

Changes and continuities in the formulaic language of letters to high authorities from imperial rule to independence: Finland, 1899–1923

Mr. President, Helsinki. Esteemed Ruler. I have turned to You and humbly request assistance for a poor schoolgirl. I have attended a bookkeeping course in Ojastenmäki for 3 months, and a little more is needed to pass. Poverty is fighting against me. [...] In my distress I turn to You Mr. President and kindly ask for assistance so that I can continue [the course] on January 9, 1921. Seeking refuge in your favor, I sign with all due respect, eagerly awaiting your esteemed response. Viivi Suolahti. Address: Perkjärvi (station). Wishing you a Happy and Joyful New Year.

The above extract from a schoolgirl's letter to the first President of Finland, originally written in Finnish and dated December 1920, contains several formulaic expressions typical of nineteenth-century epistolary style. The letter is embellished with a humble and reverent language, exemplified by the way the President is addressed as “Esteemed Ruler.” However, the writer’s approach also seems to contain personal nuances that distinguish it from letters directed to high authorities in previous decades. Can these nuances reveal something about how the new presidential institution of the recently independent republic appeared to its citizens?

In this paper I present initial findings from my ongoing research, which examines the changes and continuities in the use of formulaic language in the context of a political entity that transitioned from imperial rule to independence between the 1890s and the 1920s. The subject of research is Finland, one of the imperial borderlands in Europe that gained independence as a result of the First World War, and where the high administration was partially reconstructed after independence. The study compares letters sent by citizens to supreme political authorities before and after independence.

The source material consists of letters from ordinary citizens to the Governors-General of Finland during the last decades of Russian rule (1899–1917) and similar letters to the President of Finland in the years after independence (1919–1923).¹ The research material comprises more than 1500 pages of letters (Table 1). From this material I have transcribed about 1200 pages of Finnish text using HTR technology and Transkribus software. This sample contains only accurate (ground truth) transcriptions that I have validated myself. In terms of word count, almost 90 per cent of the sample consists of letters to the Governors-General (corpus A), whereas letters to the President make up only 10 per cent of the text (corpus B).

Table 1. Transcriptions from the research dataset.

Collection	Documents	Pages	Words
Letters from the case files of the Governor-General's Office, 1899–1917 (Corpus A)	236	1027	131,326
Registered and unregistered letters from archive of the President's Office, 1919–23 (Corpus B)	89	176	14,914

For transcribing the material, I collaborated with Ilkka Jokipii from the National Archives of Finland and Maria Niku from Finnish Literature Society to develop a text recognition model on Transkribus specifically designed for identifying handwritten Finnish text from the years 1870–1917.² Our training data included court records, and diary entries, and citizens' letters to the Governor-General. The model achieved an impressive character error rate of 0.91 per cent on our train set, and it performs well in recognizing letters sent to the Governors-General, despite the significant variation in handwriting in these letters. However, the model did not perform nearly as well in recognizing letters sent to the President, partly due to the new vocabulary present in these letters. For example, the recognition of the word "presidentti" posed unexpected difficulties for the model. In any case, after the automatic text

¹ These letters are archived in the archive of the Governor-General's Office, and in the archive (I) of the Office of the President of the Republic of Finland, both housed at the National Archives of Finland.

² The HTR model "Suomi 1870-1917, v1" was made openly available on the Transkribus platform. See <https://readcoop.eu/model/suomi-1870-1917/>. My material also includes some typewritten letters, which were transcribed with the OCR engine of Transkribus.

recognition, I have personally gone through the transcribed corpora and corrected errors, which took some weeks.

This paper explores the differences and similarities in the use of formulaic language in these two sets of letter data. The hypothesis is that the process of independence and the emergence of new national institutions did not result in a complete transformation of formulaic expressions. Rather, when addressing the President, citizens commonly used the same established forms of address and formulaic courtesies, similar to those used previously when writing to the Governor-General representing the Russian administration in Finland.

My research is situated within the vibrant research field of writing upwards. As defined by historian Martyn Lyons, the umbrella term “writing upwards” encompasses various writings from ordinary individuals to those in positions of power, spanning collective petitions to letters composed by individual authors. A shared element across all forms of writing upwards is the social or political inequality between the correspondents and the implicit assumption about the ruler's accessibility.³

A specific source of inspiration for my own paper has been Maarten Van Genderachter's research on letters from citizens to the Belgian royal family in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Van Genderachter demonstrates that the social background of the senders influenced their ability to imitate official discourse and use the humble and deferential phrases that were characteristic of this discourse. Educated senders were often skillful in using the public transcript of the dominants, whereas lower-class uneducated writers often struggled in using the formulaic language according to the epistolary etiquette.⁴

Similar observations about the mastery of epistolary conventions among letter-writers has also been presented by Karen Lauwers in her study of citizens' letters to parliamentarians in early twentieth-century France. Lauwers' analysis of these letters sheds light on the senders' perspectives on political representation, citizenship, and

³ Martyn Lyons, “Writing Upwards: Letters to Robert Menzies, Australian Prime Minister, 1949–1966,” *The Journal of Epistolary Studies* 2, no. 1 (2020): 35–36.

⁴ Maarten Van Genderachter, “Public Transcripts of Loyalty: Pauper Letters to the Belgian Royal Family (1880–1940),” in *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, eds. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 223–34.

the Republican regime. The study also explores how the First World War, socio-economic crises, and laicization affected communication between citizens and politicians. Lauwers observes a notable emergence of democratic citizenship vocabulary in the letters during the war. She also points out that women, especially the wives and mothers of mobilised men, became a significant minority of letter senders during the war.⁵ The gender of the letter-writers may have had a great influence on the formulaic language used in the letters, which is also an issue to be considered in my own research.

Like many other “writings upwards,” my research material is inherently characterized by the abundance of formulaic expressions and strategic language use. Due to these features, some researchers argue that letters sent to authorities cannot be considered an “authentic” reflection of the senders' voices and experiences.⁶ On the other hand, as recent research within the field the history of experience has argued, experiences should not be solely reduced to language and discourses anyway.⁷ Nonetheless, there is a connection between experiences and language use. I believe that analyzing changes in formulaic language can be a productive way to understand shifts in people's societal experiences. Even subtle nuances in language use can provide valuable insights into how citizens experienced political transformations and lived out key political institutions in their everyday lives.

In the remainder of my paper, I first provide an overview of the letters in the dataset and their political and social context. Second, I compare the most common forms of address used in the corpora. Third, I apply simple quantitative methods to the transcribed samples. Finally, I synthesize observations and contemplate directions for further research. My study is in its early stages, and the processing of the datasets is still underway. Therefore, conclusions should be approached with caution.

⁵ Karen Lauwers, *Ordinary Citizens and the French Third Republic: Negotiations Between People and Parliament, C. 1900–1930* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 75–83, 167, 329–30.

⁶ See Yuval Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan: Protests and Justice in Late Ottoman Palestine 1865–1908* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 89–91.

⁷ E.g. Rob Boddice and Mark Smith, *Emotion, Sense, Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 18–20.

Letters in their political context: Finland from the imperial era to independence

The Governor-General of Finland received letters from ordinary people throughout the period 1809–1917, when Finland was under Russian rule as an autonomous Grand Duchy. The Governor-General was the highest representative of imperial power in the Grand Duchy, and he served as the chair of the Finnish Senate, while simultaneously executing the will of the emperor. As the Russian government began to reduce the autonomy of Finland and integrate it more closely into the empire at the end of the nineteenth century, Governors-General played a key role in implementing these integration measures. This made them detested representatives of imperial oppression among many Finns but also elevated their public profile. Therefore, an increasing number of people started to contact them through letters, which contained requests, complaints, congratulations, thanks, threats, and, very prominently, political denunciations. The flow of letters to the Governors-General continued up until the Russian February Revolution and even beyond, until the institution of the Governor-General was eventually abolished slightly before Finland gained independence in December 1917.⁸

Finland's independence from Russia in the middle of the First World War had a turbulent start. In January 1918, a bloody civil war broke out between non-socialist Whites and socialist Reds. The war resulted in the deaths of approximately 38,000 individuals, three-quarters of whom were Reds. Many of these deaths occurred in post-war internment camps, where around 80,000 Reds were confined for varying durations. The fate of the Red prisoners, war widows, and orphans, remained central political and social issues that divided Finnish society in the interwar period.⁹

After the Civil War, the victorious Whites initially planned for a monarchy in Finland, with a German prince as the ruler. However, when Germany lost the World War, the monarchical form of government was abandoned, and the country was declared a

⁸ See Sami Suodenjoki, "Whistleblowing from Below: Finnish Rural Inhabitants' Letters to the Imperial Power at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Vernacular Literacies: Past, Present and Future*, eds. Ann-Catrine Edlund, Lars-Erik Edlund, and Susanne Haugen, 279–93 (Umeå: Umeå University, 2014); Sami Suodenjoki, "Informing as National Indifference? The Case of Finnish Citizens' Collaboration with the Russian Authorities, 1899–1917," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 25, no. 2 (2022): 253–79.

⁹ The best synthesis on these themes is Tuomas Tepora and Aapo Roselius, eds., *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

republic. The President, who was to be elected by the parliament, was granted the highest powers. In the summer of 1919, the moderate social reformist K. J. Ståhlberg won the first presidential election. His opponent, General Mannerheim, who had led the White army in the Civil War and served as regent after the war, lost the election by a wide margin.

From the start of his six-year term, the new President received letters from ordinary citizens, including men, women and children from both the Red and the White sides of the Civil War. For the defeated Reds, the President became even more approachable after his marriage to Ester Hällström in 1920, since the President's new wife worked actively for the Red Orphans' cause.¹⁰ The marriage also strengthened the President's social-liberal profile, setting him further apart from General Mannerheim, who was idolized by many as the White hero of the Civil War but who was also a target of hatred for the defeated Reds. Citizens' letters to Ståhlberg suggest that his moderate profile facilitated positive feelings even among defeated Reds towards the newly independent nation, a sentiment that might have been challenging if Mannerheim had been president. Historian Tuomas Tepora argues that Mannerheim's election could have steered Finnish society towards a more authoritarian direction compared to the republicanism embodied in Ståhlberg's term.¹¹

What the letter corps under study have in common is that the senders of the letters came from a wide range of social backgrounds and had a wide variation in their writing skills. However, the President's correspondents were, on average, slightly more fluent in the use of the pen than the people who wrote to the Governors-General, a fact that was influenced by the expansion of popular education and literacy. In 1900, only 40 percent of the Finnish adult population could write, but by 1920 this figure had risen to 70 percent.¹²

¹⁰ See Marjaliisa Hentilä and Seppo Hentilä. *Tasavallan ensimmäiset: Presidenttipari Ester ja Kaarlo Juho Ståhlberg* (Helsinki: Siltala, 2022).

¹¹ Tuomas Tepora, *Sankari ja antisankari: Mannerheim-kultin pitkä vuosisata* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2023), 88.

¹² *Annuaire Statistique de Finlande: Vingtième année 1922* (Helsinki: Bureau central de statistique de Finlande, 1922), table 18: Population selon le degré d'instruction 1880–1920.

The corpora under examination differ also in terms of the gender distribution of the senders. Of the letters sent to the President, 39 percent were written by women, while the proportion of women writing letters to the Governors-General was less than 10 percent. This difference highlights the distinctiveness of the public profiles of the President and Governor-General. Notably, the President's female correspondents also included several school-age girls, a group that was entirely absent among the correspondents of the Governors-General.

In my previous research, I have found that many citizens who wrote to the Governor General also approached other authorities with their petitions and complaints. Against this background, it is surprising that few of these people seem to have subsequently written to the President. I have identified with certainty only two such individuals, servant Ida Liukko and street vendor Olga Hellberg, both of whom struggled with poor handwriting and mastery of grammar. However, their letters are particularly important for the study as they provide concrete evidence of how the same person may have modified her language when addressing a different recipient. For instance, Hellberg's letters to the Governors-General were full of religious vocabulary, but this vocabulary was completely absent from her letters to Ståhlberg. The President's public profile might have contributed to this, although it is unlikely that the author knew about Ståhlberg's aloofness towards church and religion.¹³

Forms of address in comparison

The letters sent to the Governors-General contain dozens of different forms of address in their salutations. Table 2 presents the most used forms of address from 1899–1905. These included “Your Excellency” and “His Excellency”, but many writers also used the phrase “Highly Esteemed” (*Korkeasti Kunnioitettava*) or its abbreviation (*K.K.*). Occasionally, terms such as “Merciful” and “Honourable” were also used in the salutations.

¹³ For Ståhlberg's relation to religion, see Hentilä and Hentilä, *Tasavallan ensimmäiset*, 220.

Table 2. The most common forms of address in letters to the Governor-General, 1899–1905

Hänen Korkea Ylhäisyytensä Suomenmaan Kenraalikuvernööri	His High Excellency the Governor-General of Finland
Hänen Ylhäisyytensä Kenraalikuvernööri	His Excellency Governor-General
Hänen Ylhäisyytensä Kenraalikuvernööri Suomessa	His Excellency Governor-General in Finland
Hänen Ylhäisyytensä Korkeasti Kunnioitettu Herra Kenraalikuvernööri	His Excellency Highly Esteemed Mr. Governor-General
Hänen Ylhäisyytensä Suomenmaan Herra Kenraalikuvernööri	His Excellency Mr. Governor-General of Finland
Korkeasti Kunnioitettu Herra Kenraalikuvernööri	Highly Esteemed Mr. Governor-General
Suomenmaan Kenraalikuvernööri	The Governor-General of Finland
Teidän Ylhäisyytenne	Your Excellency
Teidän Ylhäisyytenne Herra Kenraalikuvernööri	Your Excellency Mr. Governor-General
Teidän Ylhäisyytenne Suomenmaan Kenraalikuvernööri	Your Excellency The Governor-General of Finland

Deviations from conventional forms of address can shed light on the sender's attitude towards the addressee. Some senders addressed the Governor-general as “ruler”, which was a breach of etiquette as it elevated the Governor-general above the emperor. However, the use of forms of address appropriate to the emperor when addressing high imperial officials was also common in letters sent by Russian peasants to officialdom, as Sergei Tutolmin has observed.¹⁴

The forms of address used in the salutations of letters sent to the President between 1919 and 1923 differ significantly from those used in the letters to the Governor-General. Table 3 lists the most typical forms of addressing the President. In general, there are fewer decorative words expressing humility and deference in these letters than in letters to the Governor-General. Although the phrase “Highly Esteemed” does appear in several letters to the President and the term “Honourable” in a few, only a couple of senders addressed the President as “Your Excellency”. This goes against the hypothesis suggesting a strong continuity of formulaic language from the imperial era in letters directed to the President.

As the table shows, the term 'republic' (tasavalta) was commonly used in the salutations. This suggests that the new form of government was swiftly embraced by the people. However, the corpus contains letters from two different senders in which

¹⁴ Sergei N. Tutolmin, “Russian Peasant Views of the Imperial Administration, 1914-Early 1917,” *Russian Studies in History* 47, no. 4 (2009): 77.

the President is addressed as *Suomen valtakunnan Herra Presidentti*. This could be translated as “Mr. President of the State of Finland.” However, the Finnish term *valtakunta* also connotes a kingdom and was commonly used in the expression “Kingdom of God.” Therefore, it is possible that the senders who used this word wanted Finland to be a monarchy rather than a republic. However, this is speculative, as the term *valtakunta* could just as well have been used because it was more familiar to the users than *tasavalta*.

Table 3. The most common forms of address in letters to the President, 1919–23

Herra Presidentti	Mr. President
Korkeasti Kunnioitettava Herra Presidentti	Highly Esteemed Mr. President
Suomen Tasavallan Herra Presidentti	Mr. President of the Republic of Finland
Suomen Tasavallan Presidentti	President of the Republic of Finland
Tasavallan Herra Presidentti	Mr. President of the Republic
Tasavallan Presidentti Kunnioitettava Herra	President of the Republic, Esteemed Mr.

The letters to the President also include some other interesting deviations from established forms of address. One man who sought assistance for his family's financial hardship referred to Ståhlberg as “The Highest Man of Finland,” whereas another sender with limited writing skills addressed the President as “The Highest of Finland.” These phrases indicate that the two senders perceived the president as the unquestionable supreme authority of the state. Their conception was in line with Finnish constitution, which granted the president significantly more power than the heads of state had in most other new European republics.¹⁵

Letters addressed to the President contained less vocabulary expressing humility and deference compared to those addressed to the Governors-General, but still maintained social distance from the President. However, some school-age writers adopted a more intimate tone with salutations “Honourable Uncle” and “Dear Uncle!”. Such intimate forms of address did not appear in letters addressed to the Governors-General. However, it is worth noting that President Ståhlberg was not the first head of state in Finland to be referred to as “Uncle” by children. In fact, General

¹⁵ See Hentilä and Hentilä, *Tasavallan ensimmäiset*, 64.

Mannerheim also received letters addressed to him as “Uncle” during his regency in 1918–1919.¹⁶

An interesting detail in the correspondence to the President is the complete absence of the Finnish term *Suomenmaa*, which translates to “Finland”. However, in the letters addressed to the Governor-General, the term is used quite generally, primarily as part of the salutation: *Teidän Ylhäisyytenne Suomenmaan Herra Kenraalikuvernööri*, “Your Excellency Mr. Governor-General of Finland.” The term *Suomenmaa* referred specifically to Finland as a geographical area and did not carry the connotation of a nation-state or body politic associated with the term *Suomi*. It was therefore safe to use the word *Suomenmaa* when addressing a high imperial official, even though the term *Suomi* was also commonly used in letters from citizens to the Governors-General. By contrast, citizens who wrote to the President no longer found use for *Suomenmaa* and instead always used official name of the republic, *Suomi*.

An experiment with keyness analysis

As part of my research, I will experiment with computational methods for corpus analysis. These methods are borrowed from Risto Turunen's groundbreaking study on the evolution of the political language of Finnish socialism. Turunen employs three methods: 1) counting relative word frequencies over time, 2) collocation analysis, which can be used to understand the linguistic context of conceptually interesting terms, and 3) the keyness method.¹⁷ Especially the third method is a natural fit for my research. To apply it, I lemmatized the raw texts of the corpora and conducted the analysis using the AntConc tool.¹⁸

The keyness method identifies words that occur more frequently in text corpus A than in text corpus B. Keyness is measured using both the log-likelihood test and the ratio of relative frequencies. The latter is more accessible for historians not

¹⁶ Tepora, *Sankari ja antisankari*, 96.

¹⁷ For an explanation of these methods, see Risto Turunen (2021), *Shades or Red: Evolution of the Political Language of Finnish Socialism from the 19th Century until the Civil War of 1918*. Helsinki: Finnish Society for Labour History, 51–60.

¹⁸ AntConc Homepage, <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/>.

specialized in statistical methods, as it indicates *how many times more* a word occurs in corpus A compared to corpus B.

Keyness analysis reveals some obvious differences between the two corpora (see Appendixes 1 and 2). Unsurprisingly, the terms "President" and "Republic" are prevalent in letters addressed to the President, but neither term appears in correspondence with the Governors-General. Conversely, letters dispatched to the Governors-General exhibit a relatively higher frequency of words associated with Russian governance. Such words include "imperial", "Emperor," and the term referring to the government of the Grand Duchy of Finland, "Senate." Following Finland's independence, the term "Senate" was supplanted by "Government" (in Finnish, *hallitus*), a shift swiftly embraced by citizens, as evidenced in letters to the President.

In letters addressed to the President, the title "Mr." (*Herra*) is used three times more often than in letters sent to the Governors-General.¹⁹ Conversely, the term "excellency" appears significantly more frequently in letters sent to the Governor-General compared to the other corpus. "Your Excellency" had become a standard form of address for the Governor-General in the nineteenth century and was recommended also in letter-writing manuals. However, only a small segment of senders used this expression to address the President, which indicates a shift away from monarchist language.

Based on my initial experiments, the keyness method does not bring about revolutionary results in the analysis of the material, as similar observations can be made from such small datasets even with the naked eye. If the word counts of the corpora were significantly higher or the temporal perspective longer, the usefulness of keyness analysis would likely increase. Nevertheless, computational methods can probably help confirm the argument that the use of humble, deferential and monarchical expressions and phrases significantly decreased in the correspondence after independence. This, in turn, could indicate that the social distance between citizens and the highest leadership of the state decreased, and that the presidential institution did not, after all, represent a continuation of monarchy for the citizens.

¹⁹ As a form of address, the Finnish term *Herra* could also be translated as "Sir" or even "Lord".

Conclusion

Determining whether the comparison of letters sent to the Governors-General and the President shows more continuity or ruptures in the use of formulaic language is a challenging task. However, a preliminary analysis suggest that citizens did not use very similar language in their letters to the first President as had been used in letters to high imperial authorities. The reduced use of the form of address “Your Excellency” and some other deferential expressions exemplifies this. Despite the extensive powers given to the President as a necessary compromise after the failure of aspirations for a monarchy, the data does not support the notion that citizens perceived the President as a new Tsar, or the King.

To extend the research, the comparative dataset could include letters from citizens addressed to C. G. E. Mannerheim from his regency period (1918–1919) to his presidency (1944–1946). This would be particularly intriguing because Mannerheim served as a kind of shadow president during Ståhlberg's presidency, and because his public profile was were different from that of Ståhlberg due to his Swedish aristocratic background, military career, and political conservatism. As observed by Tuomas Tepora, Mannerheim received a considerable number of letters from ordinary citizens, especially children, who formed a specific target group for the builders of the Mannerheim cult after 1918.²⁰ It would be interesting to study whether the language used by these writers had more monarchist and idealizing features than the language used in letters addressed to President Ståhlberg.

Expanding the timeframe towards the later years could also benefit the study. This approach would enable a more detailed examination of the linguistic transformations in letters directed to the President, shedding light on how these changes correlate with shifts in Finnish society and the evolving political landscape affecting the President's role. Valuable comparisons could be drawn, for example, from letters addressed to the longest-serving President Urho Kekkonen, some of which have been published.²¹ Also relevant for comparison would be letters sent to the first female President, Tarja Halonen (2000–2014), especially considering the notable

²⁰ Tuomas Tepora, *Sankari ja antisankari*, 91–92, 96, 131–32.

²¹ E.g. Pekka Lähteenkorva and Jussi Pekkarinen, eds., *Kirjeitä myllärilille 1956–1981* (Helsinki: Otava, 2000).

presence of children among people who wrote to her, as indicated by research findings.²² Investigating the long-term shifts and continuities in how children express themselves to authority figures would be a captivating avenue for further research.

Examining the letters in a wider European context would also offer valuable insights. Finland, as a borderland that emerged from the collapse of a dynasty due to the First World War, presents an intriguing case study. The analyzed material could contribute significantly to comparative studies with other comparable states, including Estonia, Poland, Hungary, or Ireland. Envisioning the possibility of an international research project, I propose focusing on the language employed in addressing political leaders in newly formed nation-states resulting from the First World War. Such a project could shed light on both the shared aspects and unique features in how citizens in different countries navigated the establishment of new political institutions and leaders in their respective homelands.

Since my research material also includes letters written in Swedish, Russian, and several other languages, it would be possible in the study to compare the formulaic language usage in different languages. This type of research has been conducted previously, for instance, by sociolinguist Stephan Elspaß, who has focused on private letters. He advocates for more comparative analysis of letters in different languages. This could help discern whether there was a shared repertoire of phrases used in European correspondence in the nineteenth century and how these phrases were transmitted across different languages.²³ Letters from ordinary people to those in power could offer particularly rich material for such analysis, as these letters have often been preserved in the archives of various countries more abundantly than private letters from lower social classes.²⁴

²² Ulla-Maija Salo, "Dear Mrs President: Children's Letters to the President of Finland as Documents of Life," in *Documents of Life Revisited*, ed. Liz Stanley (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

²³ Stephan Elspaß, "Between linguistic creativity and formulaic restriction: Cross-linguistic perspectives on nineteenth-century lower class writers' private letters," in *Letter Writing in Late Modern Europe*, eds. Marina Dossena and Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012): 60.

²⁴ See Andreas Würigler, "Voices from Among the 'Silent Masses': Humble Petitions and Social Conflicts in Early Modern Central Europe," in *Petitions in Social History. International Review of Social History* 46, Supplement 9, ed. Lex Heerma van Voss, 12.

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Appendix 1. The words that appear more frequently than statistically expected in letters addressed to the Governors-General compared to letters sent to President Ståhlberg.

Word	Translation	Keyness value (Likelihood)	Ratio of Rel. Freq.
<i>kuvernööri</i>	governor	83,932	
<i>ylhäisyys</i>	excellency	67,192	4,2
<i>senaatti</i>	senate	50,084	32,6
<i>keisarillinen</i>	imperial	42,224	11,4
<i>keisari</i>	emperor	37,651	
<i>päätös</i>	decision	33,962	6,82
<i>räisälä</i>	Räisälä (place name)	25,666	
<i>kenraalikuvernööri</i>	governor-general	22,766	9,77
<i>lääni</i>	county	22,403	6,02
<i>valitus</i>	complaint	21,93	16,2
<i>torppari</i>	crofter	21,814	

Appendix 2. The words that appear more frequently than statistically expected in letters addressed to President Ståhlberg compared to letters sent to the Governors-General.

<i>Word</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Keyness value (Likelihood)</i>	<i>Ratio of Rel. Freq.</i>
<i>presidentti</i>	president	575,272	
<i>tasavalta</i>	republic	283,87	
<i>herra</i>	Mr.	126,311	3,14
<i>avustus</i>	assistance	86,25	15,6
<i>ståhlberg</i>	Ståhlberg (surname)	75,831	
<i>helsinki</i>	Helsinki (place name)	62,026	4,41
<i>äiti</i>	mother	51,932	75,5
<i>kunnioittaa</i>	to respect	44,583	5,87
<i>nöyrä</i>	humble	44,43	3,61
<i>eläke</i>	pension	40,21	15,9
<i>pyytää</i>	to request	39,72	2,3
<i>ehdonalainen</i>	probation	39,556	
<i>käyttövarat</i>	available funds	39,556	
<i>palvelus</i>	service	38,423	8,39
<i>rauha</i>	peace	35,219	8,39
<i>auttaa</i>	to help	35,09	7,19
<i>kääntyä</i>	to turn	31,487	4,49
<i>myöntää</i>	to grant, to allow	30,75	5,92
<i>anteeksi</i>	sorry	29,552	6,78
<i>kuritushuone</i>	penitentiary	28,692	18,2
<i>jumala</i>	God	28,659	3,85
<i>päästä</i>	to get, be released	24,766	4,37
<i>tampere</i>	Tampere (place name)	24,085	6,29
<i>odottaa</i>	to wait	23,919	7,46
<i>vapaus</i>	freedom	22,407	8,39
<i>leski</i>	widow	18,721	5,72