The Image of Terrorism in the English-language Media of Finland and Russia

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Spring 2018
Abstract

The subject of this thesis is the image of terrorism in the English-language media of Finland and Russia. The purpose of this thesis is to present analysis of several online articles that concern two terrorist acts: the Turku stabbing of 18 August 2017 and the Saint Petersburg metro bombing of 3 April 2017. The approaches of such English-language media as Helsinki Times, Yle News, The Moscow Times and Russia Today to this topic will be considered. The first two of the mentioned are Finnish media outlets and the latter two are the Russian ones. It is a qualitative study that employs Fairclough’s approach (1992) to critical discourse analysis. The research aim is to explore the differences and similarities in the terrorism discourse of two countries and their media in order to see how media articles change the image of terrorism in the society. The results show that there are discrepancies not only between the countries but also between different news sources in one country. Nevertheless, in general it can be said that Russia tends to create a more militaristic image of terrorism than Finland does. Russian media outlets use photos that show violence, harsh vocabulary and personal stories of victims to create an impression of war between terrorists and the government, in which the government is winning.

Keywords: terrorism, media, critical discourse analysis
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1 Introduction

Oxford English Dictionary suggests that the term “terrorism” was firstly introduced in the 18th century at the time of the French revolution. Nevertheless, some historians believe that it might have originated as early as the Middle Ages or even in the Antiquity. Back then it was used in order to describe violent actions against the government executed for an overthrow of the regime or violent actions of the government against the rebels. However, nowadays it is mostly associated with the Islamic attacks on the Western Christian world. In the last couple of years, with ISIS increasing its powers as well as the number of attempted murders, the topic of terrorism has become more and more discussed in the society. Politicians, researchers and journalists give speeches and publish articles making suggestions on how to stop the attacks.

There is no doubt that media plays an important role in creating an image of terrorism. When reading an article or watching a news video about the last attack a person develops a certain attitude towards it. That is why, the right approach to reporting the terroristic acts is so important in the modern world. Different English-language media in different countries also use different approaches to describing the terroristic attacks. All of them try to create an unfavorable image of terrorism, however, they use diverse techniques in order to do that. In addition, it is interesting to note that many English-language media do not pay enough attention to the terrorist attacks that happened outside of the country of origin of this particular newspaper or TV channel.

In this thesis these distinctions will be discussed using the examples of articles published after the first terrorist attack in modern Finland, the Turku stabbing of 18 August 2017, and the last major attack on Russia, the Saint Petersburg metro bombing of 3 April 2017. The Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis will be employed to see the impact of terrorism discourse in the media onto the society. It is an analytical qualitative study, therefore, the vocabulary and other features of the articles will be analyzed to conclude what the differences between the Finnish and Russian types of discourse are and how they impact the attitude of the society towards terrorism.
2 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

In this thesis the peculiarities of representation of terrorism in the media will be discussed through qualitative study and critical discourse analysis. According to Martin Reisigl (2013), CDA has “a strong interdisciplinary orientation and social engagement”. This particular approach to the research was chosen, as the topic of this thesis balances between linguistics and social studies.

There are six variants of critical discourse analysis described by this author. Fairclough’s approach is strongly related to social practice and recognizes the dynamic role of discourse in the changes in the society. The approach of van Leeuwen and Kress that is social semiotic and systemic functional. Besides, there are the socio-cognitive approach of van Dijk, the form of CDA created by the Duisburg group, the Oldenburg approach and the discourse historical approach.

Fairclough’s approach will be used for this research, as it is text-oriented and at the same time implies that linguistic peculiarities of one cannot be discussed without the analysis of the discursive practice (1992).

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

The main idea of critical discourse analysis is that language and society impact and relate to each other. Language is a very important tool to understand, explain and change the social reality.

The main focus of critical discourse analysis is on social relations. According to Fairclough (2010, p.3), the relations in question are not only relations between people but also internal and external relations between institutions, sets of events and abstract entities.

Therefore, critical discourse analysis might be considered as an appropriate method for this thesis, as it aims to find out the relations between the language practice (terrorism discourse) and the society of Finland and Russia. It is also good, as apart from vocabulary it allows to
consider pictures, videos, graphics and other semiotic representations of non-verbal communication.

2.2 Fairclough’s Approach

Norman Fairclough described his approach as an attempt to unite three traditions: textual and linguistic analysis in the field of linguistics, macro-sociological analysis as well as micro-sociological analysis within sociology (1992). By uniting them, he suggests that language cannot function outside of the society, but it influences the society and the society influences it back.

The approach of Norman Fairclough differs from other variants of critical discourse analysis, as it takes particular interest in the dynamic role of discourse in changes in society and its culture (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). He does not see discourse only as constitutive but also as constituted. It is a form of social practice that shapes cultural and social relations and at the same time is shaped by them.

2.3 Previous Studies

The topic of representation of terrorism in the media has been researched before. For instance, Maija Stenvall in her article “Fear of terror attacks persists’: constructing fear in reports on terrorism by international news agencies” discussed the fear that terrorism discourse produced in the reports of Associated Press and Reuters (2007). She conducted a quantitative analysis for which she used M.A.K. Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar, took nouns fear, worry and concern as nominalizations and ran a search through the wires of these news agencies. Stenvall concluded that in terrorism discourse “fears are often combined with the concept of security” and, therefore, would help the authorities in their war against terrorism (2007, p.219).
3 Analysis

As this thesis discusses Finland and Russia in particular, we are going to use two terrorist acts of 2017: The Turku stabbing that happened in Finland on August 18\textsuperscript{th} and the Saint Petersburg metro bombing of April 3\textsuperscript{rd}.

The Turku stabbing took place on August 18\textsuperscript{th} in the center of Turku. A 22-year-old asylum seeker from Morocco Abderrahman Bouanane killed two and injured eight people at the Market Square with a knife. The terrorist was immediately detained. Later it was found out that he possessed ISIS propaganda materials as well as a video he recorded reading a manifesto about the attack that included some citations from Quran.

The Saint Petersburg metro bombing occurred on April 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 2017. A homemade bomb exploded in the metro train between stations Sennaya Ploshchad and Tekhnologichesky Institut. Fourteen people died and more than 50 were injured as a result of the incident. The bomb was detonated by a Kyrgyz-born Russian citizen Akbarzhon Dzhalilov. He did not survive the explosion, however, his accomplices were later arrested by the FSB (the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation). The Islamic State terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

3.1 Finland. 2017 Turku stabbing

Despite the fact that, according to the report of the World Economic Forum, Finland is the safest country in the world, the latest trend of arising terrorism has not bypassed it. The number of terrorist acts here is, however, much lower than it is, for example, in France.

More precisely, before 2017 Finland had had a rating of zero in the Global Terrorism Index (Malkki 2016). It means that officially the number of terrorist attacks in this country between World War II and April 2017 had been zero. At the moment of writing this thesis the GTI score of Finland was 2.34. It was ranked 76 out of 163 countries. There were 75 countries, where the act of terrorism was more likely to happen than in Finland.
Nevertheless, Leena Malkki mentions that “what qualifies as a ‘terrorist attack’ is always a matter of definition” (p.358). Some minor attacks like the firebomb attack against the Turkish embassy in 2008 or school shootings in 1989, 2007 and 2008 could hypothetically have been considered as such but they are usually regarded as an act of sabotage not the one of terrorism.

In 2017 the mostly discussed terrorist event that happened in Finland was the so called Turku stabbing on August 18th. Actually it is not only the mostly discussed one but also the first one since the end of the Second World War. That is why, it is not surprising that both major English-language media of Finland Helsinki Times and Yle gave an excessive and detailed coverage of it.

However, despite the fact that both sources are media that publish their articles in English and are oriented at the international public, there are several discrepancies between them. In contrast to Yle, Helsinki Times did not even call the happening a terrorist act and stopped reporting on it two weeks after the event, when the identity of the main suspect had been ascertained, other suspects had been released and the discourse about toughening immigration laws had come to an end. Yle, on the other hand, published some texts even in October, two months after the tragic happening. It can also be seen that Yle performed a much more excessive work. In addition to comments on press releases, it conducted their own interviews – with a crisis psychologist, other residents of the same reception center as Abderrahman Bouanane, with eyewitnesses. The most striking difference is, nevertheless, the discrepancy in covering the discourse about immigration. Helsinki Times clearly tried to create a more negative impression of the attitude of the Finnish authorities towards asylum seekers than Yle did. Yle, in its turn, attempted to mitigate the tension and used a more neutral language as well as a greater variety of quotes: their articles that might have sounded rough, always included other assuaging quotes of the speaker or another point of view as, for example, the condemnation of the stabbing by Muslim organizations.

As for the English-language media of Russia, it is understandable why The Moscow Times did not cover the attack in Turku. This newspaper is mostly interested in telling about the events that took place in Russia and explaining their nature, causes and effects to the international public. However, Russia Today, being a pro-Kremlin media financed by the Russian government,
attempts to create an image of troubled Europe, where terrorist acts happen constantly. This fact calls forth the choice of topics to report on, as, for instance, the sub-machine guns.

3.1.1 Helsinki Times

The biggest English-language newspaper of Finland Helsinki Times provided much information about the attack itself and the investigation that followed the stabbing. This newspaper published its own articles based on interviews and press releases as well as translations of texts from such reliable sources as Helsingin Sanomat, Yle and STT. The author of the majority of publications is a Finn Aleksi Teivainen.

Helsinki Times was rather resistant to call the happening a terrorist act. It preferred to use phrases like “what is treated as a terror attack”, “offence committed with terrorist intent”, “what is believed to be the first terror attack”, “knife attack” or “deadly knife attack”, “suspected terror attack”, “rampage which left two dead and eight injured” (Teivainen, 2017). The necessity of caution is instead transferred via harsh and powerful vocabulary like “killing”, “murder”, “terrorist intent”, “stabbing spree” (Teivainen, 2017).

It is important that Helsinki Times never disclosed names of the supposed criminals detained by the police apart from the main one, despite the fact that it paid special attention to the releases of suspects from custody. A new article appeared after each new release (Teivainen, 2017). Nevertheless, the newspaper did not cover other aspects of the investigation as the existence of several attack plans, the evidence found or the translation difficulties (as a significant amount of evidence is in Arabic) of which we know from Yle.

It is also interesting to note that Helsinki Times (following the Finnish-language press) supported the discourse about the need of toughening immigration laws that quickly arose after the attack. For instance, it published an article with quotes of Sauli Niinistö who made a statement about the necessity to control immigration and “expedite the removal process for unsuccessful applicants” two days after the attack (Teivainen, 2017). Besides, it reported the smoothening words of the president to the nation. He used such phrases as “restoring our sense of security” and “confidence in the actions of our authorities” in a row. This quote is contrary to the often used vocabulary like “murder”, “spree” and “terrorist”.

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In addition to the statement of Sauli Niinistö, *Helsinki Times* published the words of the Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä (Teivainen, 2017). Just like the president, he expressed an opinion that the authorities “must have the means to remove those who have come here on false grounds”. He also stated that “in light of the recent events in Turku...the right to life is a more precious fundamental right than the right to privacy”. Both figures mentioned that Finnish legislation must be aligned with the systems of other European countries. Thus, considering the fact that an English-language newspaper might be oriented to the audience in the EU, it becomes clear why *Helsinki Times* draws such attention to that.

Such a discourse is continued in the newspaper through the article with the words of the Interior Minister Paula Risikko (Teivainen, 2017). *Helsinki Times* cites her words about the fact that it is impossible to establish immigration removal centers that were suggested as “the residents of such centers are not placed under around-the-clock surveillance but are simply required to check in regularly with the staff”. The tone of the text is, nevertheless, rather coarse. The first thing that a reader sees is a picture of the Minister and a caption that Finland will “ensure unsuccessful asylum seekers leave the country”.

Nonetheless, *Helsinki Times* reports on the increased tensions in the Finnish society by also describing another part of the story. In the article compiled from the information found in *Helsingin Sanomat* and *Yle* the newspaper discusses the cases of hostility towards people of immigrant background (Teivainen, 2017). The undertone of this text is rather sympathetic to the victims. Even the name of the article “Immigrants face increased hostility after stabbings in Turku” suggests that the newspaper believes statements of the plaintiffs.

The very last article on the topic published by *Helsinki Times* concerns the new measures of the government that are aimed against the immigrants that might be involved in terrorism (Teivainen, 2017). The newspaper cites the Minister for European Affairs, Culture and Sports Sampo Terho, who revealed that the government agreed to “revise the nationality act to strip dual citizens who have committed terrorist offences of Finnish citizenship” (Teivainen, 2017).

Thus, the majority of articles in *Helsinki Times* on the topic of the Turku stabbing discussed the increased anti-immigrant tension in the Finnish society, which was as well supported by the
authorities. Besides, it is important that the newspaper never calls the happening a terrorist act. Either it was done on purpose, or it happened so due to the fact that the author of the articles is not a native-speaker. Nevertheless, this newspaper is not published for native-speakers either. According to its web page, readers of Helsinki Times are “mainly expats, diplomats and other international individuals, businesses and groups residing in Finland”. This fact can explain the choice of the media to concentrate on the discourse about the immigrant laws – their introduction might concern the readers directly.

3.1.2 Yle News

Yle News provided information on the Turku stabbing that was based on fewer secondary sources than the one of Helsinki Times. Being a part of the Finnish Broadcasting Company, Yle mostly cited their own Finnish-language website and direct sources as interviews with politicians and police press releases. The language of Yle is also more sophisticated which might be the result of the fact that native-speakers usually write news texts there.

One of the main differences between Yle News and Helsinki Times is the fact that the former did use the phrase “terrorist attack” whereas Helsinki Times attempted to avoid it and never said it straightforwardly (“Finnish PM: We are no longer an island,” 2017).

The range of sub-topics covered by Yle is also wider than the one of Helsinki Times. For instance, the latter did not mention the press conference held by Juha Sipilä and Paula Risikko the day following the attack at all. The article is written in a very sympathetic towards the Finnish citizens manner and, quoting the words of Sipilä, it suggested the need to unite in the face of danger to national security (“Finnish PM: We are no longer an island,” 2017). Furthermore, Yle reported on the reconstruction of the attack performed by the police whereas Helsinki Times did not (“Finland commemorates Turku victims,” 2017).

Another difference concerning the investigation between the media would be the fact that Helsinki Times stopped to report on the attack or the investigation in the end of August. On the contrary, Yle kept publishing news articles even in course of the fall. It followed the investigation closely and told about the new discoveries. For example, there is a piece of news from September 8th that concentrates on several plots that the suspect had been designing
prior to the attack ("NBI: Turku attack suspect," 2017). On October 12th Yle News reported that the suspect had been “ordered to undergo a psychiatric evaluation” ("Turku stabbing suspect," 2017).

In addition, Yle followed the social media accounts of the Finnish administration and published an article with the quotes of Sauli Niinistö and Juha Sipilä on Twitter ("Finnish leaders react," 2017).

Besides, when Helsinki Times provided only texts furnished by no more than one cover picture, Yle used infographics and maps widely to provide visual information as well. This statement is illustrated by the fact that in one of the first articles on the topic, when the media described the attack, it included the map of central Turku where the incident took place ("Two dead, several injured," 2017). What is more, Yle published a picture of the main suspect Abderrahman Bouanane alongside with a story about his personality that the journalists got to know during the course of interviews conducted in the reception center ("Turku suspect wanted to join ISIS," 2017).

Yle News also participated in the discourse about the need to toughen the immigration laws. Nevertheless, its articles on this topic did not sound as harsh as the ones of Helsinki Times. This was achieved by including some other information into the texts that cover this theme. For instance, in the article that discussed the words of Paula Risikko about the possible establishment of deportation centers for rejected asylum seekers, there is also a part with the citation of the head of Finland’s Security Intelligence Service (Supo) Antti Pelttari that it is “regrettable that Supo did not follow up on the tip that they received half a year ago about the man who allegedly carried out the Turku knife attacks” ("Interior Minister says,” 2017).

The same is true for the coverage of the speech of Sauli Niinistö to an audience of ambassadors that slipped the attention of Helsinki Times ("President Niinistö: security shaken,” 2017). The newspaper only quoted the president saying that there is a need to revise the intelligence laws and increase the surveillance powers on the press conference a day before (Teivainen, 2017). In comparison to that, Yle brought his words about the risk of isolation that must be avoided and the impossibility of stopping immigration into the center of the text. The article is called "President Niinistö: Security shaken, but closing borders leads to isolation” which already
suggests a discourse in favor of the continuing immigration that only needs to be controlled better. The writer of the text also included this quote of the president: “We cannot close our borders without isolating ourselves”. This fact attempts to show that Niinistö is a person in favor of immigration and partnership with other European countries.

As for the press conference, Yle chose a different approach to describing it as well. It did not mention any words in favor of deportations but rather pointed out the words of Niinistö that “the desire to misunderstand has been greater than the desire to understand” and his concern over the arising debate (“President Niinistö: This weekend,” 2017). It also decided to include into the article the condemnations of the attack made by Muslim and Moroccan groups.

Moreover, Yle differs from Helsinki Times in the fact that it found one of the eyewitnesses of the attack and had an interview with her whereas the latter only concentrated on press releases and translations of articles from the Finnish-language newspapers without actually doing the active reporting (“Eyewitness describes,” 2017).

In addition to interviewing eyewitnesses and asylum seekers from Bouanane’s reception center, Yle had a talk with a crisis psychologist Eija Palosaari (“After Turku attack,” 2017). She suggested those affected by traumatic events to look at pictures of it and by that process the feelings. “If viewing the images becomes too overwhelming, it may be a good idea to seek help from trauma counselor,” she said. Yle recorded an interview with her to help people get over a shock from the events.

One of the few sources cited by Yle is the local newspaper Turun Sanomat in connection to its story about Ahmad Hosseini who is himself an asylum seeker from Afghanistan studying “to become a practical nurse while awaiting an asylum decision” (“Crowds in Turku,” 2017). At the time of the attack he rushed after the assailant and provided first aid to the victims. By telling this story Yle endeavors to create a favorable image of immigrants and asylum seekers persuading the readers that not all of them are bad and radical. The same message can be found in the article where Yle tells about the interviews with the asylum seekers from the same reception center as the main suspect (“Turku suspect wanted,” 2017). They are shown to be adequate and denouncing the terrorist. The text is ended with a phrase that the interviewees
attempted to talk to the police about their previous worries about Abderrahman Bouanane, but believed that “the police don’t fully trust them, but instead regard them with some suspicion”.

Therefore, it might be said that Yle had a totally different approach to reporting about the Turku stabbing than Helsinki Times did. Not only did it go beyond communicating message sent by the police and the politicians on press conferences, but actually went into the field, conducted interviews and search for information in less evident sources like Twitter accounts. However, the most striking difference between the media is a choice of angle. Most easily this distinction can be seen in the articles dedicated to the anti-immigrant discourse. Somehow Helsinki Times makes it sound like all the Finnish authorities are against asylum seekers and immigration while Yle, despite using the same interviews and press releases as the newspaper, does not create the same effect. Yle chooses different quotes and attempts to translate the harshest ones into more neutral English. In addition, in every article that has a risk of sounding in favor of stopping the immigration and removing asylum seekers from the country, there is either a citation that produces an auspicious image of the group or an abundance of quotes that prove the concerns of the speaker and his understanding that immigration is natural in the modern Europe.

### 3.1.3 Russia Today

Russia Today which is by many considered to be a pro-Kremlin propagandistic media shows an even more distinguished approach to the act. One of its articles has a heading “Finnish police consider submachine guns for patrol officers amid mounting terrorism concerns” (“Finnish police,” 2017). Not only did it bring forward the topic of submachine guns that English-language media of Finland did not mention at all, but it also created an image of uncontrollable terrorism in Finland (“Turku knife attacker,” 2017). The article includes troubled voices of Finnish officials and their quotes are explained with the use of phrases like “carry the same guns as special ops”, “militaristic impression”, “terrorism threat”, “protective equipment”. The article is finished with a reference to the terrorist acts in France. By mentioning those events, the writer as if compares those large-scale happenings to the Turku stabbing and creates a worse image of the situation.
As for the reports on the attack itself, it cannot be pointed out that they are somehow politically colored. The language is rather neutral and the information given is not very different from the one provided by Finnish sources. It is interesting to note, however, that Russia Today includes short videos in their website publications while Yle also being a broadcasting company does not do it (“2 dead, 6 injured,” 2017; “Turku knife attacker,” 2017).

Thus, Russia Today does not provide a full picture of what happened in Turku but gives enough information for a reader to get an overview of the attack. Apart from text it also uses videos shot by eyewitnesses. It does not intrude into the anti-immigration discourse of Finland but chooses to report about the submachine guns and create an image of troubled Finland.

3.1.4 The Moscow Times

The Moscow Times did not cover the Turku stabbing at all.

Therefore, the approach of English-language media in Finland to the Turku stabbing differed from the one of those in Russia. This is a terrorist attack that took place in Finland, thus, it is totally understandable that Finnish media took greater interest in explaining the events than Russian media did. When Finnish media outlets attempted to soothe the public, Russia Today tried to create a militaristic impression of troubled Europe that wages a war against terrorism.

3.2 Russia. 2017 Saint Petersburg Metro Bombing

Russia is a country with a longer history of terrorist acts. It started as early as the 19th century. Back then terror attacks were widely used by revolutionary-minded Marxists against the authorities in order to overthrow the government. Later, in the end of the 20th century, Russia witnessed a great number of terrorist attacks in the North Caucasus, performed by radical Muslims. According to Anna Borshchevskaya (2013), their cause was “the fall of the Soviet Union and the political and economic turbulence that followed in the 1990” (p. 70).

In the 21st century terrorist attacks on transport became especially common. In 2010 two female suicide bombers called the “black widows” of slain terrorists detonated two bombs on a metro train in Moscow killing 36 people. A year before in 2009 a bomb exploded under one of
the carriages of the Nevsky Express – back then the fastest train between Moscow and Saint Petersburg. There were 27 dead and 98 injured victims. The deadliest incident took place in the international arrivals hall of the Domodedovo International Airport in Moscow in 2011. The bombing took lives of 37 people and injured 172 others. In addition to Russian citizens, there were Americans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Germans as well as citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (“Deadliest terrorist attacks,” 2017). Therefore, in contrast to Finland, the Saint Petersburg metro bombing of 2017 was not the first one in dozens of years.

The GTI score of Russia was 5.33 at the moment of writing this thesis. It is a red score which means that there were 47 incidents with 56 fatalities in 2017. It is ranked 33 out of 163 countries.

3.2.1 The Moscow Times

The Moscow Times published an excessive number of photos in addition to their texts. A photo gallery “Moscow Protests Against Terrorism” is an example of it (2017). The pictures of the newspaper depict the work of rescue services and events organized in honor of the dead in different cities of Russia.

The photos published by the newspaper are rather brutal (“Explosion Hits,” 2017). There is blood, dead bodies and destroyed metro cars. In contrast to the violent images, the newspaper posted interviews with eyewitnesses and stories about the willingness of Saint Petersburg residents to help total strangers by giving them free rides (“The Train Didn’t,” 2017).

When the Turku stabbing provoked a discourse about the need to stop immigrants coming to Finland and deport those whose asylum demand was declined, the problem of racial profiling became discussed in Russia after the Saint Petersburg metro bombing. The Moscow Times published articles featuring interviews with people exposed to illegal police checks due to their Asian appearance and various civil rights defenders (“After Metro Blast,” 2017).

Another discourse that arose after the bombing is the reaction of the west towards the happening. The newspaper published a column written by Mark Galeotti, who is a senior researcher at the Institute of International Relations Prague and heads its Center for European
Security (2017). He mentions the reluctance of European states to show sympathy for Russia by lightening public buildings in the colors of flags of the countries that experienced tragedies. He points out that even though “we are in the midst of a renewed Cold War”, human sympathy should not be neglected.

The third result of the bombing that the newspaper shed light on was the decision of the State Duma to revoke Russian passports from terrorists with dual citizenship (“State Duma Passes,” 2017). The cause of this was the suicide bomber who was born in Kyrgyzstan and later became a Russian citizen.

In addition, the Saint Petersburg metro bombing arouse a discourse about the terrorist threat coming from the Central Asian migrant workers who might be easily susceptible to the ISIS recruitment (“Russia’s Glare Turns,” 2017).

It is also interested to note that the names of all the suspects were published immediately. Not only the name of the main suspect but also full names of the alleged suspects and a man who had allegedly trained the bomber before the attack (“Suspect Accused of Training,” 2017). The Moscow Times also drew attention to the fact that the media falsely accused a Muslim man Ilyas Nikitin of being a primary suspect in the bombing (“Muslim Man Falsely Accused,” 2017). They published his photograph along with his name. As a result, he lost his job and was removed from an airplane.

The Moscow Times did not only write complete articles, but also published detailed fact lists about Akbarzhon Dzhalilov, the bomber (“One Week On,” 2017). The newspaper mostly used news agencies like Reuters as sources.

As for the language, The Moscow Times started to call the happening “an act of terrorism” from the very beginning (“Nine Dead After Explosion,” 2017). The reaction of the media was also very fast. Updates were posted every hour. The statements of Vladimir Putin, the police and the city of Saint Petersburg were considered (“The St. Petersburg Terrorist Attack,” 2017).
3.2.2 Russia Today

The topics covered by Russia Today were very similar to the ones of The Moscow Times. Nevertheless, the former included a lot more information into their articles. For instance, in the text devoted to the newly approved law about stripping naturalized Russians of their citizenship RT gave information on the history of the bill (when it was approved by the houses of the Russian parliament, the State Duma and the Federation Council), mentioned other new laws signed by Putin and discussed the ban of “anonymizer’ services and VPN (virtual private network) providers” (“Putin signs law,” 2017). The media also closely followed the process of bill passing through the houses.

As opposed to The Moscow Times that stopped reporting on the topic soon after the arrest of the suspects, Russia Today continued to create stories inspired by the act. For example, in October the media published the results of the poll conducted by the independent sociological center Levada that showed that “the proportion of Russians who live in constant fear of terrorist attacks” had almost halved since April – the figure went from 30% in April to 16% in mid-September (“Fear of terror attacks,” 2017).

What is more, RT reported on the situation in the Kiev metro, when the journalists of Ukraine’s 1+1 channel placed fake bombs there in order to see how the security forces would react (“Kiev Metro slams,” 2017). It happened right after Saint Petersburg, on April 4th.

It is also interested to note that in the majority of articles Russia Today adds extra information about the events that preceded the happening to which the text is devoted. When talking about ISIS members arrested by the FSB (the Russian Federal Security Service) in Moscow, RT told about another special operation in the Vladimir Region as well as reminded readers about the Saint Petersburg metro bombing that was the original cause of all anti-terrorist operations around the country (“4 ISIS-linked terrorists,” 2017).

Besides, many short articles found on the RT website feature a video. It is understandable, especially considering the fact that it is mainly a video channel. However, Yle, while being a channel itself, does not usually include such videos into their website publications. Examples of
such an activity can be, for example, videos of suspects’ arrests and victims commemoration events ("Bomb parts," 2017).

In addition, it can be pointed out that *Russia Today* draws special attention to the names of weapons found in the suspects’ apartments. “During their search, officers seized components of improvised explosive devices, a Kalashnikov AK-74 assault rifle, a PM handgun and ammunition,” a journalist writes in one of the articles ("Bomb parts," 2017). The names of these weapons are also included in the article’s name. As a result, the atmosphere of war is created. It makes an impression that Russian authorities are waging a war against terrorism and are in the process of winning it. As for the photos, they often depict people in uniform: policemen and FSB officers. It is probably also a sign of an attempt to influence the viewers and create a feeling of security within them.

Another feeling *Russia Today* is trying to produce is a feeling of national unity and solidarity. A long article tells about rallies organized in different Russian cities in opposition to terrorism and in support of Saint Petersburg residents ("Always united," 2017). There are many utterances of the participants and pictures of crowds and banners.

The media also attempts to create a more personalized view of the victims of the bombing in order to produce the disgust of the readers towards terrorism. An example of this is an article about a hand-to-hand combat champion Denis Petrov who was one of the passengers of the exploded metro train ("Russian hand-to-hand combat champion," 2017). The story of a man who lost his wife – a 50-year-old doll maker – adds to the impression (”My call could’ve saved her,” 2017). The article includes a phrase “heart-broken husband” which creates horror and resiliency towards terrorism.

Furthermore, it is possible to see more differences between *Russia Today* and *The Moscow Times*, if we were to discuss the biography of the suicide bomber Akbarzhan Dzhalilov. When the latter only published some facts about him using dashes, *Russia Today* published a well-written story featuring statements of his former teacher, neighbors and acquaintances from Kyrgyzstan (”Intelligent, sportsman, didn’t pray,” 2017).
Nevertheless, despite the abundance of details and commentaries, some articles are manifestly pro-Kremlin. In one of those the Irish journalist based in Moscow Bryan MacDonald calls Western media, who mentioned that the attack in Saint Petersburg might have been an attempt of the Russian government “to distract from anti-corruption protests which took place recently”, “mentally unhinged” “so-called experts” and “cranks, kooks, flakes and halfwit stooges” who sell “fiction of sordid sedition, perfidy and conspiracy to dingbats who don’t know any better” and twist the tragedy in a “nasty, loathsome and repugnant” way (2017). He uses the stilted insulting language to explain, why (according to him) the journalists from BBC, CNN and The Moscow Times are too stupid to understand that Putin is a good president who would never do anything like that. While being written in a rather repulsive tone, the article is well structured, has subheadings and links to journalists’ Twitter posts. It is indeed very interesting that such posts that denounce the western reaction to the attack come from the western journalists themselves. It is probably done for stronger effect of pieces of writing.

Just like The Moscow Times, Russia Today took up a discourse about the reaction of the west to commemorate or not commemorate the victims of the bombing by illuminating the major buildings in color of the Russian flag. RT devoted a paragraph to every city who did it and also posted a video (“Light of hope,” 2017). Nonetheless, it criticized Germany that decided to not light up the Brandenburg Gate that was lit up for Paris, Brussels, Orlando, London, Nice, Istanbul and Jerusalem. They used posts on Twitter to support their criticism. Britain was also criticized for not illuminating the London Eye.

A whole other article is devoted to Berlin and the Brandenburg Gate (“Berlin in hot water,” 2017). A journalist points out that Berlin residents on Twitter, politicians and the city police are “ashamed” of the decision not to radiate the Russian national colors. The opposite opinion is not displayed in the text at all. Another critical article was about the Empire State Building in New York that did not turn off its light for Saint Petersburg in contrast to the terroristic acts in Nice, Brussels, Paris and Orlando (“NYet: Empire State Building,” 2017).

Thus, it might be inferred that The Moscow Times and Russia Today were different in their reporting about the incident. Russia Today took a more personalized approach telling smoothly written stories and giving a say to the victims of the tragedy as well as to their relatives. Besides, there could be seen a clear pro-Kremlin anti-western approach in their texts.
channel even employed western journalists so they would criticize the reaction of the West to the bombing. Overall RT also tried to create a militarist impression. Policemen and the FSB agents often appeared on photos and precise names of weapons were reported. The Moscow Times acted more neutral. Nevertheless, it also posted pictures that depicted blood and names of the suspects straight away.

3.2.3 Helsinki Times

Saint Petersburg metro bombing was only mentioned in the Helsinki Times once in connection to the statement of the Interior Minister Paula Risikko (Teivainen, 2017). She said that “we cannot and must not shut our eyes to the changes in our security environment”. The article is ended by the list of actions that are being taken by the ministry including “updating the intelligence legislation, overhauling rescue services, developing the contingency plans of provinces, responding to hybrid threats and promoting co-operation between various authorities”.

3.2.4 Yle News

Yle News did not notice the attack in Saint Petersburg at all, despite having spoken, for example, about Stockholm and London.
4 Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to show differences between Finnish and Russian English-language media in their representation of terrorism with the use of Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis. In addition to the detailed findings that are presented in the previous chapter, I found three discourses that characterize discrepancies between countries and their approach to reporting about terrorism.

The first one is a militaristic discourse. The articles of Russian media outlets The Moscow Times and Russia Today tend to present the happenings as if there was a wide-ranging military operation going on. There is a lot of talk about arrests (with the use of names of weapons, special forces involved and pictures and videos that depict the process), photos that show blood and violence as well as bursts of patriotism that are also typical for military times. In contrast, the Finnish Helsinki Times and Yle News paid more attention to diplomacy and governmental reaction by publishing interviews with Finnish leaders and covering their press conferences.

The second discourse is a victim discourse. The Russian media published a great number of photos of attack victims as well as interviews with them. Helsinki Times did not conduct any interviews at all and Yle News concentrated on talking to a psychologist and people who knew the attacker. Therefore, it can be said that Russia attempted to create a feeling of sympathy mixed with fear for one’s life whereas Finland tried to soothe the public. As it is possible to derive from the findings of Maija Stenvall, the feeling of fear might be created in the society in order to help the government fight against terrorism by supporting it. In comparison to Russia, Finland is not trying to fight against it, it is trying to prevent it by restricting immigration.

And the third discourse is an immigrant discourse. In difference to the first ones, it arose in both countries. Both Finland and Russia started to discuss laws against immigration and Russia even allowed to strip dual citizens convicted of terrorism of citizenship. Thus, the discussion of terrorism created a kind of a xenophobia against people from other countries, however, Russia went further and created new laws while Finland mostly discussed the issue.
5 Conclusion

All things considered, it might be said that the aim of the study was fulfilled. On the basis of Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis I singled out three discourses that characterize differences in the terrorism discourse of the Finnish and Russian English-language media: a militaristic discourse, a victim discourse and an immigrant discourse.

In addition to these three features, there were also other differences that are minutely discussed in the analysis. Those include calling the event a terrorist act, topics discussed, personalization and disclosing names of suspects.

It is also interesting to note that although main differences were between countries, media outlets in one country also had discrepancies between each other. The best example here would be The Moscow Times and Russia Today, of which the latter is a pro-Kremlin source that supports all governmental actions and decisions and the former is a liberal source, which collaborates with many western journalists.

In the end it might be mentioned that societies of Finland and Russia relate to terrorism differently and media is one of the reasons why it happens so. The societies discuss the same or similar terrorist acts in a different way in order to pursue different purposes.
References


Appendix

This appendix includes articles used in the analysis of the topic.

Appendix 1.1 Helsinki Times


Appendix 1.2 Yle News

Finnish PM: “We are no longer an island” (2017, August 19). *Yle News*. Retrieved from https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finnish_pm_we_are_no_longer_an_island/9786294


Appendix 1.3 The Moscow Times


**Appendix 1.4 Russia Today**


