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harvard University Press.

Gorter, Durk. 2006. “Introduction: The Study of the Linguistic Landscape as a New Approach to Multilingualism.” *International Journal of Multilingualism* 3 (1): 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668382

Gorter, Durk. 2019. ‘Methods and Techniques for Linguistic Landscape Research: About Definitions, Core Issues and Technological Innovations’. *Expanding the Linguistic Landscape: Linguistic Diversity, Multimodality and the Use of Space as a Semiotic Resource*, edited by Pütz, Martin and Neele-Frederike Mundt. Multilingual Matters https://doi.org/10.21832/PUTZ2159

Gorter, Durk. 2021. “Multilingual Inequality in Public Spaces: Towards an Inclusive Model of Linguistic Landscapes.” *Multilingualism in Public Spaces: Empowering and Transforming Communities*, 13–30. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350186620.ch-001

Gorter, Durk and Jasone Cenoz. 2015. “Linguistic Landscapes Inside Multilingual Schools.” In *Challenges for Language Education and Policy: Making Space for People,* edited by Bernard Spolsky, Ofra Inbar-Lourie, Michal Tannenbaum. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315884288

Gorter, Durk and Jasone Cenoz. 2020. “Theoretical development of linguistic landscape studies.” *Linguistic Landscape* 6 (1): 16-22. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.00020.gor

Gorter, Durk and Jasone Cenoz. 2023. *A Panorama of Linguistic Landscape Studies*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800417151.

Helsinki Smart Region. 2016. “The Central Library: Creating New Millennium’s Civil Society in Helsinki” https://helsinkismart.fi/case/the-central-library-creating-new-millenniums-civil-society-in-helsinki/ accessed 18.04.2025

Houghton, Kirralie, Marcus Foth and Evonne Miller. 2013. “The Continuing Relevance of the Library as a Third Place for Users and Non-users of IT: the Case of Canada Bay.” *The Australian Library Journal* 62 (1): 27-39. https://doi-org/10.1080/00049670.2013.771764

Huebner, Thom. 2006. “Bangkok’s Linguistic Landscapes: Environmental Print, Codemixing and Language Change.” *International Journal of Multilingualism* 3 (1): 31-51. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668384

Hult, Francis M. 2018. “Language Policy and Planning and Linguistic Landscapes.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Language Policy and Planning,* edited by Tollefson,

James W. and Miguel Pérez-Milans. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190458898.013.35

IFLA. 2019. "And the Winner is Oodi!" 04.10.2019. https://www.ifla.org/news/and-the-winner-is-oodi/. Accessed 7.5.2025

Igarashi, Tomoya, Momoka Watanabe, Yumi Tomita, Yuki Sugeno, Motoko Yamagishi, and Masanori Koizumi. 2023. "Public Library Events with Spaces and Collections: Case Analysis of the Helsinki Central Library Oodi." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 55 (3): 681–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006221097405.

Jaworski, Adam and Crispin Thurlow. 2010. *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*. Continuum.

Johnston, Jamie. 2018. "The Use of Conversation-based Programming in Public Libraries to Support Integration in Increasingly Multiethnic Societies." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 50(2): 130–140. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000616631613

Kallen, Jeffrey L. 2010. "Changing Landscapes: Language, Space and Policy in the Dublin Linguistic Landscape." In *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*, edited by Jaworski, Adam and Crispin Thurlow. Continuum.

Kaupunkitieto. n.d. "Ulkomaalaistaustaiset ja vieraskieliset Helsingissä." https://kaupunkitieto.hel.fi/fi/maahanmuutto-ja-kotoutuminen/ulkomaalaistaustainen-vaesto/ulkomaalaistaustaiset-ja-vieraskieliset-helsingissa. Accessed 22.5.2025.

Kontio, Jenni. 2021. "The Role of English in the Linguistic Landscapes of Finnish Shopping Centers: A Comparative Study Between Helsinki and Oulu." MA Thesis, University of Helsinki. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/330408

Laitinen, Mikko, Sirpa Leppänen, Paula Rautionaho and Sara Backman. 2023. "Englanti Suomen kansalliskielten rinnalla: Kohti joustavaa monikielisyyttä." *Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja* 2023(59). http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-055-4

Lamarre, Patricia. 2014. "Bilingual Winks and Bilingual Wordplay in Montreal's Linguistic Landscape." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2014 (228): 131-151. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2014-0008

Landry, Rodrigue and Richard Y. Bourhis. 1997. "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16 (1): 23-49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X9701610

Language Act. 423/2003. Available at: https://finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskokoelma/2003/423

Leguina, Adrian, Sabina Mihelj, and John Downey. 2021. "Public Libraries as Reserves of Cultural and Digital Capital: Addressing Inequality through Digitalization." *Library & Information Science Research* 43 (3): 101-103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2021.101103.

Li, Xiaoyi. 2022. "Exploring Linguistic Landscape in a Multilingual Finnish University." MA Thesis, University of Helsinki. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/344889

Malinowski, David and Sébastien Dubreil. 2019. "Linguistic Landscape and Language Learning" In *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, edited by Chapelle, Carol. Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1492

Malminen, Ulla. 2023. "Maailmallakin noteerattu Oodi muutti viisi vuotta sitten kirjaston roolia – nyt talon palveluja ollaan uudistamassa." 5.12.2023. https://yle.fi/a/74-20063681. Accessed 11.5.2025

Manan, Syed Abdul, Maya Khemlani David, Francisco Perlas Dumanig and Khan Naqeebullah. 2015. "Politics, Economics and Identity: Mapping the Linguistic Landscape of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia." *International Journal of Multilingualism* 12 (1): 31-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2014.905581

May, Stephen. 2014. *The Multilingual Turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and Bilingual Education*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203113493

Ministry of Justice. n.d. "Linguistic Rights." https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/linguistic-rights. Accessed 22.5.2025

Montgomery, Susan E. and Jonathan Miller. 2011. "The Third Place: The Library as Collaborative and Community Space in a Time of Fiscal Restraint." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 18 (2-3): 228-238. https://doi.org/10.1080/10691316.2011.577683

Mujunen, Olivia. 2024. "Multiculturalism as Reflected in the Linguistic Landscapes of Landmark Museums in Helsinki." MA Thesis, University of Helsinki. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/574543

Oldenburg, Ray. 1989. *The Great Good Place*. Da Capo Press.

Oodi. 2019 “Oodia parannetaan – ja se on iloinen asia.” 20.9.2019. https://oodihelsinki.fi/oodia-parannetaan-ja-se-on-iloinen-asia/. Accessed 9.5.2025.

Oodi. 2020. “Central Library Oodi Receives International Cultural Heritage Award.” 6.10.2020. https://oodihelsinki.fi/en/central-library-oodi-receives-international-cultural-heritage-award/. Accessed 7.5.2025

Oodi. 2021. ”Oodi on voittanut Detail Prize 2020 -pääpalkinnon.” 18.1.2021. https://oodihelsinki.fi/oodi-on-voittanut-detail-prize-2020-paapalkinnon/. Accessed 7.5.2025

Oodi. 2025. ”Kiitos vuodesta 2024!” 2.1.2025. https://oodihelsinki.fi/kiitos-vuodesta-2024/. Accessed 7.5.2025

Papen, Uta. 2012. “Commercial Discourses, Gentrification and Citizens’ Protest: The Linguistic Landscape of Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16 (1): 56–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00518.x

Pavlenko, Aneta. 2010. “Linguistic Landscape of Kyiv, Ukraine: A Diachronic Study.” In *Linguistic Landscape in the City,* edited by Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, Elana Shohamy and Monica Barni. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847692993-010

Pennycook, Alastair. 2010. *Language as a Local Practice*. Routledge.

Pennycook, Alastair and Emi Otsuji. 2015. *Metrolingualism: Language in the City*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315724225

Pienimäki, Hanna-Mari, Tuomas Väisänen, and Tuomo Hiippala. 2024. ‘Making Sense of Linguistic Diversity in Helsinki, Finland: The Timespace of Affects in the Linguistic Landscape’. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 28: 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12633

Protassova, Maria. 2021. ‘Linguistic Reactions to COVID-19 : The Case of Tourism Services in Helsinki in Summer 2020’. MA Thesis, University of Helsinki. https://helda.helsinki.fi/items/URN:NBN:fi:hulib-202106152747.

Putnam, Robert M., Don Cohen and Lewis M. Feldstein. 2003. *Better together: restoring the American community*. Simon & Schuster.

Pütz, Martin and Neele-Frederike Mundt. 2019. *Expanding the Linguistic Landscape : Linguistic Diversity, Multimodality and the Use of Space As a Semiotic Resource*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/PUTZ2159

Risku, Jaakko. 2024. 'Commercial Linguistic Landscape of Helsinki: The Roles of English and Finnish in Street-Level Advertisements'. MA Thesis, University of Helsinki. https://helda.helsinki.fi/items/URN:NBN:fi:hulib-202406112780.

Saamelaiskäräjät. n.d. "Mitä kielellisiä oikeuksia saamelaisilla on Suomessa?" https://samediggi.fi/vastuualueet/saamen-kielet/viranomaisille-saamelaisten-kielellisista-oikeuksista/kielelliset-oikeudet-ovat-perusoikeuksia/mita-kielellisia-oikeuksia-saamelaisilla-on-suomessa/. Accessed 20.5.2025

Saarto, Solja, Ari Jaakkola, Teemu Vass, Lotta Haglund. 2024. Helsinki Facts and Figures 2024. https://www.hel.fi/static/kanslia/Kaupunkitieto/24_06_17_Helsinki_facts_and_figures_2024.pdf accessed 12.04.2025

Sámi Language Act. 1086/2003. Available at: https://finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/2003/1086

Scollon, Ron and Susie Wong Scollon. 2003. "Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World. Routledge.

Shohamy, Elena. 2015. "LL research as expanding language and language policy." In *Linguistic Landscape* 1: 152-171.

Shohamy, Elena and Eliezer Ben-Rafael. 2015. "Introduction: Linguistic Landscape, a new journal." In *Linguistic Landscape* 1: 1-5.

Spolsky, Bernard. 2009. *Language Management*. Cambridge University Press.

Syrjälä, Väinö. 2019. "Commercial Naming in the Linguistic Landscape of Historical Photographs from Helsinki." In *The Economy in Names: Values, Branding and Globalization*, edited by Leibring, Kathanrina, Leila Mattfolk, Kristina Neumüller, Staffan Nyström and Elin Pihl. Institutet för språk och folkminnen.

Tallroth, Paulina. 2012. Strategy for the National Languages of Finland. Prime Minister's Office.

Trinch, Shonna and Edward Snajdr. 2020. *What the Signs Say: Language, Gentrification, and Place-Making in Brooklyn*. Vanderbilt University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv160btqs

Tufi, Stefania and Robert Blackwood. 2010. "Trademarks in the Linguistic Landscape: Methodological and Theoretical Challenges in Qualifying Brand

Names in the Public Space." *International Journal of Multilingualism* 7 (3): 197-210. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710903568417

Van Mensel, Luk, Mieke Vandenbroucke and Robert Blackwood. 2016. "Linguistic Landscapes." In *Oxford Handbook of Language and Society,* edited by Garcia, Ofelia, Nelson Flores and Massimiliano and Spotti. Oxford University Press.

Väisänen, Tuomas, Olle Järv, Tuuli Toivonen, and Tuomo Hiippala. 2024. "Capturing Urban Diversity through Languages: Long-Term Changes in Multilingual Residential Neighbourhoods in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area." *Population, Space and Place* 30 (1): e2717. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2717.

White, Bob and Marie D. Martel. 2022. "An Intercultural Framework for Theory and Practice in Third Place Libraries." *Public Library Quarterly* 41(3): 217-235. https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2021.1918968

Wyatt, Danielle and Dale Leorke. 2024. "Playing in the "Third Place": How Games and Play Are Transforming Public Libraries." *Space and Culture* 27(2): 254–273. https://doi-org./10.1177/12063312231223118

YIT. 2018. "Oodi's architecture is a fusion of action and timelessness." 26.10.2018. https://www.yitgroup.com/en/news-repository/news/oodis-architecture-is-a-fusion-of-action-and-timelessness. Accessed 16.5.2025

Zhang, Jialei. 2022. "Multilingualism and the Status of English in the Linguistic Landscapes of Main Tourist Attractions in Helsinki: A Case Study of Four Churches in Helsinki and Their Websites." MA Thesis, University of Helsinki. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/344839

Appendices

Appendix 1: Coding categories

The following table contains the categories were tracked in the spreadsheet, along with the corresponding coding categories used.

Feature being tracked	Entry type	Code variables	Code explained
Sign Type	Freeform notes about the materiality	N/A	N/A
Code	Code used for logging signs, discussed in section 2.2		
Assemblage suffix	Suffix used to track assemblages, discussed in section 2.2		
Permanence	Variables	PM, SN, SR, SM, SD, TM	Permanent, seasonal, replaceable, moveable, digital, temporary
Floor	Floor number	1, 2, 3	Floor number
Location	Freeform description of sign location	N/A	N/A
Function	Variable – broad data-driven categories	INF, INS, NAV, ART, WAR, OTH, DET	Information, instruction, navigation, artwork, warning, other, detritus
Information asymmetry?	Checkbox	N/A	N/A
Multilingual?	Checkbox	N/A	N/A
Number of Languages	Number	Number	Number of languages on the sign
Visually dominant language	Checkbox	N/A	N/A

Is [language] present	Checkboxes for: Finnish, Swedish, English, Sámi, Russian, Somali, Arabic, Estonian, Chinese, Kurdish, Farsi, Spanish, Vietnamese	F, S, N, O	Finnish, Swedish, English, Other
Other languages	Freeform box for signs containing foreign languages not in the 10 most spoken in Helsinki	N/A	"Other" would include languages without checkboxes assigned to them
Multimodal features	Freeform notes about important multimodal features		
Notes	Any other notes regarding the function, appearance or layout of the signs.		

Table 1. Coding categories used for data processing.