Finland's navigation towards NATO: How is it portrayed in Turkish digital media?

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Paper Abstract

Putin's invasion of Ukraine triggered a chain of events prompting Finland to reassess its longstanding policy of military non-alignment. Consequently, Finland made the decision to seek NATO membership. Türkiye, whose NATO membership dates to 1951, largely affected Finland's path towards NATO integration (Kanniainen 2022; Visala & Kajander 2023). This research investigates how Finnish NATO membership is portrayed in Turkish digital media, employing a linguistic framework. The data for this study is collected from web texts of online news reports and internet forum within the Turkish media sources. These texts encompass all references to Finland with specific words such as "Finlandiya" (Finland), "Fin" and "Finli" (Finnish) published between 24 February 2022 when Ukraine was invaded, and 4 April 2023 when Finland officially joined NATO. Sourced from both pro-government and anti-government Turkish digital media, these web texts present a diverse range of perspectives that shape political and public discourse surrounding Finland's NATO membership. The analysis employs Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) (Partington et al. 2013), combining quantitative corpus linguistics methods such as keyword analysis and qualitative methods like discourse analysis to examine language patterns, discourse structures, and lexical choices. Initial findings reveal a divergence in content focus of news reports, primarily centred on NATO, and interactive discussions, which extend to broader topics including Finnish culture and language. The divergence between the two contents is further reflected in discourse structures and lexical choices. Moreover, the study identifies potential intersections between political and public discourse, providing a comprehensive perspective on the topic. The research contributes to understanding Finland's recent history and national identity while offering insights into media literacy.

Keywords: Turkish digital media, Finland's NATO membership, web texts, political and public discourse, Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies.

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