

## **Contextual factors when reading a translated academic text**

The effect of paratextual voices and academic background

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*This study builds on Taivalkoski-Shilov's (2015b) work on the reception of Foucault's Histoire de la sexualité in Finland, as translated by Kaisa Sivenius in 1998. It examines how two non-interdependent factors that proved central to the reception of Sivenius's translation in Taivalkoski-Shilov's study – paratexts and readers' academic background – affect how readers react to a translated academic text. Our empirical study on Finnish university students reading Sivenius's translation consisted of two parts: an eye-tracking study followed by short interviews and a reading task given to some participants with a request to write a narrative report. The participants were divided into five different groups with six to eight participants. We studied the effect of paratexts on three groups in an eye-tracking study, prior to which each group read a different paratext. The effect of academic background was studied by an analysis of narrative reports that two groups with different academic backgrounds (translator students and non-translator students) wrote about their reading experience. The analysis of the eye-tracking data gives some evidence that the paratexts read prior to reading the text sample influenced the participants' perspective in regard to the translation. The narrative reports indicate that the participants' academic background affected the way they reacted to Sivenius's*

*translation. Consequently, this study suggests that voices that surround both texts and their readers influence how these readers respond to translated academic texts.*

**Keywords:** translation, reader response, paratext, paratextual voice, reading perspective, academic text, Foucault, Sivenius, eye-tracking

## **1. Introduction**

How is the reading of a translated academic text influenced by contextual factors? For instance, how does a translational paratext such as a translator's preface affect the way readers respond to certain translation strategies? Is it possible to create a particular reading perspective (see below) with the help of paratexts? Furthermore, how does a reader's academic background influence the perception of a translated academic text? In this chapter, we seek answers to these questions by presenting the results of an empirical study that investigated Finnish students reading the translation of Michel Foucault's *Histoire de la sexualité* (*Seksuaalisuuden historia*, by Kaisa Sivenius) at the University of Helsinki. The analysis is divided into two parts. In the first part, we study the effect of paratexts on twenty-four participants. The participants were divided into three groups, each of which read a different paratext (the translator's preface, a sociologist's afterword, and a critical review of the translation) prior to reading a passage from the translation while being observed with an eye tracker. In the second part, we investigate the effect of the readers' academic background by analyzing reading journals written by thirteen participants. The participants were recruited from two different fields:

translation/language studies and social studies. Our research questions spring from Taivalkoski-Shilov's (2015b) case study on the reception<sup>1</sup> of Sivenius's translation (1998) and its revised edition (2010), which indicates that paratexts as well as readers' interpretive communities influenced the reception of Sivenius's translation.<sup>2</sup> In the study described in this chapter, we were unable to study the effect of the interpretive community, owing to the heterogeneity of the social studies group, which turned out to consist of participants belonging to dissimilar interpretive communities.<sup>3</sup> Thus, we ended up making a broader division, simply distinguishing between translator students and non-translator students.

In this study, as well as in the majority of studies that deal with reader-response of translated texts at the individual level, information is acquired through triangulation by combining different research methods (Brems and Ramos Pinto 2013). Our research material consists of both eye-tracking data and *contextual voices* (Alvstad and Assis Rosa 2015) that we have either collected from various sources or else generated ourselves by interviewing the participants and asking them to write journals on their reading of Sivenius's translation. The research material was collected in four rounds between June 2014 and April 2016.<sup>4</sup>

The remainder of this chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first one, we present the theoretical framework and the paratexts to Sivenius's translation that we used in this study. In the second section, we describe the study setup and discuss the results of our analysis.

## **2. Text, context, paratext**

### *2.1 On contextual aspects of reading*

After the “rise of the reader” – that is, the shift in interpretive focus away from texts and their authors toward readers, one that happened some decades ago in literary studies and cultural studies and later also in Translation Studies – scholars have generally agreed that readers play an essential role in constructing textual meaning. Moreover, many studies have shown the influence of contextual factors on the reading of any text, whether literary or non-literary. Such contextual factors include larger socio-historical and economic circumstances as well as communities that individual readers belong to (Chan 2016:147–148).

Textual contexts also affect the reception of texts, as has been pointed out by Gérard Genette (1987), who talks about paratexts as textual thresholds. These thresholds can be written, oral, verbal, or non-verbal, such as prefaces, notes, titles, dust jackets, photos, charts, comments, correspondences, and interviews. Genette links such paratexts strictly to authorial intention and responsibility (Genette 1987:9, 13, 14; Pellatt 2013a:2; Summers 2013:14). From the point of view of Translation Studies, it is more fruitful to have a wider understanding of paratexts, as many texts that frame translated texts in the target culture have similar functions as the authorial paratext in the source culture: the translator’s preface, a target-language specialist’s introduction or afterword, interviews

with the translator, reviews of the translation, correspondences, and so forth. All such texts may serve as thresholds to translated texts and predispose readers to interpret the core text a certain way (i.e., have a paratext function in the reception of a given translation). Furthermore, source-text authors tend to have less power in target cultures: as Summers (2013:12, 13) notes, “translated authorship is problematized by the writer’s lack of authority over the frames placed around the translated text, which are often controlled by institutional agents such as publishers, editors and reviewers.” Even though this does not apply to all source-text authors,<sup>5</sup> it is an additional reason to redefine paratexts in the context of translation: translated texts are not the same as their originals, and the same applies to paratexts. Consequently, we understand “paratext” here as “any material additional to, appended to or external to the core text which has functions of explaining, defining, instructing, or supporting, adding background information, or the relevant opinions and attitudes of scholars, translators and reviewers” (Pellatt 2013a:1), if such a text is used to “bridge translated texts with their readers” (Tahir Gürçağlar 2016) and affects how readers respond to the core text. By paratextual voices we simply mean contextual voices that are deliberately used by the author, the publisher, the translator, critics, readers, or researchers (such as the authors of this chapter in the eye-tracking study described below) to influence reader reactions to a translated text.

## *2.2 The three paratexts used in this study*

All three paratexts used in the eye-tracking study are excerpts from texts that have functioned as real-life paratexts for Sivenius’s translation. The first text is the translator’s

own preface, which introduced both editions of the translation (the 2010 reedition also includes a shorter, additional foreword from the translator that refers to the critical comments of some gender and queer studies scholars on her translation solution regarding the term *sexe*, see Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:42–45). The second text, an afterword by sociologist Ilpo Helén, featured likewise in both editions of the translation. The third text, a critical review of Sivenius’s translation by Tuija Pulkkinen, has served as an unofficial but influential paratext for Sivenius’s translation in certain Finnish university contexts, such as in conjunction with gender studies exams at some universities (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:44).

### 2.2.1 *Sivenius’s preface to Seksuaalisuuden historia*

Translators’ prefaces do not seem to be common in Finnish translations of academic texts, but Kaisa Sivenius’s preface can be explained by the source text’s status as a well-known classic (Liikala 2006:36–39). This explanatory preface<sup>6</sup> is two pages long and is situated at the very beginning of the 512-page work. Sivenius opens by describing the structure and style of Foucault’s text. Since Foucault’s French is difficult to render in Finnish, she has, according to the preface, aimed at increasing the readability of the text by splitting up long sentences and by changing the punctuation and the structure of some paragraphs. Her general aim has been to create an enjoyable reading experience and to transmit Foucault’s humor in the text (Sivenius 1998).

The longest part of the preface concerns terminology. Foucault’s polysemic terminology is notoriously difficult to translate, and his translators’ solutions have received critical scrutiny (see Gillett and Downing 2010). Sivenius clarifies her own

translation choices for several challenging terms, such as *dispositif*, *l'hypothèse répressive*, *souci*, *régime*, *techniques de soi*, and *désir*. Her most elaborate explanation concerns Foucault's term *sexe*, which can variously mean "gender/sex," "genital organs," "sexuality," "sex," and "sexy" in French.<sup>7</sup>

Another essential term is *sexe*, which has been rendered here by *sukupuolisuus* ['sexuality'] or *sukupuoli* ['gender']. Instead of other options, for example *seksi* ['sex'], it was chosen specifically because of its Janus-like nature, indicating the biological division into two sexes, male and female. However, *sukupuoli* has a deeper and wider meaning: for Foucault it is what the two halves of the human sexes have in common, and it is here that Westerners have been seeking the truth. Its repression does not signify mere gender oppression; repression and the demand to disclose the truth are directed exactly at what the sexes have in common, sex itself. The ambiguity opened up in the Finnish translation was thus a deliberate choice. (Sivenius 1998:n.p., translation by Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:41)<sup>8</sup>

The cited passage in Sivenius's preface has been crucial for the translation's reception, which is why we included it in the excerpt that some of our participants read in advance in the eye-tracking study. Sivenius justifies her solution by her interpretation of Foucault, which is based not only on her own thorough reading of all parts of *Histoire de la sexualité* (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:47), but on the comments of Foucault specialists and other members of the Finnish intelligentsia who are acknowledged at the end of the

preface, as a sort of guarantee of quality.<sup>9</sup> The slightly “defensive” tone of the preface shows that Sivenius was anticipating some criticism regarding her translation (Norberg 2012:103), which explains why the voice speaking in her preface has the function of a *captatio benevolentiae* (see Liikala 2006:11).

### 2.2.2 Ilpo Helén’s afterword

The second paratext used in our study is the afterword written by sociologist Ilpo Helén entitled “Elämä seksuaalisuudessa” (Life in sexuality). This afterword is seventeen pages long and is situated at the end of the book. Helén starts by discussing the context of Foucault’s work and the development of his thinking and philosophical approaches while writing *Histoire de la sexualité*:

The philosophical and historical work of Michel Foucault (1926–1984) during his “late period” was centered on the lecture series and seminars that he gave at the *Collège de France* and from 1979 also in the United States, mostly in California. Teaching and lecturing formed the context where *The History of Sexuality* began to take shape, so the three published volumes were not built on systematic theorizing or conceptual work, or on pedantic archival work. (Helén 1998:495, our translation)<sup>10</sup>

From the genesis of *Histoire de la sexualité*, Helén moves on to discuss the contents and central concepts of the work. As Sivenius points out in her preface, Helén presents a more detailed discussion of concepts such as the repressive hypothesis and dispositif and



also addresses Foucault's views on sexuality, discussing particularly his emphasis on the duality of the concept of *sexe*, rooted in the distinction between the two sexes (Helén 1998:502). In this discussion, Helén uses the Finnish word *seksuaalisuus* ('sexuality') but does not explicitly address the terminology or potential translation issues. The excerpt used in the eye-tracking sessions discussed in section 3.1, part of which is quoted above, was taken from the beginning of the afterword, where the context and overall contents of Foucault's work are discussed. Consequently, the voice speaking in the paratext read by our participants is that of a neutral outsider, even though Helén's afterword as a whole has probably had a "defensive" function vis-à-vis the translation as well, since he brings up the distinction between the two sexes, which is the starting point of Sivenius's interpretation of Foucault's *sexe*.

### *2.2.3 Tuija Pulkkinen's review of Sivenius's translation*

Tuija Pulkkinen's four-page review of Sivenius's translation was published in 1999 in a special issue of the journal *Tiede ja edistys* (Science and progress), where Finnish Foucault scholars had been invited to write on *Histoire de la sexualité* to mark the historical publication of the Finnish translation. Pulkkinen, whose English website introduces her as a "multidisciplinary scholar, originally trained in the areas of philosophy, history, and politics, with feminist and queer interests,"<sup>11</sup> praised the style and humor of Sivenius's translation, but was extremely critical about her use of the term *sukupuoli* ('gender') for Foucault's *sexe* (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:42–44). Pulkkinen starts her criticism by making assumptions on the causes of this translation solution:

For a long time I have been wondering why it is that, particularly in Finland, some parties believe that Foucault wrote essentially about gender in the first part [of *History of Sexuality*]. Only recently, after having acquainted myself with the Swedish translation that came out already in 1976, has it dawned on me that many Finns have presumably been reading the Swedish translation, where the translator Britta Gröndahl has made a strange choice by translating the word *sexe* with *kön*, that is, ‘gender.’

In the new Finnish translation, Kaisa Sivenius has unfortunately continued the “Nordic” tradition of interpretation and has rendered *sexe* in most cases by the word *sukupuoli* [‘gender’]. (Pulkkinen 1999:61)<sup>12</sup>

For Pulkkinen, this translation solution had caused a shift in Foucault’s most essential points in *La volonté de savoir* and made his claims on sexuality sound like traditional gender issues. The quoted passage from Pulkkinen’s review was part of the excerpt that eight of our participants read before their eye-tracking session. Even though the excerpt also contained extremely positive comments on the translation, the voice that speaks in the paratext is that of an antagonist. As Pellatt (2013a:3) writes, in addition to priming, explaining, contextualizing, and justifying, paratexts can also reject and refute the text and thereby deter readers, and Pulkkinen’s review has indeed had such a negative effect on some readers of Sivenius’s translation (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:46). However, when it was included as required reading for gender studies exams, as mentioned above, its main function was probably to serve as a reading guide within an interpretive community,

that is, to ensure that the students did not read *La volonté de savoir* as a discussion on traditional gender issues.<sup>13</sup>

### **3. The effect of paratextual voices**

#### *3.1 The eye-tracking study*

The objective of the first part of our study was to investigate the potential effect of different paratexts on the reader. We selected an eye-tracking approach, which examines the reading process by using infrared light reflected from the reader's eye to determine where the person is looking on the screen (Rayner et al. 2012:20). As explained by Hyönä (1993:10–11), the general assumption behind this approach is that eye movements, particularly in reading, reflect the processes of the mind and that where the reader's gaze fixates reflects the focus of attention. Furthermore, longer durations of these fixations or a number of repeated fixations indicate text segments that are more difficult to process.

As previous research on text-comprehension processes recommends triangulation (see Kaakinen and Hyönä 2005), the eye-tracking data collected in this study were complemented by a brief oral interview conducted with each participant immediately after the eye-tracking and recorded for later study.

### *3.1.1 Objective and study setup*

We wanted to know whether it was possible to influence our participants' reactions to Sivenius's translation by creating particular reading perspectives prior to the eye-tracking, depending on which paratext the participants had read before their session. "Reading perspective" refers here to a certain viewpoint or goal adopted by the reader prior to reading (Kaakinen and Hyönä 2008:319), such as alternatively reading Cicero to understand Roman society, deconstruct a rhetorical point he is making, or contrast his style with that of Caesar. Previous research on reading perspective done in the field of psychology indicates that readers' prior knowledge, working memory capacity, and reading perspective influence their text processing and make certain information in the text important or relevant to the reader, while other information becomes less important or irrelevant (Kaakinen and Hyönä 2008:319–320).<sup>14</sup> This has been studied with different research methods, such as reader tasks (recall, recognition tests, essays), eye-tracking, interviews, and think-aloud protocols. In these studies, the participants' reading perspectives have been influenced by explicit instructions on which viewpoint to adopt for reading test passages. In a pioneering study on reading perspective, Anderson and Pichert (1978) made college undergraduates read a story of two boys skipping school and spending time in one of the boy's homes. Participants were asked to read this story either from the perspective of a burglar or of a person interested in buying a home. After reading and recalling the story once, the participants were directed to shift perspectives and recall the story again. Both times they recalled better the perspective-relevant information, such as what valuables there were in the house (for the burglar) or what defects, such as a musty basement, were described (for the home buyer).

Our study naturally differs from earlier work done on perspective-driven text comprehension by its lack of a psychological framework. Moreover, unlike in the studies conducted by Kaakinen and Hyönä, for instance, the participants were not given explicit information on particular perspectives to adopt prior to reading. The reading perspectives were created indirectly, by exposing the participants to different paratexts.

The data used in the analysis were collected from twenty-four participants in two rounds of eye-tracking examinations. The first round in October 2014 had sixteen participants, and the second round in 2016 had eight participants. In order to limit variables related to the participants, we used data taken from participants with a similar academic background, namely, translator students at the University of Helsinki. Furthermore, all of the participants were native Finnish speakers and most were first- or second-year students, although three who participated in 2014 already had a bachelor's degree in another subject.

The participants were divided into three groups referred to as the *preface*, *afterword*, and *critique* groups, each consisting of eight members and each reading a different paratext: a 283-word excerpt from Sivenius's preface, a 265-word excerpt from Helén's afterword, and a 297-word excerpt from Pulkkinen's critical review, respectively.<sup>15</sup> The reading perspectives we wanted to create were that of a reader who understands the translator's motivations (preface group), that of a reader focused on Foucault (afterword group), and that of a reader who has been prejudiced against translating *sexe* as *sukupuoli* (critique group). All the participants were told that this initial reading was an introduction intended to provide them with "background information" on the actual text to be read. They were not aware that other participants

read a different paratext, or what type of a text (preface, critique, or other) the excerpt represented.

The test passage read by the participants during the eye-tracking sessions consisted of a 792-word excerpt taken from the first chapter of Sivenius's translation, "Viktoriaaninen kuri" (Fr. "Nous autres, victoriens"). Here Foucault lays the ground for his later, explicit dismissal of the *repressive hypothesis*, which claims that modern industrial societies in the West led to an age of increased sexual repression and unprecedented prudishness (Foucault 1976:49). The beginning of the work was chosen as the most likely starting point for a new reader, whose reading experience we were trying to simulate. The passage also contained central terms that had been explicitly addressed by Sivenius and Pulkkinen, making it thus of particular interest for this study.

### 3.1.2 Analysis of the data

Different measures related to eye-tracking data can be examined, and the use of more than one is generally recommended (for a detailed discussion, see, e.g., Hyönä 1993; Rayner et al. 2012). We chose to focus on two commonly used measures, namely, first fixation duration and total fixation duration (dwell time). The first fixation refers to the first time each participant fixates on the word before moving on to the next word. This measure, then, reflects the attention focused on the word at first pass. The total duration, on the other hand, is the sum of all the fixations on the word, including the first one and all subsequent fixations (should the participant return to the word later on). As noted by Rayner et al. (2012:93), this measure assumes that the reader returned to the word to continue processing it in some way or to verify it. Some earlier studies on the effect of

reading perspective on text processing show increased fixation times for relevant text information in comparison to irrelevant text information. However, the matter is not straightforward and depends on other factors as well (see, e.g., Kaakinen and Hyönä 2005 and 2008).

In general, many of the words with the longest fixation times were long compound words, such as *normalisointipyrkimykset* ('efforts to normalize'), *yhteensovittamaton* ('incompatible'), and *sopivaisuusvaatimus* ('demand for decorum'). These words may have caught the readers' attention simply because of their length and potential lack of familiarity (see also Kruger 2013:200, 221). At the opposite end, the words with the shortest durations were generally short function words like *ja* ('and') and *ei* ('no'). A detailed analysis of all the words in the passage is not within the scope of this study. Instead, we focus on the translations for *sexe* that appear twelve times in the test passage: six inflected forms of *sukupuoli* ('gender') and six inflected forms of *sukupuolisuus* ('sexuality'). In the eye-tracking data, fixations on these specific words were examined to see whether they appear to have particularly long durations compared to the other words in the passage.

Comparing the three groups of students who read different paratexts (see table 5.1, appendix), it appears that the preface group fixated the least on the words in question. Particularly the average first fixations tend to be relatively short on all but three instances of the words, and with the exception of one case, they tend to have much fewer revisits than the other two groups. None of the forms of *sukupuoli* or *sukupuolisuus* appear in the top 10 for either first or total fixation durations for this group, although two instances appear in the top 50, and five more in the top 100 in terms of one of the two

measures. In contrast, the afterword group shows somewhat longer average fixation durations: one instance of the words in question is in the top 10 for first and one for total fixation duration, and overall, particularly the average first fixations appear longer. Those in the critique group appear to have focused the most attention, relatively speaking, on the translations of *sexe*. Two are among the top 10 words with the longest first duration for this group, but even more noticeable are the frequent revisits and ensuing long average total fixations: eight of the twelve instances of these words are in the top 100 total fixations, three of them in the top 10.

Our original assumption was that Sivenius's explicit comments on her word choice would have directed the preface group's attention to these words. Instead, the results indicate that this group, in fact, had shorter fixations and less revisits compared to the others. It can be speculated that the discussion of the term *sexe* and its translation in Sivenius's preface had already familiarized these readers with the word choices, and therefore less processing was needed during reading. In contrast, Helén's afterword did not address the translation choices, and the afterword group was therefore unfamiliar with the way *sukupuoli* and *sukupuolisuus* were used in the text. The longer fixations may indicate a greater need to process the meaning of these terms. In the case of the critique group, the explanation for their greater focus on the term for *sexe* does not appear to be unfamiliarity, as the term choice was specifically addressed in Pulkkinen's critique. However, as the critique presented a very negative view of the word choice (see, e.g., the quoted passage in 2.2.3), this may have led these readers to pay more attention to the specific wording criticized. Consequently, the longer fixations in this group might



indicate that they had adopted the targeted reading perspective at least up to a certain point.

### 3.1.3 *The interviews*

The interviews conducted after the eye-tracking give some confirmation to our eye-tracking results. Overall, it appears that Pulkkinen's translation critique made a greater impression on its readers, as they were more apt to mention the paratext during their interview. In contrast, only one participant in each of the other two groups made any mention of their paratext: in the preface group, one participant mentioned that, in general, the foreign terms discussed in the introductory text were difficult, while a member of the afterword group, when commenting on style, stated she had expected the test passage to be "more scientific" after reading the introductory text.

Interestingly, one of the participants in the critique group started out by actually describing the content of Pulkkinen's translation critique. Furthermore, terminology related to the translations of *sexe* were explicitly addressed by four out of eight participants in the critique group, who specifically stated that they had paid attention to these translations due to their being discussed in the "introduction." They also commented on this choice, and seemed to generally agree with the critique that *sukupuoli* was not correct or "not the best choice," and one stated that she was not sure what word to use, but in her opinion, the passage was about *seksuaalisuus* ('sexuality'). Surprisingly, one participant in the critique group stated that what caught her attention was that she did not see the word *sukupuoli* used at all in the passage (although several instances in fact appear) and thought this might be a retranslation. This is in clear contrast with the other

two groups, where none of the participants made any reference to the translations of *sexe*, even though the translator's preface, in particular, discusses the word choice in detail.

#### **4. The influence of academic background**

##### *4.1. The narrative reports*

In the second part of the study we examined the effect of the readers' academic background on their reading of Sivenius's translation. The participants read the first volume of the translation – a photocopy of the translator's preface and the whole *Tiedontahto* (*La volonté de savoir*, pages 11–114 in the 1998 edition) – at home and wrote a reading journal, that is, a narrative report based on their experience. (We also did an eye-tracking study on these participants, but the data was not used for this article, see endnote 4.) In total, thirteen participants (six translator students and seven non-translator students) took part in this longer study. In what follows, each reading journal will be referred to with a capital letter: A–F for the translator students (TS) group and G–M for the non-translator students (non-TS) group.<sup>16</sup>

In the instructions, the participants had been advised to read the text as though they were reading for an exam, using other textual sources as background information if they so wished. In their reports (each 1,000–2,000 words long), they were asked to summarize Foucault's main claims, write about their ideas and emotions that emerged during the reading process, describe the feel of the text, and point out well-translated or

difficult passages in the text. We then analyzed these journals, paying special attention to the following aspects: the participants' understanding of Foucault's main claims, their perception of the readability of the text, the reading strategies they used for understanding the text, the feelings they experienced during the reading process, and the effect of the translator's preface and of the translation of the term *sexe* on their reading process.

Before going into the analysis of each group, we can state generally that, although we observed some misunderstandings of Foucault's main claims in the interviews,<sup>17</sup> all reading journals suggest that the participants had understood Foucault's main point correctly. In fact, two participants in the non-TS group (G and M) explicitly mentioned that while reading *Tiedontahto* for the reading journal, they realized that they had misunderstood Foucault's point during their eye-tracking session. Moreover, two other students in this group (K and L) describe how they first had understood that Foucault supports the repressive hypothesis until they became aware that he is in fact dismissing it. Such a shift in understanding is also visible, although not explicitly mentioned, in reading journals A (TS group) and H (non-TS group).

#### *4.2 The narrative reports in the TS group*

The reports written by the members of this group were quite homogeneous, and their views on the translation were strikingly similar. Unsurprisingly, they were very much aware of the presence of the translator in the text. All of them mention the translator's preface in the reading journal, and five discuss the translator's solutions in light of the preface.

All of these participants considered the text “challenging” or “heavy” to process. As causes for this heaviness, many of them mention the difficult terminology, the complex phrase structure of the translation and of the source text (probably on the basis of the translator’s preface, since no one mentions having looked at the source text), and the unidiomatic and unclear use of pronouns, especially the frequent use of *se* (‘it’) or *ne* (‘they, those’). Different techniques had been used for facilitating the reading process. One participant (C) had moved her finger under the lines she was reading and circled words and pronouns that seemed to refer to these words. Another (F) had underlined essential passages and made notes. A third one (A) writes that after getting used to Foucault’s “serpentine” style, she had simply stopped trying to understand every single sentence and had moved on. Five participants had consulted webpages related to Foucault and *Histoire de la sexualité*.

The most common feelings during the reading were frustration (mentioned by half of the participants) and irritation (mentioned by one-third of the participants). However, some of them (A and D) do mention and even quote several enjoyable passages in the translation. E writes that she found the language of the translation very rich and metaphorical, but the difficulty of the phrase structures prevented her from enjoying the text. She did, however, have insightful moments during the reading process.

As to the effect of the translator’s preface on the reading journals, half of the TS participants (A, B, and F) comment explicitly on the translator’s claim that she has simplified the source text. According to them, the text structure is still extremely complex, and especially A is of the opinion that there would have been room for much more structural simplification. F observes that even though the phrase structures might be

simpler than in the source text, they are still very complex and “French-like” in the Finnish translation – “to the delight and horror of the reader.”<sup>18</sup> Many speculate rather that the source text must be difficult as well, and D writes that it was probably intended for a learned audience in France.

Two participants comment on the translation of *sexe* and find the Finnish equivalent *sukupuoli* hard to comprehend. However, both find the translator’s preface useful in clarifying the meaning of *sukupuoli* in this context. C writes:

Being unfamiliar with the topic, I constantly had to struggle with different terms and the extent to which they intersect or overlap. This was especially hard with the central terms *sukupuoli*, *sukupuolisuus*, and *seksuaalisuus*. If I had not read the translator’s note, the situation might have been nearly impossible. I have to say that I am very grateful not only for the “warning” included in the note from the translator, but also for the clarification it offered. (C, reading journal)<sup>19</sup>

Overall, the translator’s preface is mentioned as something positive. None of the members of this group question Sivenius’s competence, but give evidence of trusting the translator, though they also expressed awareness that there would have been alternative ways to translate this difficult text acceptably.

In sum, the reading journals in the TS group focus on linguistic, stylistic, and translational aspects of the text. All of these participants have paid attention to the translator. Consequently, their reading journals seem to reflect the same collective voice, that of a translation professional.

### *4.3 The narrative reports in the non-TS group*

This group was more heterogeneous as to the academic background of the participants. The same can be said for their opinion on the text. Only one of them, the philosophy student (G), seems to have felt at home with this text, finding some passages of the text to be particularly “swinging.” Others write that the topic and style of the text is unfamiliar to them. No doubt, the differing academic backgrounds of these participants can explain why they have processed and evaluated the text in such dissimilar ways. G gives an expert account of Foucault’s main claims, using expressions such as “the eugenic ends of the ruling class (bourgeoisie).”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, he has attached a thirty-point list of observations (i.e., notes he always makes when reading for exams) where he comments something on page 101 of the translation: “Could capitalism actually be thought of as Hobbes’s Leviathan?”<sup>21</sup> G shows no negative emotions when describing difficult passages in the text. As a whole he qualifies the text as “sometimes very fluent and easy to read, and at times easy to read but difficult to understand,”<sup>22</sup> which corresponds to his expectations regarding continental philosophy.

The opposite can be said of the two media and communication students, whose comments resemble those of the TS group. Participant I, who also works as a news editor, writes that she would have “boomeranged” such a text back to its writer. Even though she is aware that such a “bombastic” style belongs to a philosophical work, she thinks it might drive away ordinary readers. L pays attention to Foucault’s long sentences and complex language, and notes that the text would have been much more understandable if

there had been a clear introduction at the beginning of each chapter and a summary at the end. However, she had also momentarily enjoyed reading the translation thanks to its rich Finnish. M, the student of English philology, draws parallels between Foucault's example of linguistic purism in seventeenth-century France (in the context of what Foucault calls *the transformation of sex into discourse*) and the coeval birth of standard English, which was related to the emergence of the middle class. It is worth noting that even though M studies at the same department as the members of the TS group (i.e., the Department of Modern Languages), she does not even mention the translator in her reading journal. This student is thus clearly a member of a different interpretive community. Finally, the student of microbiology (J) observes that Foucault's style differs greatly from the texts she is used to reading in her own field, adding that she is generally more used to reading academic texts in English.

What the participants in the non-TS group have in common is that, even though the translator's preface was attached to the photocopy that was given to them, they pay much less attention to the translator. Less than half of them (H, K, and L) comment on Sivenius's translation solutions. Students G and M seem to have read *Tiedontahto* as Foucault's alone. Student I briefly mentions the translator's preface, but criticizes Foucault for *his* "meandering" style. J finds the translator's preface very helpful for a novice reader, but does not comment on the translation. The most elaborate observations concerning the translation come from H, who both praises and criticizes the translation. On one hand, the translation had given him the impression that Foucault's ideas had been put into Finnish as clearly as possible. H also mentions many chapters and shorter passages that he had found pleasant to read. On the other hand, he finds the terminology

hard to process and lists several terms, including *sukupuolisuus* and *sukupuoli*, that would have required more clarification. K, who coincidentally studies the same subject as H, sociology, describes how she suddenly remembered the translator's preface when struggling with the text. She reckons the source text must have been quite a handful for the translator as well.

Each member of the non-TS group had found the text at least somewhat heavy to process. J and L mention, however, that reading became easier after they got used to Foucault's style. Different strategies for processing the text had been used also here. Most of the participants had consulted related webpages, some underlined the text (K, L) and made notes (G), and many of them mention that they had re-read passages and browsed the text. The feelings mentioned or described in the reading journals were more varied and fluctuating than in the TS group: astonishment and enjoyment (G), enthusiasm or contentment that varied with irritation (H, J, K), and interest (M).

To summarize, we can observe that although the study setup could have made the participants more aware of the translatedness of the text, and even though the translator's preface was available for all the participants who wrote the reading journal, the non-TS group paid less attention to the translator than the TS group. They found the text at least momentarily hard to process, but reacted to this difficulty in varying ways, which can perhaps be partly explained by their differing academic backgrounds and experience as readers. Consequently, the participants' academic background seems to have influenced their processing of the translation. The translator students all noticed the translator in the text, while the non-translator students tended to read the text more as Foucault's text.



## 5. Conclusion

Our data concerning the effect of paratexts and academic backgrounds on how readers react to a translated academic text indicate that contextual factors influenced both what our participants *saw* and what they *found* in Sivenius's translation of Foucault. Both the eye-tracking data and the interviews indicate that the translation critique group was much more focused on the translations of the word *sexe* than the other groups. Furthermore, the eye-tracking data suggest that less cognitive processing was necessary for those who read the translator's preface. As to the effect of academic background, the philosophy student read the translation with quite different eyes than the future language professionals – that is, the translator students and the media and communication students – all of whom seemed to be editing the text in their mind while reading it. These future language professionals also thought about the target reader more than the other participants did. This leads us to conclude that the voices that surround both the texts (i.e., the paratextual voices) and their readers (i.e., the collective voices of the communities they belong to) influence how these readers respond to translated academic texts.

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<sup>1</sup> Following Leo Tak-hung Chan (2016:146), we make a distinction between readers' response and the reception of a given text. Reception is the history of readers' accumulated responses to a given text.

<sup>2</sup> The term "interpretive community," originally coined by Stanley Fish (1980), can be defined as "a group of individual readers whose interpretation of texts is shaped and constrained by shared assumptions about reading and by a common set of interpretive practices" (Baer 2010:215).

<sup>3</sup> These participants were recruited through mailing lists aimed at students of social studies.

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<sup>4</sup> In total, forty-seven people participated in this study. However, we ended up not using all the eye-tracking data because our research questions were refined along the way and also because we decided to include a third paratext (Pulkkinen's critical review of Sivenius's translation) in our study. The number of participants in each round was the following: ten in an initial pilot study in the summer of 2014 (the eye-tracking data from this first round were not used in the final analysis, but the reading journals were included); sixteen in the second round in October 2014 (both eye-tracking data and reading journals from some participants were used); thirteen in the third round in June 2015 (only reading journals were included); and eight in the final session in April 2016 (only eye-tracking data were compiled and used).

<sup>5</sup> Translated authors' lack of power in the target culture does not necessarily apply to, for instance, intracultural translation in multilingual countries. For example, Finnish authors who write in Swedish but are fluent in Finnish, such as the novelist Kjell Westö, are able to control their public image and also the Finnish translations of their works.

<sup>6</sup> Dimitriu (2009:195, 198, 201) distinguishes between three main functions of translator's prefaces: *explanatory prefaces* outline the rationale behind the choice of the source text as well as the translation strategies adopted by the translator; *normative/prescriptive prefaces* set guidelines or offer suggestions to other translators and may reflect the translation norms the translators have followed in their work; and finally, *informative/descriptive prefaces* might contain detailed source-text analyses or comparisons of the source and target cultures.

<sup>7</sup> See *Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, accessed August 15, 2015, <http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>, s.v. "sexe."

<sup>8</sup> "Toinen keskeinen termi on *sexe*, joka on suomennettu sukupuolisuudeksi tai sukupuoleksi. Suomennokseksi on valittu juuri 'sukupuoli' muiden vaihtoehtojen, esimerkiksi 'seksin', sijasta, koska se 'puolinaisuudessaan' kertoo, että on olemassa biologinen jako nais- ja miessukupuoleen. Sukupuoli on kuitenkin tätä kattavampi ja syvempi asia: Foucault'n merkityksessä sukupuoli on juuri se, mikä on puolikkaille yhteistä, ja juuri se, josta länsimainen ihminen on hakenut totuutta. Sukupuolen torjuminen ja tukahduttaminen, repressio, ei tarkoita yksiviivaisesti sitä, että jotakin tiettyä sukupuolta on sorrettu, vaan repressio ja vaatimus totuuden paljastamisesta kohdistuvat juuri siihen, mikä sukupuolille on yhteistä, itse sukupuoleen. Suomennoksen avaama monimielisyys on siis tarkoituksellista."

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<sup>9</sup> Sivenius (1998:n.p.) mentions by name her brother Hannu Sivenius (a philosopher), her sister Pia Sivenius (scholar of French psychoanalytic theory and translator of Lacan, Kristeva, and Irigaray), the political scientist Markku Koivusalo, the philosopher Tuomas Nevanlinna, the classicist Erja Salmenkivi, and Gaudeamus's copy editor Anni Kuusjärvi (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:40–41.)

<sup>10</sup> “Michel Foucault'n (1926-1984) “myöhäiskauden” filosofinen ja historiallinen työ keskittyi luentosarjoihin ja seminaareihin, joita hän piti *Collège de France*ssa ja vuodesta 1979 myös Yhdysvalloissa, useimmiten Kaliforniassa. Opetus ja luennot muodostivat yhteyden, jossa *Seksuaalisuuden historia* muotoutui, eikä kolmen julkaistun kirjan perustana ollut systemaattinen teorian tai käsitejärjestelmän rakennus tai pedantti arkistotyö.” All translations from Finnish are our own unless otherwise stated.

<sup>11</sup> Tuija Pulkkinen, “Description of Research and Teaching,” accessed February 13, 2017, <https://tuhat.helsinki.fi/portal/en/person/tupulkki>.

<sup>12</sup> “Olen pitkään ihmetellyt sitä aina välillä nimenomaan Suomessa kohtaamaani käsitystä, että Foucault olisi ensimmäisessä osassa puhunut olennaisesti sukupuolesta. Vasta hiljakkain tutustuttuani ruotsinnokseen, joka on peräisin jo vuodelta 1976, asia on alkanut valjeta minulle: varmaan moni Suomessa on lukenut ruotsinnosta, jossa ruotsintaja Britta Gröndahl on tehnyt omituisen ratkaisun ruotsintamalla *sexen* useimmiten sanalla *kön*, siis sukupuoleksi. Uudessa suomennoksessa Kaisa Sivenius on ikävä kyllä jatkanut “pohjoismaista” tulkintalinjaa ja käyttänyt useimmiten käänöksessä *sexen* kohdalla sanaa sukupuoli.”

<sup>13</sup> Pulkkinen (1999:63, translation by Taivalkoski-Shilov 2015b:56) writes, for instance: “It is recommendable to read the text [the last ten pages of *Tiedontahto*, i.e., *La volonté de savoir*] so that all the terms *sukupuoli* are replaced either by *sukupuolisuus* [sexuality] or by *seksi* [sex] and that part of the terms *sukupuolisuus* [sexuality] are replaced by *seksi* [sex]. Then compare the new meaning to [Sivenius's] translation.” [“Teksti kannattaa lukea vaihtaen kaikkien sukupuoli-sanojen paikalle sukupuolisuus tai seksi ja vaihtaen osan sukupuolisuus-sanoista myös seksiksi, ja verrata näin saatua merkitystä käänökseen.”]

<sup>14</sup> Kaakinen and Hyönä (2008:322) have proposed a framework for perspective-driven text comprehension: “During the course of reading the incoming text information is constantly interpreted in the light of the activated knowledge and the standards of coherence (cf. Sanford and Garrod, 1998). When the reader gazes

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at a word, the meaning of the word is encoded and related concepts as well as world-knowledge (e.g. schema-type of knowledge structures in the LTM [long-term memory]) are automatically activated, akin to the resonance process proposed by Myers and O'Brien (1998). When perspective-relevant text information is encountered, activated knowledge structures [. . .] resonate with the text input, allowing a quick recognition of the text information as relevant. [. . .] Perspective-irrelevant information, on the other hand, is only superficially processed.”

<sup>15</sup> One of the participants in the critique group mentioned that she had read Foucault's text before out of interest (not as part of her studies or for similar reasons), and had in fact attended a lecture by Taivalkoski-Shilov, where the issue of translating *sexe* in Foucault had been discussed. This naturally weakens our analysis in the critique group somewhat.

<sup>16</sup> The six members of the TS group studied French philology (A), translation of English (B), translation of Swedish (C), Italian philology (D), and English philology (E and F), with the four philology students having Translation Studies as a minor subject. The seven members of the non-TS group studied social and moral philosophy (G), sociology (H and K), media and communication (I and L), microbiology (J), and English philology without Translation Studies as a minor subject (M).

<sup>17</sup> The interviews indicate that some of the participants had understood that Foucault talks about sexuality, while for others he was also talking about gender or gender studies. This is not a correct interpretation and might have been prompted by the translator's unusual usage of the term *sukupuoli* (usually 'gender' in Finnish). However, we must remember that the participants had read only a short passage of a text previously unknown to them in quite unusual circumstances. These circumstances were in fact mentioned by some of the participants, who noted that they felt some pressure reading in a situation where they knew that their reading was being observed (the white-coat effect – see Hvelplund 2014:204).

<sup>18</sup> “Kirjoittajan tapa ajatella ja tuottaa tekstiä on – niin epätieteellinen ja perustelematon kuin arvioni onkin – tavattoman ranskalainen. [. . .] Tekstin lauserakenteet voivat olla yksinkertaisemmat kuin lähdetekstissä, mutta ajattelun ja argumentoinnin monipolvisuus on – lukijan riemuksi ja kauhuksi – tallella.”

<sup>19</sup> “Aihetta tuntematta oli jatkuvasti kamppailtava erilaisten termien kanssa, ja missä määrin ne risteävät tai ovat päällekkäisiä. Tämä oli erityisen vaikeaa keskeisten termien sukupuoli, sukupuolisuus ja seksuaalisuus kanssa. Jos en olisi suomentajan huomautusta lukenut, tilanne olisi voinut olla melkein pä mahdoton. On

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sanottava, että olen hyvin kiitollinen paitsi tästä suomentajan sanan sisältämästä ‘varoituksesta’, niin myös sen tarjoamasta selvityksestä.”

<sup>20</sup> “Foucault tuntuu vihjaavan, että sukupuolisuuden kehityksessä kyse on paljolti hallitsevan luokan (porvariston) eugenisista pyrkimyksistä.”

<sup>21</sup> “Voisko [sic] kapitalismia oikeastaan ajatella Hobbesin Leviathanina?”

<sup>22</sup> “Teksti oli välillä hyvin sujuvaa ja helppolukuista, toisinaan taas todella vaikeaselkoista ja helppolukuista.” This is not a misprint, because G repeats the comment three times in the reading journal.