

Expressing gender in the Finnish translations of Gospel of Luke

Different languages may vary based on how they express biological sexes and genders. Grammatical genders and living beings' biological sexes usually overlap in languages which incorporates grammatical genders. However, in languages with no grammatical genders (e. g. in Finno-Ugric languages), biological sexes can be expressed using lexical components.

In my research, I examine how these lexical components changed in Finnish during the last 400 years. The foundation of my research is based on Gospel of Luke in four Finnish Bible translations: *Biblia. Se on Coco Pyhä Raamattu Suomexi* [Bible. The whole holy Bible in Finnish] from 1642, *Vanha kirkkoraamattu* [Old church Bible] from 1776, *Kirkkoraamattu* [Church Bible] from 1938 and *Pyhä Raamattu* [Holy Bible] from 1992. On the one hand my database includes "gender-changing" words in which gender-referring components appear or disappear.

On the other hand, my database also contains elements where gender-neutral words took the place of gender-referring lexemes and vice versa. Based on the collected words, I identified four different categories. The first category contains names of professions; in the past Finnish profession names often comprehended components like *-mies* 'man' or *-herra* 'lord' as only men could fill these positions. However, nowadays gender-neutral profession names are more common, which can be detected in the language of the Bible translations too. E.g. *kalamies* 'fisherman, fish + man' changed to *kalastaja*, *sotamies* 'soldier, war+man' became *sotilas*. The second category includes words where components referring to women appeared. In the early translations words that referred to women without any specific lexical components were used or gender was not included in the meaning at all. In the later translations female gender is expressed using lexical components, e. g. *piika* 'maid' – *palvelijatar* 'servant girl', *ystävä* 'friend' – *ystäväti* 'female friend'. In the third category the word *mies* 'man' was not used in early translations but was used later in place of pronouns (e. g. *tämä* 'this', *he* 'they') or the word *ihminen* 'person'. In some cases this can be explained by clarifying the meaning. Words referring to offsprings belong to the last category. Using gender referring words was common in the early translations but in some cases they were later changed to gender neutral, e.g. *tytär* 'daughter' – *jälkeläinen* 'offspring', *poika* 'son' – *lapsi* 'child'.

Keywords: gender, Bible translation, Finnish Bible vocabulary.

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