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Translators' Status in Platform-Based Translation

Finnish Fiverr Translators as a Case in Point

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Abstract: This study investigates how work on digital labour platforms affects translators' status, or occupational prestige, which has generally been believed to be quite low. In the last twenty years, empirical studies have also suggested this to be the case. The present study sets out with the hypothesis that platform translators may suffer from an even lower status than other translator groups and tests this with a research questionnaire aimed at Finnish translators working on the online freelancing platform Fiverr. The survey is largely based on earlier status studies that have been carried out in Finland and Denmark, but as the collected data consists of only 18 responses, comparisons with the much larger reference studies cannot be deemed statistically significant. Keeping this in mind, the results suggest that Finnish Fiverr translators' perceptions of status are not any lower than those of other translator groups, but that they are equally low. This may be explained by low expectations: if the translators come to Fiverr fully expecting that the work is unglamorous, they may not be as disappointed with their position. The study does indicate that remuneration from translation work on Fiverr is exceedingly low, and that many of the translators involved in it do not have any formal education in languages or translation. For most of the respondents, translation on Fiverr is nothing more than a convenient side job that can earn them some "pocket money".

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1   Introduction

If you were to go to an internet search engine right now and look for translation services, it is likely that not all of your first-page results would be websites of translation agencies or sole proprietors. Instead, they would likely also contain *digital labour platforms*, sites where translations – and sometimes many other types of services – can be purchased from a wide network of separate individuals that have signed up on the platform. This relatively new phenomenon is bringing about changes for both buyers and suppliers of translation services, and in the present thesis, I am particularly interested in the latter. I have set out to explore whether platform-based translation work affects perceptions of translators' *status*, or *occupational prestige*, which has generally been believed to be quite low.

To study these status perceptions, I have devised a questionnaire for Finnish translators working on the online freelancing platform *Fiverr*. The questionnaire is based on earlier studies of translators' status perceptions that have been conducted in Finland and Denmark, but it has also been supplemented with some new questions that better suit the context of digital labour platforms. Only one platform has been included in the study to keep the scope manageable and to make identifying potential respondents easier. Fiverr in particular has been selected because of its prevalence in the "gig economy" and because I have personal experience with the platform from having done translation work on it in the years 2018 and 2019.

The study sets out with the hypothesis that platform translators may suffer from an even lower status than other translator groups. Auxiliary hypotheses include that due to heavy competition in pricing, *income* from Fiverr translation is small and unsatisfying, and that the translators have low *job satisfaction*.

Up ahead in chapter 2, I dig deeper into the concept of translators' status and present how it has been previously researched in translation studies. Special emphasis is placed upon a few large empirical studies that have guided the methodology of my own study. I also provide a more precise description of what Fiverr and digital labour platforms in general are and introduce a few recent studies where the focus has been on translators who work on them.

In chapter 3, I present the details of my own research questionnaire, describe the process of response collection, and briefly discuss how I have analysed the responses. After this comes chapter 4, in which I present and analyse my results, making certain observations about them

and conducting a few comparisons with my reference studies. Chapter 5, for its part, deepens the discussion on the significance of the results and provides some potential explanations for them. Finally, in chapter 6, I determine what conclusions can ultimately be drawn from my study and suggest avenues for further research.

2 Background

As articulated by professors Helle V. Dam and Karen Korning Zethsen from Aarhus University, Denmark, "literature [on translation] tends to draw a rather negative picture of the translation profession" (2016, 174). Even before translation studies had really emerged as a discipline, publications discussing the craft often approached it with a fair degree of pessimism. For example, in his 1937 essay *The Misery and the Splendor of Translation*, Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gassett described the translator's occupation as "insignificant" and suggested that "the translator is usually a shy character" (2000, 50). Later in 1958, when linguists Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet were formulating their *Methodology for Translation*, they mentioned in passing that translators are "overworked and unappreciated" (2004, 136). Seemingly, these kinds of postulations about translators have always been intuitive to both scholars and laymen alike.

When the discipline of translation studies did start to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century, the focus was initially more on translations than translators (Gengshen 2004, 106–109; Dam and Zethsen 2014, 261–262). Starting in the 1990s, however, scholars in the field have witnessed a "sociological turn", and more attention has been paid to translators themselves and the social networks that they operate in (Angelelli 2012: 125–127; Dam and Zethsen 2014, 262). After this turn, much more has been written about the translator's profession, but just like before it, the sentiments have been largely negative. In the third edition of her introductory book on translation studies, Susan Bassnett notes how "[t]ranslation has been perceived as a secondary activity" that can be done by anyone who knows a second language (2002, 12). And Lawrence Venuti (1995) famously wrote about the translator's "invisibility".

Broadly speaking, all of the citations above concern translators' *status*. Before we can embark on a further discussion about the topic, we first need to define what we mean by this concept. For this, I will take an interdisciplinary approach and turn to the field of sociology in the next subsection.

2.1 The concepts of status, occupational prestige, and job satisfaction

In sociology, the term *social status* is used to refer to "a person's relative position in a social hierarchy" (Swencionis and Fiske 2018, 79) or to "the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference an individual is afforded by others, based on that individual's perceived

instrumental social value" (Anderson, Hildreth, and Lowland 2015, 575). Unlike *socioeconomic status,* this kind of status – which can also be called *sociometric status* or *prestige* – cannot be inferred by simply looking at an individual's bank statements or resume (Anderson, Hildreth, and Lowland 2015, 575–576). Instead, sociometric status is "fundamentally rooted in the accumulation of deference behaviors" (Sauder, Lynn, and Podolny 2012, 268). In other words, a person acquires a high sociometric status when others consistently afford them deference. Socioeconomic status can, however, "be an antecedent or source of sociometric status", as people may sometimes afford others higher status based on their financial success (Anderson, Hildreth, and Lowland 2015, 577). At least socioeconomic status is undoubtedly linked with an individual's line of work, which is one reason why sociologists are also interested in *occupational prestige.*

As explained by Fujishiro, Xu, and Gong, occupational prestige "indicates how members of a community collectively evaluate the social standing [i.e. status] of a job" (2010, 2101). Occupational prestige is certainly not simply an aggregate of the social statuses of everyone who has a specific job, but the prestige of an occupation and the prestige of individuals are related to eachother in another way. Already in the 1970s Donald Treiman cited research which "shows that occupational prestige strongly influences the social standing [i.e. status] of concrete individuals" (1977, 28). That is, the degree to which an individual is valued has some direct correlation with their line of work.

Occupational prestige has been studied extensively for a long time. In the 1940s, sociologists Cecil C. North and Paul K. Hatt developed occupational prestige scales, which were later used by Otis Duncan to construct a well-known "Socio-economic Index" (Dam and Zethsen 2008: 74). In this index, "educational background" and "income" were found to be important parameters for determining occupational prestige, but there are also other status parameters such as "fame", "power", worthiness", and "value to society", and the relative weight of these parameters has been found to be variable in different studies around the world (ibid). This goes to say that occupational prestige is a rather complicated and multifaceted concept.

Related to but distinct from occupational prestige is the concept of *job satisfaction*. As Paul E. Spector succinctly defines it, "[j]ob satisfaction is the degree to which people like their jobs" (1997, vii). It is also one of the most researched topics in organizational psychology (ibid). There are many different scales for measuring job satisfaction, and different scales assess slightly different facets (Spector 1997, 6). Generally, however, there is some overlap between

the determinants of job satisfaction and the determinants of occupational prestige, and many studies that focus on one of these metrics also end up producing data relevant to the other. On the other hand, it can also be interesting to deliberately study both metrics simultaneously to see whether a low occupational prestige also means low job satisfaction or vice versa.

On the basis of the overview above, it can be said that when translation scholars write about translators' "status", they typically mean their occupational prestige, i.e. the sociometric status of translators as a collective. This metric is also influenced – but not completely determined – by their socioeconomic status. However, as Minna Ruokonen and Jukka Mäkisalo (2018, 2–3) point out, the concept of status is somewhat ambiguous in translation studies and has been used by different scholars to mean different things. Most confusingly, it can be used in regards to the question of whether translation in general has the *status of a profession*, i.e. if it fulfils the "criteria of a specialized and protected occupation that is highly valued by society" (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 2). While this topic is interesting in its own right, my thesis focuses on status as occupational prestige, as defined above. Moving on, I will continue to simply use the term status, as it is the established concept in translation studies. In the next subsection, I will present how it has been previously studied.

2.2   Earlier studies on translators' status

In the beginning of chapter 2 we saw that translators' status has long been contemplated by scholars, even if the term hasn't always explicitly been used in these discussions. However, in most publications from before the year 2008, the topic has only been mentioned in passing and approached from a mostly speculative standpoint (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 72–73). It had commonly been assumed that translators have low status – and the same goes for translators' job satisfaction – but this had not been studied extensively. Before 2008, there had been almost no empirical studies on translators' status and/or job satisfaction.

One early empirical study that essentially concerns translators' status was published by Johan Hermans and José Lambert in 1998. They investigated the translation market in Belgium by interviewing employees and employers of local companies, as well as their partners and contacts (Hermans and Lambert 1998, 117–119). While Hermans and Lambert did not use the concept of status, they did discuss topics adjacent to it and directly mentioned job satisfaction. In fact, their primary research question was "why is job satisfaction as low among translators in business environments as it seems to be?" (Hermans and Lambert 1998, 117).

Hermans and Lambert's findings seemed to speak in favour of the presumed low status of translators: they found that "translators' profiles are ignored" in companies, and that translators are "regarded as lower-category employees" (1998, 123). In many cases, the companies found it unnecessary to hire dedicated translators, as the job could be done by a "secretary" or "talented engineer" either during their normal working hours or even "over the weekend at home, when the 'real job' is over" (Hermans and Lambert 1998, 122–123). Beyond this, the article focuses on the many conflicts, complaints, and misunderstandings prevalent in the industry. For a long time, it was one of the only studies touching on translators' status.

In order to fill this research gap, Helle V. Dam and Karen Korning Zethsen launched a large-scale project where they studied the status of several different translator groups in Denmark (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 72). The first study, which focused on Danish company translators, was reported on in 2008, and it was followed by further studies which were presented in 2011 and 2012. These studies form most of the theoretical backbone of my own study, so I will next devote an entire subsection to presenting them in more detail.

2.2.1 Translators' status in Denmark

The first of Dam and Zethsen's studies focused on translators in Denmark who had full-time contracts with major Danish companies, such as law firms or banks (2008, 76–77). Furthermore, the translators in this study were required to have an MA degree in translation and had to have "a visible translation function and a clear translation profile" in their company (ibid). Dam and Zethsen hypothesized that this group would enjoy a relatively high status compared to others, such as freelancers or literary translators, and felt that studying such a distinguished group would be a good starting point for examining whether translators' status truly is as low as it is believed to be (2008, 75–76).

To find out how the status of the company translators was perceived, Dam and Zethsen devised questionnaires for both the translators themselves and some of their key coworkers, such as lawyers in a law firm or economists in a bank (2008, 76). These coworkers are referred to as "core employees" in the study (ibid). Dam and Zethsen presumed that the status ratings obtained from these questionnaires would be relatively high (2008, 77). For selecting the companies that they wanted responses from, Dam and Zethsen employed rather specific criteria, and they ended up contacting a total of 50 companies (ibid). Of these, 36 responded to their letter, but of them, 21 more turned out to not meet the criteria, and two did not want to

participate (ibid). Thus, responses were collected from translators and core employees in 13 companies (ibid). This ultimately amounted to 47 accepted responses from translators and 49 responses from core employees, which they believed to constitute a representative sample (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 79). The data collection took place in January 2007 (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 983).

The questionnaires themselves contained questions related to four different parameters that are believed to determine status: *salary*, *education/expertise*, *visibility*, and *power/influence* (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 78). These parameters were based on a separate Danish survey from 2006 where 2,155 respondents assessed the prestige of 99 occupations, and the parameters mentioned were found to be important for determining status (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 74–75). Most of Dam and Zethsen's questions concerned the respondents' opinions on different statements and were based on a five-point Likert scale where the number one represented the response "to a very low degree or not/none at all" and the number five represented the response "to a very high degree" (2008, 78). The response options were however presented in an inverse order in the questionnaire so as to not encourage choosing the negative options (ibid). Translators and core employees received slightly different questionnaires, but they were made as similar as possible to allow for comparability (ibid).

Generally, the results from this study showed that the translators' work was appreciated relatively much (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 80–81), but it was still not seen as very prestigious (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 82). When asked about how high the translators' *status* was, the translators themselves responded with the rather low mean value of 2.87, and the core employees provided a marginally higher mean of 2.94 (ibid). This "low-status picture" came as a surprise to Dam and Zethsen, as they had expected translators with such a "strong professional profile" to enjoy higher status (2008, 83).

More specific analyses of the assessed four status parameters revealed that the translators had relatively high *salaries*, but not as high as other comparable MA degree holders (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 83–84), that the respondents considered translation to require a fairly high amount of *expertise* (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 85–86), that the translators' *visibility* was "reasonably, though not overwhelmingly, high" (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 91), and that the translators had quite little *power/influence* in the companies (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 91–92). These mixed results "did not do much to change the overall picture" of low status that the study painted (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 93). Dam and Zethsen concluded the article by

welcoming more studies on the topic and suggesting that interviews or focus-group discussions could be used in future to supplement quantitative survey data, as well as re-iterating their own plans for further studies with different translator groups (2008, 93–94).

In the years following 2008, Dam and Zethsen published several articles further discussing their first study as well as the subject of translators' status in general, but the report on their second and third studies did not come out until 2011. In this article, they presented results from a study aimed at Danish *agency* translators, as well as a study of Danish *freelance* translators (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 977). These studies employed very similar research methodology and respondent selection criteria as the first study on company translators (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 982–983). In the second study, Dam and Zethsen ultimately accepted responses from 28 translation agencies and a total of 66 translators, and in the third study they received data from 131 qualifying freelancers (2011, 982–983). In these studies, they rather exhaustively contacted all translators fitting their desired profile and had a response rate as high as 97% (ibid), making the data very impressive. Unlike in the first study, responses were only collected from the translators themselves (ibid). By this point, Dam and Zethsen had seen that non-translators' perceptions on translators' status are often based on erroneous information, and they found it best to instead ask the translators themselves how they think they are perceived by outsiders (2011, 988). In any case, the questionnaires used were comparable to the first study (ibid). The data for these second and third studies were collected in January 2008 and January 2009 respectively (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 983).

Comparison of the survey results from the different translator groups showed that while company translators had reported a mean status score of 2.87, agency translators and freelancers reported mean scores of 2.55 and 2.53 respectively (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 984). While the difference between company translators and agency translators and freelancers was relatively small, it was found to be statistically significant (ibid). This supported Dam and Zethsen's hypothesis that company translators would have higher status than other groups, but they were somewhat surprised that freelancers did not report a noticeably lower status than agency translators (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 984). In any case, the study seemed to confirm a low status for all three translator groups (ibid).

In terms of the specific status parameters, the positions of the different groups were rather dynamic. For example, freelancers reported a higher average salary than company translators, with agency translators landing in the middle, (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 985), whereas

freelancers considered their visibility much lower than company and agency translators (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 991). This goes to show that the overall effect that the different parameters have on status is not obvious (Dam and Zethsen 2011, 994). For example, salary is not nearly as important for determining status as one might think (ibid).

In 2012, Dam and Zethsen's publicized dataset was further supplemented by status perceptions of Danish translators working in the European Union (215). This new data contained responses from 39 translators in the European Commission and 24 translators in the European Parliament (Dam and Zethsen 2012, 216). Responses were collected from the EU translators in the early months of 2011 (Dam and Zethsen 2012, 217). Dam and Zethsen's hypothesis was that EU translators would have a higher status than translators in Denmark's national market (2012, 214–216).

When the EU translators were asked to generally rate their occupational status, they responded with a mean value of 2.56 (Dam and Zethsen 2012, 220). This is in fact lower than the national-market translators, whose combined mean value was 2.68 (ibid). However, this minute difference is not statistically significant (ibid). In any case, the results show that even translators in a high-profile international organization appear to suffer from a low status (ibid).

Again, scores related to the more specific status parameters fluctuated significantly between the two groups. For example, the EU translators reported a much higher salary, (Dam and Zethsen 2012, 221) but a much lower score in questions related to their visibility (Dam and Zethsen 2012, 228). Just like the earlier comparisons between company translators, agency translators, and freelancers, these results seemed to indicate that salary is not a very important determinant of translators' status (Dam and Zethsen 2012, 229).

After their study on EU translators, Dam and Zethsen have also studied the status of conference interpreters (2013), but as my thesis is focused translators of written texts, I will not present this study here. All in all, Dam and Zethsen's research on different translator groups has supported the notion that translators' status is low (2016, 175). On the other hand, they note that "a number of surveys, quite surprisingly, show that translators are generally quite satisfied with their jobs" (Dam and Zethsen 2016, 176). To explain this paradox, Dam and Zethsen referred to narratives that were previously collected from Danish agency translators with 8–20 years of work experience (2016, 177–178). These narratives indicated that the translators were happy with their low-status job because they found it exciting,

important, and intellectually stimulating (Dam and Zethsen 2016, 180). However, these positives might not be enough to make the job satisfying for freelancers and other such translators on the lower end of the status spectrum, from where much of the negativity likely stems (Dam and Zethsen 2016, 177).

The groundwork laid by Dam and Zethsen has also been utilized in further studies in other countries. Pertinently for my thesis, their methodology has been used for a few studies in Finland, one of which had a very large pool of respondents. I will discuss this study as well as some others in the next subsection.

2.2.2 Translators' status in Finland

Outside of translation studies, some information about the occupation's prestige in Finland can be found in surveys that have been published in the magazine *Suomen Kuvalehti*. In these surveys, respondents have placed over 300 different occupations in a ranked order, and they have been published since the 1990s (Lappalainen, Tuomisto, and Tynkkynen 2024, 28). The latest survey has just been published in 2024, and its rankings are also compared with the previous study from 2018 (Lappalainen, Tuomisto, and Tynkkynen 2024, 31). In this survey, 2,200 respondents ranked "translator" as 107th out of 379 occupations (Lappalainen, Tuomisto, and Tynkkynen 2024, 33; 38), which is not terribly low, but not overwhelmingly high either. In 2018, it had been 128th (ibid), suggesting that appreciation for translators has somewhat increased in recent years.

For the status perceptions of Finnish translators themselves, we turn to a 2018 article released by Minna Ruokonen and Jukka Mäkisalo from the University of Eastern Finland. The study partially replicated Dam and Zethsen's questionnaires and utilized the same four status parameters of *income*, *education/expertise*, *visibility*, and *power/influence* to some extent (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 5–6). However, some steps were also taken to adapt the questionnaire to the Finnish context, and some questions were added that more directly related to working conditions and job satisfaction (ibid). This survey was also aimed at a much wider range of respondents than Dam and Zethsen's (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 7). In total, the questionnaire received 450 responses, out of which 57 came from *audiovisual translators*, 269 from *business translators* (which in this case refers to all translators of factual texts), 71 from *literary translators*, and 53 from other types of translators not encompassed by this categorization (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 7–8).

Instead of directly using the potentially ambiguous concept of "status" in their questionnaire, the researchers asked their respondents "to what degree is the translator's occupation valued in Finland", which is a typical wording for studying occupational prestige in Finland (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 6). To this question, the subjects responded with a mean value of 2.55 (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 9). This is very similar to the values obtained from Dam and Zethsen's question about translators' status, which would seem to indicate that the perceptions are equally low in Finland and Denmark (ibid). However, the respondents were also asked to rate how their *own work specifically* was valued at their workplaces (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 6), and this yielded the much higher mean ranking of 3.94 (2018, 9). The Chi Square test was used to determine that this difference is statistically very significant (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 6; 9). Clearly, perceptions of translators' status in general and perceptions of one's own status in their working environment can be very different.

While Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's study also featured questions that related to Dam and Zethsen's four specific status parameters, they did not rely on them as heavily in presenting their results. One parameter that they did discuss in detail, however, was income. Their results indicated that Finnish translators have a median income above Finnish households' national median, but there were large differences between translators of different specializations (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 10). Most strikingly, literary translators' yearly median income was over 10,000 euros smaller than that of business translators and audiovisual translators (ibid). Contrary to Dam and Zethsen's findings, Ruokonen and Mäkisalo also found clear indications that a low income level worsened the respondents' perceptions of their status (2018, 10–11).

Ruokonen and Mäkisalo also investigated whether background variables such as gender, age, and work experience affected their respondents' status perceptions (2018, 12). The only statistically significant difference that they found was that translators who had worked in the industry for 21 years or longer had a higher perception of their own status (ibid). Beyond this, Ruokonen and Mäkisalo mostly reported on questions relating to professional wellbeing and job satisfaction. These were assessed by asking the respondents how often they experienced unpleasant stress in their work, how often they had to compromise the quality of their work due to external factors such as deadlines, and how often they had considered leaving the translation industry (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 12). The respondents who reported these experiences as common rated their own status as lower than those who reported them as rare (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 13). This seems to indicate that there is some degree of

correlation between low job satisfaction and low status perceptions for translators (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 14).

Minna Ruokonen has also used Dam and Zethsen's methodology in a study on how Finnish translation students perceive translators' status. While studying the status perceptions of future translators is interesting in its own right, my thesis focuses on the status perceptions of individuals who are already involved with translation work, so I will only discuss this study very briefly. Ruokonen received 277 responses from students in five Finnish universities (2016, 196). These students rated the general status of the translator's occupation with the rather low mean value of 2.36 (Ruokonen 2016, 197–198). Clearly, the translation students in this study were quite pessimistic about work in their own field.

Ruokonen has also worked on a few other status-related projects. In one of them, she analysed the same data from Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's 2018 study to explore how *authorization* of translation work affects Finnish translators' status perceptions and how they generally feel about the topic (Ruokonen 2018). In Finland, translators can seek the qualification of an *authorized translator* if they wish to translate official documents (Kieliasiantuntijat, n.d.), and Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's respondents were asked whether they possess this qualification (2018, 7). 146 of the respondents 450 did, and Ruokonen examined whether these translators' status perceptions differed from non-authorized translators' perceptions (2018, 66; 74). There were no statistically significant differences, suggesting that authorization as is does not affect Finnish translators' perceptions of their status (Ruokonen 2018, 74).

Most recently, Ruokonen has co-authored an article where the data from Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's 2018 study was compared with similar data from a study carried out in Sweden (Ruokonen and Svahn 2022, 863–864). This comparison indicated that Finnish translators considered translators' "status in society", higher than their Swedish counterparts to a statistically significant degree (Ruokonen and Svahn 2022, 867), and there were also many other differences found between the datasets. Clearly, differences in status perceptions can be found between different countries, even ones that are geographically and culturally very close to each other.

While Dam and Zethsen's and Ruokonen's studies provide the main framework for my own study, there have also been other studies on translators' status since 2008. While I will not describe most of them in detail, I will present a brief overview of some of the major studies before moving on to other topics related to my study in particular.

2.2.3 Other studies and general findings

Around the same time when Dam and Zethsen were launching their project, professor David Katan from the University of Salento carried out a global online survey investigating whether translators' roles had shifted more towards managerial and specialist roles, "experts in intercultural communication", as had been suggested by many scholars (2009, 112–113). This question is related to status particularly in that such roles would grant translators more visibility and agency. Katan's questionnaire primarily included questions on "attitudes and beliefs about 'the profession' itself" (2009, 114), and it received 890 complete responses from all over the world and from many kinds of different groups, such as freelancers, agency translators, and translation students (2009, 115–118). Out of all the respondents, around 4% appeared to find translators' status very low, as they could not even consider translation a "profession" (Katan 2009, 122; 125). The respondents were also asked whether translators enjoy a high, middling, or low status (Katan 2009, 125–126). 59% of translator respondents considered the status middling, and 31% considered it low (Katan 2009, 126). This makes Katan's study yet another supporter for the notion that translators have "at best a middling status" (ibid).

Status and status-adjacent topics have also been studied by scholars such as Kristiina Abdallah (2010), Rakefet Sela-Sheffy and Miriam Shlesinger (2008), Christy Fung-ming Liu (2021), as well as Elin Svahn (2020), whose study was already mentioned in connection with Ruokonen. Despite this wealth of research, the results have continued to indicate that translators' status truly does trend towards low. However, it has also been noticed that there are statistically significant differences between different groups of translators, which is why it is worthwhile to extend the scope to as many groups as possible.

One group of translators that has only very recently started attracting scholarly attention is translators working on *digital labour platforms*. The most important reason for this is of course the fact that platform-based work is a very recent phenomenon. It is however a rapidly growing sector that is becoming more and more prevalent in our daily lives, so studying how it affects translators' status is a worthwhile endeavour. Before detailing my own small-scale study on this very topic, I will first use the next subsection to briefly describe the history and current state of digital labour platforms.

2.3 Digital labour platforms and the "uberization" of work

In 2009, a company called Ubercab was founded in San Francisco (uber.com n.d; Rao 2010, n.p.). By July 2010, it had launched an iPhone application which allowed users to request a ride from a network of limousine drivers who happened to be near the user's location (Rao 2010, n.p.). The app was convenient, as the user's smartphone automatically determined their location and matched it with a suitable driver, and payments were also handled automatically within the app (ibid). The drivers benefited from using Ubercab, too, as it meant extra trips for them (ibid).

Ubercab, which later shortened its name to simply Uber and started offering rides in many other types of cars besides just limousines, is one early example of a *digital labour platform* (Stanford 2021, 48). While it is in some ways similar to traditional taxi services, the way that it arranges work through a smartphone app has arguably transformed employment as we know it (ibid). Essentially, Uber drivers work like "independent contractors who operate their own businesses", while the platform connects them to their clients and handles payment (Stanford 2021, 49). The drivers maintain their own vehicle but can only use it to pick up customers assigned by the application, and their fares are assigned by an algorithm (ibid). This constitutes a peculiar form of employment where the drivers are not exactly employees of Uber, but also lack the usual freedoms of an entrepreneur. For the company, this is very lucrative (Stanford 2021, 50).

In the last fifteen years, Uber's business model has gradually been adopted in many other types of work, too (Stanford 2021, 50). Digital labour platforms have been established for delivering restaurant food and packages, supplying "odd jobs", and even providing specialist services such as programming or legal counsel (ibid). This emergence of a new type of employment has been called "sharing economy" (Stanford 2021, 48), "gig economy" (ibid), "platform capitalism" (Srnicek 2017), and, stemming from the company that trailblazed the trend, "uberisation" of work (Vercellone et. al 2018, 36).

While platform-based transport and delivery services are carried out "onsite", digital platforms also facilitate services that can be commissioned remotely – importantly, this includes translation (Giustini 2024, 3). Translation jobs can be commissioned on "translation/translator marketplaces and platform language service providers such as Proz, Smartcat, Translated, Gengo, and Stepes" (Firat, Gough, and Moorkens 2024, 5), but also on more general freelancing platforms, such as Fiverr, Freelancer.com and Upwork (ibid;

Giustini 2024, 3). Compared to other forms of employment in the field of translation, digital labour platforms have "dramatically lowered barriers to entry, allowing anyone proficient in two languages with a computer or smartphone, an internet connection and an email address to participate in translation work" (Firat, Gough, and Moorkens 2024, 2).

It is hard to say how this new form of employment is changing translation work. On one hand, the opportunity to do gig work can be seen to "empower" workers and grant them "independence" (Stanford 2021, 46). Arguably, an online platform can be an easy and accessible way to market oneself as a translator. Digital labour platforms also work on the principle of "on-demand work" (Stanford 2021, 51), meaning that platform translators have some degree of freedom in regards to when they work and what commissions they take, much like traditional freelancers. Platforms can also facilitate collaborative translation work, which may allow for streamlining and upscaling (Gough et al. 2023, 45).

On the other hand, many commentators fear that the uberization of work may have negative consequences for the "stability and quality of work" (Stanford 2021, 46). This new form of employment can be seen as "precarious and exploitative" and as a symptom of neoliberalism (ibid). The on-demand nature and "piece-work compensation" of platform-based work mean that the workers are not guaranteed to find gigs and receive no payment when they do not (Stanford 2021, 51). They are also personally responsible for any equipment that they need for completing the work (ibid) and lack the usual benefits of employees, such as insurance and pensions (Stanford 2021, 50). Perhaps most consequentially, digital labour platforms utilize automatic computer algorithms for "allocating, supervising and disciplining workers" (Stanford 2021, 52), which can in some cases be very unequitable and damaging.

While the question of how digital labour platforms affect translators' status and job satisfaction is still a new one, there have been some studies in the last few years that relate to the topic. In 2023, Joanna Gough et al. studied *concurrent translation* on platforms by surveying 804 platform translators, who generally had negative feelings towards this way of working (51; 67). Gökhan Firat has published an article about platform translators in 2021, as well as another one very recently in March 2024 together with Gough and Joss Moorkens. For the purposes of my thesis, Firat's 2021 study is the most relevant, so I will mostly focus on it in the next subsection.

2.3.1 Research on platform translators in Türkiye

Gökhan Firat's 2021 study had two primary research questions: "[h]ow do digital labour platforms affect the working conditions of translation workers", and "[w]hat are the risks of digital labour platforms for translation workers?" (2021, 49). To answer these questions, he devised an online survey for translators who live in Türkiye and work on at least one digital labour platform (Firat 2021, 55). Information about the survey was spread on translation-related social media groups, and workers were identified on a variety of digital labour platforms (Firat 2021, 55–56). Responses were collected through a Google Forms questionnaire from May 2019 to June 2019 (Firat 2021, 56). The questions were "based on similar field studies" and concerned *employment status*, *income level*, *work-life balance*, *social protections*, *free agency*, *bargaining power, dependence on the platform*, *allocation of risks and rewards*, and *data collection, protection and privacy* (ibid).

Firat's survey received 70 responses from a wide pool of individuals (2021, 56). Their age range was 20–77 and they had between 1 and 20 years of experience in the language industry (ibid). Most of the respondents had some degree of formal education in translation, and 80% named "translator" as their main working role, with the others reporting some other role in the language industry, such as "proofreader" or "project manager" (Firat 2021, 56–57). The respondents were asked why they work on digital labour platforms, and they mentioned reasons such as "control and flexibility over their jobs", the ability to "work with clients abroad and earn foreign currency", preference to "work from home", and having "difficulties finding standard employment" (Firat 2021, 57). Interestingly, 31.4% of the respondents stated that they could make more money online than in "the offline economy", and 50.7% reported platform work as their "primary source of income" (ibid).

The respondents were asked both about their income from translation work in general and more specifically on their income from digital labour platforms (Firat 2021, 57–58). 70% of these translators earned less than 1,000 USD a month from translation work, which is very low even in Türkiye (Firat 2021, 57; 60). From platform work, 82% of the respondents earned less than 250 USD a week (Firat 2021, 57–58). Only 20% were satisfied or very satisfied with their income from platform work, and 72.9% felt that there is not enough work available (Firat 2021, 58–59). 80% also agreed or strongly agreed that "the prevailing competitive atmosphere on labour platforms results in an overall reduction in rates" (Firat 2021, 58). Firat evaluates that the precarious nature of platform work may put translation workers in a

vulnerable situation and hold many risks (2021, 60). The situation is in fact so dire that Firat, Gough, and Moorkens' 2024 study focuses on how Turkish platform translators struggle to meet the conditions of "decent work" as defined by the International Labour Organization.

Besides the issue of remuneration, many of the respondents in Firat's 2021 study reported a poor work-life balance, as they felt that taking time off from the platforms had negative effects (60–61), the translators had reduced bargaining power and rights (62–63), and they were subservient to the platforms and to their clients in many ways (63–65). While Firat did not directly ask the respondents about their *status* and does not draw conclusions about it, his study clearly indicates that Turkish platform translators have many issues related to factors that are believed to be determinants of status and job satisfaction. In my own study, I have decided to study platform translators with Dam and Zethsen's methodology to more directly find out how uberization is affecting translators' status. Unlike Firat, I have also decided to limit the scope of my small study to just one digital platform – *Fiverr*. Before outlining my research methodology, I will first provide an overview of what this platform is and how it operates.

2.4   What is Fiverr?

As stated on the platform's website, Fiverr is an "online marketplace, offering you a streamlined experience while finding digital services and talented freelancers" (Fiverr Help Center, n.d.(a)). It allows anyone that is of age to sign up for a free account and to "present their capabilities through detailed 'Gigs'" (ibid). The same kind of free user account can also be used to buy services (ibid). Services on the platform fall under many categories, such as "Graphics & Design", "Programming & Tech", and, pertinently for the present study, "Writing & Translation" (ibid; Fiverr, n.d.). Fiverr gives buyers many tools for finding an appropriate freelancer, handles payment from the buyer to the seller, and encourages buyers to leave reviews (ibid).

Sellers on Fiverr define the specifics of their Gigs themselves, including what exactly the service entails, what the delivery time is, and what the pricing is (Fiverr Help Center, n.d.(b)). This certainly makes working on Fiverr more like working as a sole proprietor or independent contractor than having an employment relationship. However, sellers only receive 80% of their asking price, as the platform deducts a commission (Fiverr Help Center, n.d.(a)), meaning that the price of visibility and job intermediation is quite high. It is worth noting that Fiverr prohibits sellers and buyers from exchanging contact information that could be used to

communicate outside the platform and heavily discourages any off-platform interaction between the parties (Fiverr 2024). This is of course done to prevent sellers from taking their established customer relationships elsewhere and circumventing Fiverr's commissions.

Fiverr encourages sellers to perform good-quality work through a level system, where metrics such as review scores, message response rate, total number of orders, and number of unique clients determine a seller profile's level (Fiverr Help Center, n.d.(c)). Having a higher level unlocks perks such as advertising with Promoted Gigs and receiving payouts of earnings faster (ibid). While Fiverr does not directly disclose this, it is likely that some of the same metrics that determine one's level are also fed into an algorithm that affects the Gig's visibility in search results. Because of this, sellers are usually highly motivated to maintain good review scores and response rates. In Firat's study – which did feature at least some translators working on Fiverr – 79.4% of respondents felt that "they needed to be constantly available because of the short reaction times on digital labour platforms" (2021, 61).

The present study aims to shed some light on how working in an online environment such as Fiverr affects translators' status. On one hand, it may be an easy way to get at least some translation work. On the other hand, however, I hypothesize that due to rampant pricing competition and the need to appease the algorithm and clients, translators working on Fiverr have a lower perception of their status than translators with other forms of employment. In the next chapter, I will outline what kind of survey I devised to test this hypothesis and how I sent it out to potential respondents.

3 Materials and methods

To gain insight into platform-based translation work and the experiences and status perceptions of translators involved in it, I devised a survey for translators working on the Fiverr platform. To keep the scope of my study manageable and better control for background variables, I limited my pool of respondents to only translators working with the Finnish language. In the following subsections I will describe my questionnaire and response collection in more detail.

3.1 Questionnaire

As it was clear to me from the outset that I wanted to compare my results with Dam and Zethsen's results as well as Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's study, I wanted to make my research questionnaire as similar to their questionnaires as possible. Therefore, I contacted Minna Ruokonen directly to ask for the questionnaires for reference. Luckily, Ruokonen still had both her own questionnaire and a Finnish translation of Dam and Zethen's Danish survey, and kindly provided them to me. I based my own questionnaire on these, directly reusing certain questions and devising new ones.

My questionnaire was divided into seven parts: (1) *background information,* (2) *education,* (3) *work and remuneration*, (4) *working conditions,* (5) *professional image*, (6) *professional image as seen by outsiders*, and (7) *freeform responses*. The underlying research themes that motivated the questions in these different parts of the questionnaire included the four status parameters that Dam and Zethsen focused on in their studies: "salary, education/expertise, visibility and power/influence" (2008, 78). The parts "work and remuneration" and "education" correspond with "salary" and "education/expertise" quite directly, whereas questions related to "visibility" and "power/influence" are more split across the different parts. My questionnaire also included questions that were not present in Dam and Zethsen's studies but were introduced in Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's study. Many of these relate more to job satisfaction than status.

The questionnaire was created with Webropol and included 39 questions in total. Some of them were open-ended, whereas others featured predetermined response options. Just like my reference studies, I used questions based on a five-point Likert scale, where the number one typically corresponded with the response "to a very low degree or none/not at all" and the number five represented the response "to a very high degree". For technical reasons, I did not

present the response options in an inverse order like Dam and Zethsen. The Likert-scale questions also allowed the respondent to select the response "I don't know", which was automatically given the value of 6 by Webropol, but these values were removed before analysis. The questionnaire was presented in Finnish, but I have translated all of the questions and responses into English for this thesis.

In the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked for the background variables of age, gender, mother tongue, country of residence, length of translation experience on Fiverr, length of translation experience in general, as well as the language pairs that they work with. The purpose of these questions was to construct a general profile of the Finnish translators on Fiverr and to potentially find out if variables such as age or gender affect the respondents' perceptions. For example, I speculated that country of residence might have an effect on how happy the translators are with their income from Fiverr. Because the variables asked for in this part of the questionnaire technically constitute *indirect personal information*, I took special care in handling the responses safely and attached a data protection notice to the survey, in which I described how the respondents' personal information would be handled in my study.

The second part of the survey focused on education. The respondents were asked to select the highest level of education that they have completed within the Finnish educational system and whether or not they had formally studied languages or translation. They were also given the option to describe how they have independently developed their translation competencies. The last question in this part was whether the respondent had the Finnish qualification of an *authorized translator*, which was a question also present in Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's 2018 study. As discussed by Dam and Zethsen, education in itself is often considered a significant determinant of status (2008, 74–75), and it can also be interesting to see if translators of different education levels have different perceptions of status-related questions.

The third part of the questionnaire was titled "work and remuneration", and it started by enquiring whether the respondents do or have previously done translation work somewhere else besides digital labour platforms. They were also asked whether they considered Fiverr their primary source of income. After this, they were asked to evaluate their monthly income from Fiverr, and, if they also did translation work elsewhere, from those other sources. The respondents were then asked how happy they were with their income and whether they considered the fees that Fiverr deducts from sellers reasonable. For this category, I

hypothesized that remuneration from working on Fiverr would be small and unsatisfying and that the fees would be considered unfair.

"Working conditions" is a very broad concept, as can be seen from the questions in part four. In this part, the respondents were asked whether they work at home or elsewhere and how many hours a week they work on average. Then they were asked how often they are in contact with other translators, experts in specialized topics, clients, writers of the source texts, and end users of the translations. This question in particular relates to the status parameter of *visibility*. The respondents were also asked how much their clients trust the quality of their translations and how much the clients appreciate their work, the latter of which is a particularly important question for "status in general".

Related to the status parameter of *power/influence*, the translators were asked how much they can – by negotiation et cetera – influence their working hours, the schedules of the commissions, the texts to be translated, their clientele, their compensation, the quality of the source texts, the clients' expectations of quality, and the quality of the final translation. The respondents were also asked if they ever have to compromise quality due to deadlines or other external factors, and whether they would rather do translation work somewhere else than on a digital labour platform. These questions are particularly pertinent for *job satisfaction*, which I also hypothesized to be low.

In the fifth part of the survey the respondents were asked about their image of the translator's occupation. They were asked how much creativity translation involves, how much expertise it requires, how much responsibility a translator has in their work, to what degree translation is "expert work", how much "prestige" is attached to the translator's occupation, how visible translators are as a vocational group, and how much impact translators' work has. Many of these questions were also reframed in the sixth part, where the respondents were asked to evaluate how people from outside the translation industry see the occupation. The respondents were asked to what extent outsiders consider translation an occupation requiring expertise, how many years of higher education outsiders think are required to work as a translator, how much impact outsiders think translators' work has, what outsiders would evaluate as a translator's monthly income, and how much the translator's occupation is valued in Finland. This last question is perhaps the clearest indicator of the respondents' perceptions of translators' "status in general".

In the seventh and final part of the questionnaire, the respondents were provided a text box where they could freely comment on the survey or the subject in general or elaborate on their responses. Now that I have described the structure of my survey, I will describe how I identified potential respondents and what the process of response collection was like.

3.2 Response collection

In order to best reach my respondents, I approached them directly through their profiles on the Fiverr platform. As I had decided to limit my population to only include translators working with the Finnish language, I started searching for respondents by filtering translation Gigs by source and target language. When I made my searches on 22 January 2024, Fiverr returned 239 Gigs with Finnish as the source language and 253 Gigs with Finnish as the target language. However, a majority of these Gigs were not applicable for my study. Upon closer inspection, many of the Gigs were not posted by individual translators, but different kinds of agencies and language service providers. Most of these Gigs listed dozens of very different source and target languages, indicating that the translations are most likely done by a separate network of freelancers. I speculate that in some cases some of the listed languages may not even truthfully be a part of the agency's selection and are merely listed to boost the Gig's visibility on Fiverr. These company accounts on digital labour platforms are an interesting phenomenon in their own right and might merit a separate study.

In addition to Gigs posted by companies, searching for Finnish translations also returned Gigs that were supposedly operated by individual translators but were highly suspicious in other regards. Some claimed to make translations "from any language", and some claimed to be fluent in Finnish despite living in a country such as Pakistan and providing no explanation for why they would have proficiency in the language. While I cannot say for sure what the nature of these Gigs is, it was immediately clear to me that I should not include the profiles behind them in my population of respondents.

After going through the search results, I initially ended up with a population of 77 translators. Of these, most were seemingly native Finnish speakers, or in some cases immigrants with a strong grasp of the language, but I also included a few non-Finnish individuals who believably claimed to have attained a high proficiency in the language through studying and personal contacts. However, these translators, as well as some others, ended up being removed from the population during the process which I will next describe.

On 22 January 2024 I sent a message to the 77 translators who I had deemed to constitute my population of respondents. The message included a brief description of my study and an invitation to fill in the survey on Webropol, to which I also provided an internet link. I set the deadline for responding as 4 February, meaning that the recipients would have two weeks to respond to my survey. I also attached the study's data protection notice to the message.

However, not all of my 77 messages went through to the respondents. Because I sent my invitations out in rapid succession, Fiverr's automatic spam filter started blocking them after only 15 messages had been sent. The remaining 62 invitations did not go through, and my Fiverr account was issued a warning. Luckily, I was able to start rectifying the situation on the next day.

To prevent my invitation from being flagged by the spam filter again, I slightly altered some of the wording in my message and started resending the messages so that I only sent one every fifteen minutes. With 62 messages to send, this was rather time-consuming; it would have taken over fifteen hours to resend all the invitations. This is in part why I decided to remove some translators from my initial population of respondents. These included the non-Finnish individuals mentioned above, whom I was slightly unsure about including even in the beginning, as well as some Finnish translators whose profiles indicated that they had not completed any orders on Fiverr. While I had not thought about it when selecting my population, some recipients of my invitation responded to me saying that they could not fill in the questionnaire because they had not completed any orders on Fiverr and therefore had no experiences to share. This makes perfect sense, and upon closer inspection, quite many of the profiles I had initially considered potential seemed to have zero orders completed. To save time in the invitation resending process, I started omitting these profiles.

In the end, I sent my survey to a total of 66 translators. A few of them seemed to not receive my message due to their own messaging options on Fiverr, and it is likely that some simply did not read my message within the two-week response period. In fact, the response period was shorter for some recipients than others, as sending the invitations at a slower pace meant that some of them went out as late as 25 January.

Many recipients of the invitation replied to my message in various ways, which is partially explained by the fact that Fiverr keeps track of whether sellers respond to buyers' messages and how quickly they do so, and this affects their standings on the platform. Many translators simply acknowledged that they had received my message or told me if they intended to

respond to the survey. A few also asked whether they could get monetary compensation for responding, which is understandable, but this was sadly not possible in the case of this study.

Some recipients also provided additional insight in their replies. As already referred to above, five separate people informed me that they could not respond to the survey because they had not completed any translation orders on Fiverr. Three of them also supplemented this information by saying that they had so far only received spam messages on the platform. This goes to show that getting started with translation work on the Fiverr platform can be very difficult. This is something that I can also attest to based on my personal experiences, although I do not recall receiving very many spam messages when I worked on Fiverr in 2018 and 2019.

When the response period ended, I had received 18 responses in total. As I ultimately included 66 translators in my population, this makes for a response rate of 27 %, which is not overwhelmingly high, but adequate for my purposes. Since I essentially sent my survey to the whole population that I wanted to study rather than a sample, the responses should be fairly representative of the population. However, the population also includes some translators who have not completed any translation orders on Fiverr, although I started omitting respondents based on this factor midway through the response collection process. Based on the responses, a few such individuals have likely even filled in the survey. This means that not all of my respondents were selected based on the same criteria, which may skew the results. Naturally, the population also only includes Finnish Fiverr translators, so it does not allow for solid conclusions about platform translators in general. Before moving on to analysing the results, I will briefly discuss methodology.

3.3 Methodology

Because my dataset is relatively small, I did not use any specialized software in analysing it. The survey responses were exported from Webropol as an Excel file, which I manually edited to be as readable as possible. In the case of questions where the predetermined response options included "I don't know" or "I don't want to say", I separated any such responses from the data and removed them from any calculations. I calculated mean and median values and percentages manually where applicable.

While I have analysed my data quantitively and also compared some of the figures obtained to my reference studies, my survey's response rate and total number of respondents are too small

to determine statistical significance. The quantitative analyses can be believed to reveal some potential trends in platform-based translators' status perceptions, and they may be used to guide methodology for further studies, but they cannot be considered conclusive in their own right. Because of the small dataset, I have also not found it instructive to conduct many comparisons between subgroups, such as different genders or age groups. Qualitative analyses of the open-ended questions are the most insightful parts of my study. With this in mind, I will now move on to presenting and analysing the results.

4   Analysis

We start by analysing the general profile of the respondents. Of my 18 respondents, exactly 50% identified as male and 50% as female. The options "other" and "I don't want to say" were also provided in the gender question, but no respondents selected them. In terms of age, I had expected the respondents to be relatively young, and while 8 out of 18 respondents were under thirty, there were also 3 respondents over forty. One respondent reported their age as lower than 18, which may be allowed on Fiverr, as individuals over 13 are allowed to "use the Site through an account owned by a parent or legal guardian with their appropriate permission" (Fiverr 2024). One respondent did not want to disclose their age. The median age of this rather dispersed group was 30. Table 1 portrays the respondents by age group.

Table 1: Respondents by age group

	N
Under 18	1
18–29	7
30–39	6
40–49	1
50–59	2
Total	17

14 out of 18 respondents had Finnish as their mother tongue. Of the remaining 4 respondents, one described themselves as bilingual, with Swedish and Finnish as their native languages. The rest reported Polish and French as their mother tongues, but their responses suggested great fluency in Finnish as well. 15 respondents reported their country of residence as Finland, while the rest lived in Estonia, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.

When it comes to the respondents' length of translation experience on Fiverr, the responses varied from less than a year to about nine years. One respondent noted that evaluating the length of experience is difficult because orders come by so irregularly and infrequently, which is a fair point. It is entirely possible to be active on Fiverr for years without receiving any work. In any case, this respondent did provide numbers on how long they have been active on the site and has been categorized accordingly. Many respondents also had translation experience from outside of Fiverr, with the longest career being as long as fifteen years. Table 2 portrays the respondents by length of translation experience on Fiverr, and Table 3 presents them by total experience.

Table 2: Respondents by length of translation experience on Fiverr

	N
Less than a year	3
1–2 years	4
2+–3 years	3
3+–4 years	2
4+–5 years	2
5+–6 years	1
6+–7 years	2
7+–8 years	0
8+–9 years	1
Total	18

Table 3: Respondents by length of translation experience in general

	N
Less than a year	1
1–3 years	5
3+–5 years	4
5+–7 years	3
7+–9 years	2
9+–12 years	1
12+–14 years	1
14+–16 years	1
Total	18

In the question concerning languages used in translation, the respondents were asked to list all of their language pairs and to be specific about whether they only translate from language A to language B or if they also do it vice versa. The most common language pair was, unsurprisingly, Finnish and English, with 12 respondents translating in both directions, 2 reportedly only translating from Finnish to English, and 3 only translating from English to Finnish. Only one respondent did not provide translations in either of these directions. In addition to this most common language pair, the respondents' working languages included French, Swedish, Spanish, German, Polish, and Estonian. Table 4 presents the respondents' working languages in detail.

Table 4: The respondents' language pairs

	Number of respondents
English to Estonian	1
English to Finnish	15
English to French	1
English to Polish	2
English to Swedish	2
Estonian to English	1
Estonian to Finnish	1
Finnish to English	14
Finnish to Estonian	1
Finnish to French	2
Finnish to German	1
Finnish to Polish	2
Finnish to Spanish	1
Finnish to Swedish	3
French to English	3
French to Finnish	3
French to German	1
French to Spanish	1
French to Swedish	2
German to English	1
German to Finnish	2
German to French	1
German to Spanish	1
Polish to English	1
Polish to Finnish	2
Spanish to English	1
Spanish to Finnish	1
Spanish to French	1
Spanish to German	1
Spanish to Swedish	1
Swedish to English	3
Swedish to Finnish	2
Swedish to French	1
Swedish to German	1
Swedish to Spanish	1

The table above accurately depicts the responses, but it is worth noting that some respondents may have misread the instructions and only reported translating in one direction, even if they actually translate in both. In addition, some may have simply forgotten certain language pairs from their lists. For example, one respondent supposedly translated between Finnish, English, Swedish, French, Spanish, and German in several directions, but listed no language pairs with English as the source language. At one point they had mistakenly written "Swedish to Swedish", indicating that they may not have taken sufficient care in drafting their response. In any case, the responses demonstrate that Finnish translators on Fiverr offer a relatively wide variety of language pairs. Now that I have mapped out the respondents' general profile, I will move on to discussing their educational background.

4.1 Education

Out of the 18 respondents, 3 stated that they had only completed Finnish *comprehensive school* (*peruskoulu*), which is a level of education that all Finns must attain according to law. In fact, the youngest respondent may not have even completed this level yet, but I had not realized to provide an option for this. Interestingly, one respondent revealed that they had started some studies after the comprehensive level but dropped out of them when part-time translation work turned out to provide them a living.

Beyond the comprehensive level, there had apparently been some confusion with the response options. In Finland, comprehensive school is followed by the *upper secondary level*, which includes *upper secondary school* (*lukio*) and *vocational school* (*ammattikoulu*). I had provided these as options, but also allowed for an option between the upper secondary level and a bachelor's degree, i.e. the option "some higher education studies". However, one respondent had chosen "bachelor's degree" despite writing that they had studied English and translation at university but had never completed their BA. I have corrected this response as "some higher education studies" in the data. Additionally, two other respondents had selected "upper secondary school" as their highest level of education, but their other responses seemed to indicate that they may have completed some higher education studies. These responses were too vague for me to determine the truth, so I have categorized both of them as having only completed upper secondary school, as they had selected.

With the above in mind, 4 respondents reported having completed upper secondary school, and 4 had finished vocational school. This would indicate that less than half of the respondents had received any higher education. One had definitively completed some higher

education studies, 3 had a bachelor's degree, and 2 had a master's degree. One respondent held a doctoral degree. None of the respondents had the qualification of an authorized translator. Table 5 presents the respondents by level of education.

Table 5: Respondents by highest level of education

	N
Comprehensive school	3
Upper secondary school	4
Vocational school	4
Some higher education studies	1
Bachelor's degree	3
Master's degree	2
Doctoral degree	1
Total	18

In addition to the respondent that had studied English and translation, five more indicated that they may have completed some language studies at university level, with one of them specifying that this would have been in German language and culture. In any case, very few of the respondents had any "formal translator training", although one vocational-school graduate stated that they are employed as an interpreter. One respondent's master's degree was in international marketing. The one doctoral degree was in a field within the natural sciences, quite unrelated to languages. However, this respondent had gone to an international school abroad and completed their comprehensive education in English, French, and Swedish. Another respondent also disclosed that they had gone to a Swedish-speaking school.

The respondents were eager to share some ways in which they had improved their language skills and translation competencies. These included learning from parents, bilingual work in social media marketing, working as a writer, using a foreign language in their daily life, living abroad, consuming media and literature in foreign languages, and simply practicing by doing. Several respondents also suggested that their competencies can be attributed to being naturally skilled in languages and interested in them. Generally, the respondents seemed to not consider formal education necessary for a translator – at least when we are talking about part-time work on a digital labour platform. In the freeform responses at the end of the survey, one respondent suggested that "many texts can be translated by anyone with a little bit of practice, if they are bilingual, for example". However, the same respondent did believe that

specialized topics require more expertise. In the next subsection, I will move on to discussing the respondents' work and remuneration.

4.2 Work and remuneration

Out of the 18 Fiverr translators in my study, 7 stated that they currently do translation work outside of digital labour platforms, and 5 reported having previously done so. Confusingly, one respondent answered in this part that they had not done other translation work, but shared in their freeform responses that they had done translations as part of their earlier jobs and also freelanced for about two years. It might be that this "freelancing" in fact refers to platforms, and they have also not counted the translations that they had done in other jobs as "translation work". In any case, I have counted the respondent as having only worked on platforms, meaning that a total of 6 respondents, or 33%, only had this kind of translation experience.

Of the 12 translators who did have off-platform experience, 9 respondents, or 75%, had worked as freelancers or entrepreneurs. Two reported having done translation work as employees of private companies, and one had been employed in the public sector. Out of all 18 respondents, only one considered Fiverr their primary source of income.

The respondents' average monthly income from Fiverr translation varied greatly and ranged from €0 to €1,500. It is unclear if the respondents who answered "€0" have never completed any orders on the platform or if the orders have simply been so infrequent that they considered them to average out to zero. In any case, the mean value of the incomes was €271.11, and the median was €150. These values are obviously very low, especially in a high-income country such as Finland. In the end of the survey, one respondent aptly remarked that they work on Fiverr for "pocket money". In table 6, the respondents have been categorized by their level of income from Fiverr. It can easily be seen that the one respondent who reported earning €1,500 a month is a stand-alone anomaly.

Table 6: Respondents by level of average monthly income from Fiverr

	N
€0	3
€1–€200	7
€201–400	4
€401–600	3
Over €600	1
Total	18

The responses support my hypothesis of Fiverr translators' low income level. Interestingly, however, the respondents did not seem to be very disappointed with the situation. On the five-point Likert scale, their mean rating for satisfaction with the income was 3.11, indicating that they trend slightly more towards satisfied than dissatisfied. This can likely be explained by low expectations. If one does not expect to earn more than a few hundred euros a month in the first place, it will not be that disappointing.

Even if we only consider the translators who also had experience from outside of digital labour platforms, they rate their satisfaction with their income from Fiverr with 3.50 on average. This is interesting considering the fact that they obviously received much more money from their work outside of the platform. 3 of these 12 translators did not provide a number on how much they earned from off-platform translation work, though one stated that it was "a lot". The figures that were reported ranged from €100 to €4,300 a month, with the mean value being €1,222.22 and the median being €400. Clearly, this set includes both full-time translators and others who have only done some very part-time freelancing.

Even though 3 out of 12 translators did not provide a number for their off-platform income, only 2 could also not provide an opinion on how satisfied they have been with this income. Thus, 10 responses were collected for this question, and the average score was 3.90. This indicates that the respondents were happier with their off-platform income than their income from Fiverr, but not overwhelmingly so.

When asked whether they considered Fiverr's commissions reasonable or too high, the respondents provided the mean value of 3.38, with the value 1 corresponding with "very reasonable" and the value 5 corresponding with "way too high". This indicates that the respondents were slightly unhappy with Fiverr's 20% commission, but not as much as I had hypothesized. Moving on to the next subsection, I will analyse the respondents' working conditions.

4.3 Working conditions

17 out of 18 respondents, or 94%, reported that they usually do their Fiverr work at home. The one outlier stated that they work while traveling. Weekly hours spent working on Fiverr ranged from 0 to 35, with the mean value being about 6 and the median being 2. One respondent could not provide an estimate. Table 7 portrays the respondents by average weekly

working hours. The one respondent that reported working "30–35" hours a week is the same outlier that earned €1,500 a month from Fiverr.

Table 7: Respondents by average weekly hours spent working on Fiverr

	N
Less than 1	2
1–5	9
6–10	4
11–15	1
Over 15	1
Total	17

When it comes to the respondents' communication with others during their work, 16 out of 18, or 89%, reported that they are never in contact with other translators on Fiverr, and those that did, only did so at most 1–5 times a year. This would seem to indicate that Finnish Fiverr translators do not form much of a community. Communication with other translators outside of Fiverr and with experts in specialized topics was also quite rare, with less than half of the respondents ever engaging in these. Communication with writers of source texts and end users of translations was reported as slightly more common, but 50% still never had such communication. It should also be noted that the translators' clients may sometimes have written the source texts themselves and/or be the end users of the translations, meaning that there is some overlap between the categories. While most respondents reported communicating with clients relatively often, 2 interestingly indicated that they never do. It is possible that these respondents have simply not received any work on Fiverr, but they may have also completed orders without asking the clients any questions, as it is possible to place an order through a Gig page without exchanging messages. Table 8 presents a detailed run-through of how often the respondents communicated with different parties.

Table 8: How many respondents were in contact with others with different frequencies

	Never	At most 1–5 times a year	6–11 times a year	1–3 times a month	About once a week	Several times a week
Other translators on Fiverr	16	2	0	0	0	0
Other translators outside Fiverr	10	3	2	0	2	1
Experts in specialized topics	11	6	0	0	0	1
Clients	2	3	3	4	1	5
Writers of the source texts	9	1	2	4	1	1
End users of the translation	9	3	3	1	0	2

One possible way to analyse these figures could be to convert them into Likert-scale scores and use them as a "score for visibility". For example, if the responses "never" and "at most 1–5 times a year" correspond with the value 1, and the response "several times a week" corresponds with the value 5, the respondents' average visibility score with other translators outside of Fiverr is 1.67, and the average visibility score with clients is 2.89. Combining these averages across all of the suggested parties for communication yields a mean value of 1.74. While this low figure could be thought to indicate very low visibility, the reason for it is likely the fact most of the respondents only receive orders very infrequently, making communication rare. However, receiving so little work could in itself be considered a symptom of low visibility.

When the respondents were asked how much their Fiverr clients trust the quality of their translations, they responded with the extremely high mean value of 4.88. However, trust is not the same thing as appreciation. Even if the clients believe that they are receiving good-quality translations, they might be commissioning them with little regard for the translator, and they might not express gratitude.

Asking the respondents how much their clients *value* their work yielded the quite high mean score of 4.06. In Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's study, a similar question was used to assess the translators' perceptions of their own "status" *in general* (2018, 6). Keeping in mind that

statistical significance cannot be determined when comparing my results with reference studies, Ruokonen and Mäkisalo obtained the figure 3.94 (2018, 9), which is very similar to mine. This would seem to suggest that the Fiverr translators in my study actually find the appreciation of their work just as high as other Finnish translators, which can be taken to mean that their perception of their own status is just as high. This finding does not support my hypotheses. However, due to the very nature of the platform, it may be that Finnish Fiverr translators simply have a very low standard of how much their work *should* be appreciated.

When the translators were asked how much influence they have over different aspects of their work, they generally considered it to be quite a lot. When it comes to working hours, texts to be translated, and the quality of the final translation, over 50% of respondents stated that they have "very much" control over them. Schedules of commissions, clientele, compensation, and the clients' expectations of quality were also found to be quite well-negotiable aspects of the work. The only aspect that a majority of the respondents had quite little control over was the quality of the source texts. Table 9 presents the respondents' answers to these questions in detail.

Table 9: How many respondents had different degrees of control over their work

	Very little or not at all	Quite little	To some extent	Quite much	Very much
Working hours	0	1	0	5	12
Schedules of commissions	1	1	2	9	5
Texts to be translated	1	1	1	5	10
Clientele	2	2	1	5	8
Compensation	0	2	4	9	3
Quality of source texts	3	7	0	4	4
Clients' expectations of quality	1	2	2	8	4
Quality of the final translation	0	2	1	2	13

Similarly to the earlier "visibility scores", these values could be used to construct a score for the respondents' power/influence. If the response "very little or not at all" corresponds with the value 1, and the response "very much" corresponds with the value 5, the respondents average "influence score" in terms of the quality of the final translation is 4.44, and the mean score regarding the quality of the source texts is 2.94. Combining these averages across all of the eight parameters yields a mean value of 3.91. This is quite high, which supports the notion that platform translators have a fair degree of freedom in their work, similarly to traditional freelancers.

When the translators were asked if they ever have to compromise the quality of their work due to deadlines or other external factors, 10 out of 18, or 56%, answered that they never do. 7 translators, or 39%, reported having to do so at most 1–5 times a year. Only one translator stated that they had to compromise their quality 6–11 times a year. These answers indicate that the respondents feel that they can spend an adequate amount of time on their work and can be happy with their output. If they truly have as much negotiating power over the schedules of their commissions as they stated in the previous question, this makes sense.

In the final question of part four, the respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement "I would rather do translation work somewhere else than on a digital labour platform". With the value 1 corresponding with the response "Completely disagree" and the value 5 matching the response "Completely agree", the respondents answered with a mean value of 2.61. This would seem to indicate that on average, the translators were not particularly unsatisfied with working on Fiverr. This goes against my hypothesis, but I speculate that it can once again be explained by low expectations. Many of the respondents likely do not consider doing translation work elsewhere an option in the first place and are relatively happy with small-scale, part-time work on Fiverr. However, it is also worth noting that 3 respondents did completely agree with the statement and 3 others somewhat agreed. Moving on from this subsection, I will next present the respondents' perceptions of the translator's profession in general.

4.4 Professional image

Just like the last question in part four, the questions in part five were based on a five-point scale. The value 1 always represented the response "to a very low degree or not/none at all" and the value 5 represented "to a very high degree". When the translators were asked "do you

think that translation involves creativity", they answered with a mean score of 3.76, and no respondent gave a score below 3. One respondent could not give an evaluation.

In the question "do you think that translation requires expertise", the responses produced a mean value of 3.83. Almost all respondents gave a minimum score of 3, but one selected the option "to a very low degree or none at all". There was also another very similar question, "to what degree do you consider translation expert work". The mean score obtained from this question was an only slightly higher 3.88, indicating that the respondents did not find the two questions very different and answered consistently. Once again, one respondent selected the option "to a very low degree or not at all".

When the respondents were asked "to what degree does a translator have responsibility in their work", they answered with a mean value of 4.22. This indicates that they generally consider it very important for translators to conduct their work responsibly. Like before, one respondent provided the value of 1, and one gave a score of 3, but all others responded with a 4 or a 5.

The question "how much prestige do think you is attached to the translator's work" quite directly relates to translators' status. In this question, the respondents provided the mean score of 2.60, which is much lower than the scores obtained from other questions in this part, and strikingly similar to status scores obtained from earlier studies, such as Dam and Zethsen's, Katan's, and Ruokonen and Mäkisalo's. Clearly, the Finnish Fiverr translators in my study do not consider translation a very prestigious occupation, as much as they consider it to feature aspects such as creativity and expertise. My respondents also seemed to find this question quite difficult, as 3 of them could not provide an answer.

Further along, the translators were asked were asked "are translators visible as a vocational group in society", and they answered with a mean score of 2.47. One respondent could not provide an answer. In any case, the respondents clearly somewhat agree with the common sentiment that translators lack visibility. When asked "do you think a translator's work has economic, political, societal, or other influence", they provided a mean score of 3.06. 4 separate respondents even selected the answer "to a very high degree", indicating that the respondents considered translators to be at least somewhat influential, although there were also 2 respondents who could not provide an answer. Next, we will move on to the penultimate part of the questionnaire and see what the respondents thought about non-translators' perceptions of the profession.

4.5   Professional image as seen by outsiders

Asking the respondents "to what extent *people outside the translation industry* consider translation an occupation that requires expertise" yielded the average response score of 2.72. This is clearly lower than the average of the respondents' own personal perceptions. The very similar question "to what extent people outside the translation industry consider translation expert work" gave rise to the mean score of 2.94, which is interestingly a little higher, but not overwhelmingly so. In this latter question, one respondent could not provide an answer. The scores seem to indicate that the respondents consider translators to be somewhat undervalued by outsiders.

The respondents were also asked how many years of education after the upper secondary level outsiders think are required to work as a translator. In this question, the possible response options were "0 years", "1–2 years", "3–4 years", and "5–6 years". This turned out to be the most difficult question in the survey for the respondents to answer, as 8 out of 18 could not provide an evaluation. Of the remaining 10 respondents, 2 answered "0 years", 4 answered "1–2" years, and 4 responded with "3–4" years. Therefore, the respondents seem to believe that society at large considers translators at least somewhat educated. In hindsight, it would have also been interesting to directly ask whether *they themselves* consider translation to require higher education, as getting started on digital labour platforms without any kind of degree is relatively easy, and many of the respondents did not possess higher education.

When the respondents were asked to evaluate what outsiders would estimate as a translator's monthly income, 7 out of 18 could not provide a number. However, one of these respondents answered, "they think that it is low", and another stated that "they know that translation is very expensive". The respondents that did provide numbers had very similar ideas: the range was from €1,500 to €3,000, with the mean being €2.363,64 and the median being €2.500. Based on these answers, translation would be seen as a very standard middle-class occupation in Finland.

When it comes to whether people outside the translation industry believe translators to have economic, political, societal or other influence, 7 respondents could not provide an evaluation. Those that did responded with the strikingly low mean value of 1.91. This indicates that while the respondents themselves believe translators to possess some power/influence, they think that this is not recognized in society very much at all.

Perhaps the single most important question in my survey – and the one possibly most directly related to *status* in general – was "how much do you think the translator's occupation is valued in Finland". Only one respondent could not provide an opinion on this, and the remaining 17 respondents' answers produced a mean score of 2.71. This is ever so slightly higher than the value 2.55, which Ruokonen and Mäkisalo obtained from their survey, and which in turn had been similar to values obtained by Dam and Zethsen, and Katan (Ruokonen and Mäkisalo 2018, 9). This suggests that while I had expected Fiverr translators' perceptions of translators' status to be lower than those recorded in earlier studies, they are in fact identical or even higher. Therefore, my study does not seem to support the notion that Finnish Fiverr translators suffer from a lower status than other translators in Finland. In the next subsection, I will bring up some points from the respondents' freeform responses.

4.6   Freeform responses

There were many recurring themes in the freeform responses written at the end of the survey. For instance, it was made clear that the pricing of translation work on Fiverr is exceedingly low. As already mentioned, one respondent said that they work for "pocket money", and another one used the same expression when describing how other Fiverr users from low-income countries price their work. They described that due to the global nature of the platform, competition is intense, and this is reflected on the prices. Translators from Western countries often need to have difficult pricing negotiations with clients who find their suggested prices expensive, even if they would already be considered rock-bottom in the West. A third respondent commented that "succeeding on Fiverr requires that you agree to work for 'starvation wages', at least in the beginning", and a fourth one described that clients often offer "obscenely low" prices.

Several respondents lamented that the Fiverr users from low-income countries who keep the prices down often complete their work with machine translation. One respondent used the loaded expression "Third World AI translators" and another one stated that many users from countries such as India complete their projects using machine translation. A third respondent went as far as to say that the website is "full of" individuals that use machine translation and may offer Finnish translations without even knowing the language. Based on the searches that I carried out on the platform while looking for respondents, as well as some earlier personal experiences with Fiverr, there is likely some truth to these respondents' statements. One of the respondents further commented that abusers of machine translation diminish the credibility of

actual professional translators, and that it can be very difficult to tell if a given Fiverr translator is "real" unless they have a "Top Rated" badge. Clients have often asked the respondent to prove that they actually translate manually and not with Google Translate, and this can be difficult to achieve without doing work for free.

Two respondents also expressed that they believe the pricing of translation work to be low even outside of digital labour platforms. According to one of them "wages are too low compared to the workload in the freelance market", but they believed that they are more reasonable in translation agencies. From what they had heard, a Finnish translation freelancer or entrepreneur must not budge on their pricing, as they may sometimes be asked to work for too little. The other respondent had this to say:

> "The fact is that translators are not valued. People imagine that we have Google Translate, DeepL Translate, and other machine translators, and that is enough. However, the general public doesn't understand the amount of nuance that a language such as Finnish has, how much understanding context affects the translation result, et cetera. […] This lack of appreciation can directly be seen in a low level of pay, because 'why would anyone want to pay for something that a machine does for free?'" (My translation.)

Despite the issues with pricing, the respondents also had some positive things to say about Fiverr translation. One said that they do it as a side job because "it's easy", and another one described Fiverr as a good "springboard for beginning translators". They continued that it can be difficult to find any work in Finland without a degree, so self-taught translators have to use foreign services, no matter how capable they are. They considered "the freelancer's freedom" a positive and also noted that platforms are effortless to use. A third respondent shared that during a three-year period when they were more active on Fiverr, they had withdrawn a total of 10,000 USD from the platform, but they also do other work besides just translation.

Stand-alone comments in the freeform responses included that succeeding on Fiverr requires one to always be available and ready to respond, which is very similar to sentiments expressed in Firat's 2021 study. One respondent considered the worst thing about Fiverr translation to be that clients sometimes make complaints to the translator even though the problem is with the source material. One respondent also brought up the fact that Fiverr is an Israeli-owned company and that they are giving up the platform because of this as soon as they have completed their ongoing projects. With this, I have quite thoroughly presented all of the responses from my questionnaire and will now move on to discussing the significance of the results.

5 Discussion

While my study is small in scale and its methodology could be refined, it brings up many interesting points. The first of these already arises from my process of response collection and is further supported by the freeform responses of my survey: there are many dubious seller accounts on the Fiverr platform. Some of them are operated by translation companies rather than individual freelancers, and some claim to provide Finnish translations without offering any explanation why they would be proficient in the language. My respondents speculate that many of them sell machine translations disguised as manual translations, and I find this a plausible theory. This makes identifying so-called real translators difficult for both potential buyers of translation services and researchers of translators' status. I cannot be sure that the population I have identified as applicable for responding to my survey is completely genuine, which may cast some doubt on the reliability of my study.

Another point relates to the profile of the respondents. One of them was underage, and most of them had no formal education in languages or translation. These findings would seem to support Firat, Gough, and Moorkens' (2024, 2) notion that platform-based translation has a low barrier to entry. Many of my respondents did not consider translation their primary occupation, but rather a side job. Only one respondent reported Fiverr as their primary source of income, and even they only earned €1,500 a month on average. By most of these Finnish translators, Fiverr was seen as a nice option to have, and a way to earn some "pocket money". This is of course drastically different from platform translators in countries such as Türkiye, for whom earning a small amount of money from platforms can be necessary to "meet their basic needs" (Firat 2021, 57).

Possibly because of this casual attitude towards the work, my respondents did not seem to consider their own status as Fiverr translators any lower than other translator groups consider theirs. They may have come to Fiverr fully expecting that the work is unglamorous and have a low standard for how much it should be appreciated. As many of the respondents only considered translation a side job, they likely do not have much of a "translator's identity" and do not take the status of the occupation very personally. Some of them seemed to hold the belief that translation can be done by anyone with "a knack for languages", which more formally trained translators might take offence to. Then again, the respondents did generally consider translation to require at least some degree of "expertise".

Another common theme in the responses was that work on Fiverr is very infrequent. Considering this, many of my research questions were too much based on the assumption that work is consistent, or on the *frequency* of something occurring. The infrequency of work could be attributed to low visibility with clients, or simply to low demand for the translators' services. In terms of translators' visibility in general, the respondents seemed to consider it fairly low, but this is by no means a position held uniquely by platform translators.

Generally, the respondents seemed to feel that they have quite a lot of freedom and control over different aspects of their work on Fiverr. They also lauded platform work for being easy and convenient. This would seem to indicate that the usual positives of being a freelancer also apply on digital labour platforms. Some may even prefer this mode of freelancing, as it eliminates many entrepreneurial responsibilities, such as invoicing. Indeed, the respondents' job satisfaction seemed to be surprisingly high, and many of them would not have preferred to do translation work outside of platforms. With this, I will move on to the conclusion of the thesis.

6   Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate how work on digital labour platforms is affecting translators' status. This investigation was implemented through a research questionnaire aimed at Finnish translators working on the platform Fiverr. The questionnaire, which was largely based on earlier status studies carried out in Finland and Denmark, was sent to 66 individuals, and received 18 responses. This response rate was deemed appropriate for the study itself, but the scale remained too small to determine statistical significance in comparisons with earlier studies.

The study did not succeed in proving that platform translators would suffer from lower status than other translator groups, but the results did seem to indicate that their status is not any higher either. I postulated it to be the case that Finnish Fiverr translators come to the platform with low expectations and are therefore not too disappointed with the exceedingly low remuneration. For most of them, platform-based translation work presented as nothing more than a convenient side job. Their job satisfaction also seemed to be higher than I had expected.

The questionnaire, which was based on earlier studies by Helle V. Dam and Karen Korning Zethsen, as well as Minna Ruokonen and Jukka Mäkisalo, was an appropriate research method in principle, but it could have been further modified to cater to the peculiarities of platform translation. In particular, questions that rely on an assumption about continuous work should be reframed to concern the rare instances when work is available. For example, "income per order" or "price per word" might be better metrics than "monthly income", and work-related communication could be better assessed through how satisfied the translators are with it rather than through how often it occurs.

With these kinds of modifications, further studies on the status of platform translators are to be encouraged. Besides Fiverr, there are many different platforms that could be included in these studies, and different criteria could be used for selecting the respondents. However, if a uniform profile of respondents is desired, they need to be selected carefully. Simply using the built-in search filters of a digital labour platform will likely return results that do not match the desired respondent profile. Of course, the respondents can be located outside of the platforms, too.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Finnish summary

Tämä tutkielma käsittelee verkkoalustojen välityksellä tapahtuvan kääntämisen vaikutusta kääntäjien *ammattistatukseen*. Status on sosiologian käsite, jolla tarkoitetaan tässä yhteydessä sitä, miten paljon kääntäjiä kollektiivisesti *arvostetaan*. Kääntäjien statusta on perinteisesti pidetty matalana, ja kahdenkymmenen viime vuoden aikana on julkaistu myös empiirisiä tutkimuksia, jotka tukevat tätä näkemystä. Verkkoalustat puolestaan edustavat hyvin uutta työnteon muotoa, johon uskotaan liittyvän paljon haittapuolia, ja tutkielman hypoteesi on, että alustoilla työskentelevillä kääntäjillä saattaa olla vieläkin matalampi status kuin muilla kääntäjäryhmillä. Statuksen ohella tutkielma käsittelee myös kääntäjien *työtyytyväisyyttä*.

Tutkielma pohjautuu suurelta osin muutamiin aikaisempiin statustutkimuksiin. Helle V. Dam ja Karen Korning Zethsen ovat teettäneet aiheeseen liittyviä kyselyitä useille eri kääntäjäryhmille Tanskassa, ja Suomessa heidän menetelmiään on soveltanut ja jatkojalostanut erityisesti Minna Ruokonen. Dam ja Zethsen tutkivat kääntäjien statusta kysymällä siitä pääasiassa kääntäjiltä itseltään, ja heidän kysymyksensä liittyivät neljään eri tekijään, joiden uskotaan vaikuttavan ammatin statukseen. Nämä tekijät ovat *palkkaus*, *kouluttautuneisuus/asiantuntijuus, näkyvyys* sekä *vaikutusvalta*. Useimmat Damin ja Zethsenin kysymykset koskivat vastaajien mielipiteitä erilaisista väittämistä, ja niissä käytettiin viisiportaista Likert-asteikkoa, jossa vaihtoehto 1 tarkoitti negatiivisia vastauksia, kuten "erittäin vähän tai ei lainkaan", ja vaihtoehto 5 positiivisia vastauksia, kuten "erittäin paljon". (Dam–Zethsen 2008, 78.)

Damin ja Zethsenin tutkimukset sisältävät 131 vastausta freelance-kääntäjiltä, 66 vastausta käännöstoimistoissa työskenteleviltä kääntäjiltä (Dam–Zethsen 2011, 982–983), 63 vastausta EU-kääntäjiltä (Dam–Zethsen 2012, 216) ja 47 vastausta kääntäjiltä, jotka työskentelevät suurissa tanskalaisissa yrityksissä, kuten asianajotoimistoissa tai pankeissa (Dam–Zethsen 2008, 79). Kun näiltä vastaajilta kysyttiin yleisesti, miten korkeana he pitävät kääntäjien statusta, yhdenkään kääntäjäryhmän vastausten keskiarvo ei ollut yli 3,0, eli he arvioivat statuksen melko matalaksi. Eri ryhmien välillä oli kuitenkin tilastollisesti merkitseviä eroja: esimerkiksi freelancereiden vastausten keskiarvo oli 2,53 (Dam–Zethsen 2011, 984) ja yrityskääntäjien 2,87 (Dam–Zethsen 2008, 82). Eroja löytyi myös statuksen osatekijöitä koskevista kysymyksistä: esimerkiksi EU-kääntäjät saivat huomattavasti parempaa *palkkaa*

kuin muut ryhmät (Dam–Zethsen 2012, 221), mutta heidän näkemyksensä *näkyvyyteen* liittyvistä kysymyksistä olivat selvästi negatiivisempia (mt., 228). Nämä tulokset osoittavat, että erilaisissa olosuhteissa työskentelevien kääntäjien välillä on poikkeavuuksia, ja tämä kannustaa tekemään lisätutkimuksia eri ryhmillä.

Suomessa Minna Ruokonen ja Jukka Mäkisalo ovat julkaisseet tutkimuksen, jossa hyödynnettiin osin samoja kysymyksiä ja teemoja kuin Damin ja Zethsenin tutkimuksissa (Ruokonen–Mäkisalo 2018, 5–6). Tämän tutkimuksen kyselyyn vastasi 450 suomalaista kääntäjää, joista 57 oli AV-kääntäjiä, 269 asiatekstikääntäjiä, 71 kirjallisuuden kääntäjiä ja 53 muita kääntäjiä (mt., 7–8). Ruokosen ja Mäkisalon tulokset olivat hyvin samansuuntaisia kuin Damin ja Zethsenin: kun vastaajia pyydettiin arvioimaan, miten paljon kääntäjän ammattia *arvostetaan* Suomessa, heidän vastaustensa keskiarvoksi muodostui 2,55 (mt., 6). Tässä kyselyssä vastaajilta kuitenkin kysyttiin erikseen myös sitä, miten paljon *juuri heidän omaa työtään* arvostetaan, ja vastausten keskiarvo oli niinkin korkea kuin 3,94 (mt., 9). Kääntäjät saattavat siis kokea oman arvostuksensa hyvin erilaisena kuin koko ammattikunnan statuksen.

Yleisesti ottaen aiemmat tutkimukset ovat joka tapauksessa vahvistaneet käsitystä kääntäjien matalasta ammattistatuksesta. Kuitenkin yksi kääntäjäryhmä, jota on alettu tutkia vasta aivan viime vuosina, on *verkkoalustoilla* työskentelevät kääntäjät. Tässä tarkoitetut verkkoalustat käyttävät samankaltaista liiketoimintamallia kuin esimerkiksi kyytipalvelu Uber tai monet ruokalähettipalvelut. Alustatyöntekijät eivät ole varsinaisesti työsuhteessa, mutta eivät myöskään toimi yrittäjinä, vaan alusta yhdistää heidät asiakkaisiin ja huolehtii maksuliikenteestä. (Stanford 2021, 48–50.) Tietyt alustat, kuten Proz, Translated ja Stepes, ovat erikoistuneet nimenomaan käännöspalveluiden välittämiseen (Firat–Gough–Moorkens 2024, 5), mutta käännöksiä myydään myös yleisemmillä freelancer-alustoilla, kuten Fiverr- ja Upwork-alustoilla (mp.; Giustini 2024, 3).

Käännöstöiden tekeminen verkkoalustoilla on helposti saavutettavaa, sillä siihen voi ryhtyä kuka tahansa, joka osaa vähintään kahta eri kieltä ja omistaa internet-yhteydellä varustetun tietokoneen tai älypuhelimen (Firat–Gough–Moorkens 2024, 2). Alustatyön etuna voidaan nähdä myös se, että se on samalla tavalla itsenäistä kuin perinteinen freelance-kääntäjän työ, mutta ei vaadi yrittäjyyttä. Monet kuitenkin ajattelevat, että alustatyö ei ole työntekijöiden kannalta reilu työnteon muoto. "Keikkojen" saaminen ei ole taattua, ja ilman keikkoja ei ole tuloja. Alustatyöntekijät myös vastaavat itse omista työvälineistään eivätkä he esimerkiksi kerrytä työllään eläkettä tai saa muita työsuhteisiin kuuluvia etuja. Alustat myös hyödyntävät

automaattisia tietokonealgoritmeja työntekijöiden toiminnan ohjauksessa, mikä voi toisinaan olla hyvin epäoikeudenmukaista. (Stanford 2021, 46–52.)

Lähivuosina on tehty muutamia tutkimuksia alustoilla työskentelevistä kääntävistä. Tämän tutkielman kannalta olennaisin niistä on Gökhan Firatin tutkimus vuodelta 2021. Firat laati kyselyn turkkilaisille kääntäjille, jotka työskentelevät vähintään yhdellä verkkoalustalla. Kyselyn tavoitteena oli selvittää, miten alustatyö vaikuttaa kääntäjien työolosuhteisiin, ja siihen vastasi 70 henkilöä.

Firatin tutkimus ei suoraan liittynyt statukseen, mutta sen tulokset kertovat ainakin jotakin statukseen liittyvistä tekijöistä. Esimerkiksi vastaajien *palkkiotaso* oli melko heikko, sillä 82 % vastaajista ansaitsi alustakääntämisellä vähemmän kuin 250 Yhdysvaltain dollaria viikossa. Tästä huolimatta yli 50 % nimesi alustatyön pääasialliseksi tulonlähteekseen. (Firat 2021, 57–58.) Firat arvioi, että turkkilaiset alustakääntäjät ovat työn epävarmuuden vuoksi hyvin haavoittuvassa asemassa (mt., 60), ja hän onkin myöhemmin kirjoittanut siitä, että työ ei täytä Kansainvälisen työjärjestön (ILO) määrittämiä edellytyksiä ihmisarvoiselle työlle (Firat–Gough–Moorkens 2024).

Tämä tutkielma liittyy suoremmin juuri ammattistatukseen ja hyödyntää alustakääntäjien tutkimisessa Damin ja Zethsenin menetelmiä. Lisäksi se keskittyy vain yhteen verkkoalustaan, *Fiverriin*. Kyseessä on freelancer-alusta, jolle kuka tahansa voi rekisteröityä ilmaiseksi ja myydä käännösten ohella monenlaisia muitakin palveluita, kuten graafista suunnittelua tai ohjelmointia. Fiverrin käyttäjät saavat itse määritellä työnsä hinnoittelun sekä muut yksityiskohdat, ja alusta toimii vain työn välittäjänä. Fiverr kuitenkin veloittaa myyjiltä 20 prosentin välityspalkkion, kieltää myyjiä kommunikoimasta asiakkaiden kanssa alustan ulkopuolella ja valvoo tarkasti esimerkiksi myyjien arvosteluja ja vastausnopeutta. (Fiverr Help Center; Fiverr 2024.) Tutkielman hypoteesi on, että kääntäjien status ja työtyytyväisyys ovat tässä hyvin kilpailuhenkisessä ympäristössä poikkeuksellisen matalat. Lisäksi hypoteesina on, että Fiverr-kääntämisestä saatavat tulot ovat hyvin matalat ja niihin ollaan tyytymättömiä.

Hypoteesia testattiin kyselyllä, joka lähetettiin 66:lle suomea työkielenä käyttävälle Fiverr-kääntäjälle. Kyselyn pohjana käytettiin Damin ja Zethsenin sekä Ruokosen ja Mäkisalon kyselyjä. Osa kysymyksistä toisinnettiin sellaisenaan, mutta myös täysin uusia kysymyksiä otettiin käyttöön. Kyselyssä kysyttiin vastaajien *taustatietoja*, tietoja heidän *koulutuksestaan* sekä *töistään ja palkkioistaan*, *työolosuhteisiin* liittyviä seikkoja, vastaajien käsityksiä

kääntäjien *ammattikuvasta* sekä heidän käsityksiään siitä, miten *käännösalan ulkopuoliset ihmiset näkevät kääntäjien ammattikuvan*.

Vastaajat etsittiin Fiverrin oman hakutoiminnon avulla, mutta kaikki haun kautta löytyneet profiilit eivät soveltuneet tutkimukseen. Monet niistä eivät kuuluneet yksittäisille freelancereille, vaan kielialan yrityksille, ja monet muut vaikuttivat siltä, etteivät niiden omistajat todellisuudessa osanneet suomea. Karsinnan jälkeen kysely kuitenkin lähetettiin käytännössä kaikille kriteereihin sopiville Fiverrin käyttäjille. Vastaukset kerättiin Webropolissa tammi-helmikuun vaihteessa 2024, ja niitä vastaanotettiin 18, eli kyselyn vastausprosentti oli 27 %. Osa vastaajista ilmoitti, että he eivät pysty vastaamaan kyselyyn, koska eivät ole vielä toimittaneet yhtäkään tilausta Fiverrissä. Tämän vuoksi on vaikea sanoa, kuinka monta oikeasti potentiaalista vastaajaa tutkimuksella olisi ollut.

Aineisto vietiin ulos Webropolista Excel-tiedostona, ja se sisälsi sekä määrällistä että laadullista tietoa. Kvantitatiivista aineistoa analysoitiin laskemalla mediaaneja, keskiarvoja ja prosenttiosuuksia. Lukuja vertailtiin jonkin verran aikaisempiin tutkimuksiin, mutta koska vastausten määrä oli melko pieni, näitä vertailuja ei voida pitää tilastollisesti merkitsevinä. Vastaukset saattavat paljastaa joitakin yleisiä suuntaviivoja, ja niitä voidaan hyödyntää jatkotutkimuksissa, mutta tutkielman informatiivisinta antia on kvalitatiivinen aineisto.

Kyselyn vastaajien yleisprofiili oli monipuolinen. Heistä tarkalleen puolet oli miehiä ja puolet naisia. Nuorin vastaajista oli alle 18-vuotias, ja kaikista eniten joukossa oli nuoria aikuisia, mutta mukana oli myös kolme yli 40-vuotiasta kääntäjää. Suomi oli 14 vastaajan äidinkieli, ja lopuista yksi ilmoitti olevansa kaksikielinen suomenruotsalainen, ja kolme muuta puhui äidinkielinään ranskaa ja puolaa. Vastaajista 15 asui vakituisesti Suomessa; muut asuinmaat olivat Viro, Alankomaat ja Yhdistynyt kuningaskunta.

Vastaajista kolme oli tehnyt käännöstöitä Fiverrissä vain alle vuoden, mutta hajonta oli suurta, ja yksi vastaaja oli ollut aktiivinen jopa yli kahdeksan vuotta. Monilla vastaajilla oli kääntämiskokemusta myös verkkoalustojen ulkopuolelta, ja pisin ura oli jopa 15 vuotta pitkä. Kääntäjien yleisin kielipari oli englanti-suomi, mutta työkieliin lukeutuivat myös ruotsi, ranska, espanja, saksa, puola ja viro.

Myös vastaajien koulutustaustassa oli melko paljon hajontaa. Kolme vastaajaa ilmoitti suorittaneensa vain peruskoulun, neljä oli suorittanut ammattikoulun ja neljä lukion. Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että vain hieman alle puolet vastaajista oli korkeakoulutettuja. Yksi oli

suorittanut joitakin korkeakouluopintoja, mutta ei tutkintoa, kolmella oli alempi korkeakoulututkinto ja kahdella ylempi korkeakoulututkinto. Yksi vastaaja oli suorittanut tohtorin tutkinnon. Melko harvalla vastaajalla oli muodollista kieli- tai käännösalan koulutusta, joskin kuusi vastaajaa antoi ymmärtää, että he olivat suorittaneet ainakin joitakin kieliopintoja yliopistotasolla. Yhdelläkään vastaajalla ei ollut Opetushallituksen myöntämää oikeutta toimia auktorisoituna kääntäjänä.

Muodollisen kääntäjänkoulutuksen sijaan vastaajien kieli- ja kääntämistaito pohjautui muun muassa vanhemmilta oppimiseen, kaksikielisen markkinointityön tekemiseen, vieraan kielen käyttämiseen arjessa, vieraskielisen median kuluttamiseen ja tekemällä oppimiseen. Monet vastaajat perustelivat kyvykkyyttään sillä, että he ovat luontaisesti lahjakkaita kielissä ja kiinnostuneita niiden opiskelusta. He eivät siis vaikuttaneet ajattelevan, että kääntäminen vaatii muodollista koulutusta.

Vastaajista seitsemän ilmoitti tekevänsä käännöstöitä myös muualla kuin verkkoalustoilla, ja viisi kertoi tehneensä näin joskus aikaisemmin. Suurin osa näistä vastaajista oli työskennellyt freelancereina tai yrittäjinä, mutta muutamalla oli kokemusta myös työsuhteisesta kääntämisestä. Kääntäminen oli kuitenkin monelle vastaajalle vain sivutoimista, ja ainoastaan yksi vastaaja piti Fiverriä pääasiallisena tulonlähteenään.

Fiverristä saadut tulot vaihtelivat suuresti eri vastaajien välillä. Kolme vastaajaa ilmoitti, että ei saa Fiverristä mitään tuloja. Tämä voi kertoa siitä, että he eivät ole koskaan saaneet yhtään tilausta, mutta vastaajat ovat saattaneet myös ajatella tilausten olevan niin harvinaisia, että kuukausittaiset keskiarvotulot pyöristyvät nollaan. Vastaajien keskiarvotulo oli joka tapauksessa 271,11 € ja mediaanitulo 150 € kuukaudessa. Avovastauksissa eräs vastaaja totesi osuvasti, että tekee Fiverr-käännöksiä "taskurahan takia". Yksittäinen vastaaja ilmoitti ansaitsevansa Fiverrissä noin 1 500 € kuukaudessa.

Tulokset joka tapauksessa vahvistivat, että Fiverr-kääntäjien palkkiotaso on äärimmäisen matala. Kiinnostavaa kyllä, vastaajat eivät ilmaisseet olevansa kovin tyytymättömiä näihin tuloihin. Tämä saattaa johtua matalista odotuksista: jos kääntäjä ei alun perinkään odota saavansa alustatyöstä suuria tuloja, niiden pienuus ei aiheuta suurta pettymystä.

Vastaajilta kysyttiin myös mielipidettä Fiverrin välityspalkkion suuruudesta. Kun vaihtoehto 1 tarkoitti vastausta "hyvin kohtuulliset" ja vaihtoehto 5 vastausta "aivan liian korkeat",

vastausten keskiarvoksi muodostui 3,38. Vastaajat olivat siis hieman tyytymättömiä välityspalkkioihin, mutta kuitenkin odotettua vähemmän.

Työolosuhteisiin liittyen 17 vastaajaa 18:sta ilmoitti tekevänsä Fiverr-kääntäjän töitä kotona, ja yksi kertoi tekevänsä niitä matkalla. Työaikaa vastaajat käyttivät keskimäärin 6 tuntia viikossa, joskin vastausten mediaani oli vain 2 tuntia. Sama yksittäinen vastaaja, joka ilmoitti ansaitsevansa työllä 1 500 € kuukaudessa, kertoi käyttävänsä Fiverr-kääntämiseen 30–35 tuntia viikossa.

Vastaajilta kysyttiin myös, miten usein he ovat työssään yhteyksissä eri tahoihin, kuten esimerkiksi erikoisalojen asiantuntijoihin tai käännösten loppukäyttäjiin. Tämän kysymyksen vastaukset indikoivat kommunikaation olevan melko harvinaista monien tahojen suuntaan, minkä voidaan ajatella kertovan huonosta *näkyvyydestä*. Kommunikaation harvinaisuus kuitenkin johtuu todennäköisesti siitä, että tilauksia tulee harvoin, eli se mahdollisesti kertoo vain vähäisestä kysynnästä. Toisaalta tämä vähäinen kysyntä saattaa itsessään olla "oire" huonosta näkyvyydestä.

Kun vastaajilta kysyttiin, missä määrin Fiverr-asiakkaat arvostavat heidän työtään kääntäjänä, vastausten keskiarvoksi muodostui 4,06. Lukema on melko korkea ja myös melko lähellä Ruokosen ja Mäkisalon vastaavaa lukemaa, joka oli 3,94 (Ruokonen–Mäkisalo 2018, 9). Tätä vertailua ei voida pitää tilastollisesti merkitsevänä, mutta tulos antaa ymmärtää, että Fiverr-kääntäjät eivät pidä omaa statustaan yhtään matalampana kuin muut kääntäjäryhmät Suomessa. Tämä havainto ei tue tutkielman hypoteesia, mutta tässäkin saattaa olla kyse matalista odotuksista. Fiverr-kääntäjät eivät ehkä koe ansaitsevansa kovin suurta arvostusta.

Kääntäjiltä kysyttiin lisäksi, miten paljon he pystyvät omalla toiminnallaan vaikuttamaan esimerkiksi käännösten aikatauluihin, asiakaskuntaansa, käännöspalkkioihin tai käännettävien tekstien laatuun. Vastausten perusteella kääntäjillä oli melko paljon vaikutusvaltaa työssään. Tämä tukee käsitystä siitä, että alustakääntäjän työ on samalla tavalla vapaata kuin perinteisen freelancerin. Hyvät neuvottelumahdollisuudet näkyivät mahdollisesti myös siinä, että kertomansa mukaan vastaajat joutuivat melko harvoin tinkimään käännösten laadusta esimerkiksi aikataulujen vuoksi.

Yksi kyselyn väittämistä kuului seuraavasti: "teen/tekisin käännöstöitä mieluummin muualla kuin verkkoalustalla". Kun vaihtoehto 1 tarkoitti vastausta "täysin eri mieltä" ja vaihtoehto 5 vastausta "täysin samaa mieltä", vastausten keskiarvo oli 2,61. Tämä indikoi, että vastaajat

olivat odotettua *tyytyväisempiä* työhönsä Fiverrissä. Jälleen kerran selitys saattaa löytyä vastaajien ennakko-odotuksista. Osa ei välttämättä pidä käännöstöitä verkkoalustojen ulkopuolella edes vaihtoehtona, ja Fiverr voi hyvin täyttää odotukset pienmuotoisesta ja osa-aikaisesta sivutyöstä.

Ammattikuvaa koskevissa kysymyksissä käytettiin jälleen viisiportaista asteikkoa, jossa vaihtoehto 1 tarkoitti vastausta "erittäin vähän tai ei lainkaan" ja vaihtoehto 5 vastausta "erittäin paljon". Kun vastaajilta kysyttiin, liittyykö kääntämiseen luovuutta, vastausten keskiarvo oli 3,76, ja kysyttäessä vaatiiko se erityisosaamista, keskiarvo oli 3,83. Vastaajat olivat myös selvästi sitä mieltä, että kääntäjällä on työssään vastuuta, sillä keskiarvovastaus tähän kysymykseen oli 4,22. Kysymys "miten paljon kääntäjän työhön mielestäsi liittyy arvovaltaa" liittyy statukseen yleisellä tasolla, ja tämän kysymyksen keskiarvovastaus oli 2,60. Lukema on hyvin samansuuntainen kuin esimerkiksi Damin ja Zethsenin lukemat vastaavissa kysymyksissä, ja se antaa ymmärtää että myös Fiverr-kääntäjät pitävät kääntäjien statusta matalana.

Kääntäjiltä kysyttiin myös, näkyvätkö kääntäjät ammattiryhmänä yhteiskunnassa, ja tämän kysymyksen vastausten keskiarvo oli 2,47. Vastaajat siis vaikuttivat olevan ainakin jokseenkin sitä mieltä, että kääntäjien näkyvyys on alhainen, mikä on melko yleinen näkemys. Kun vastaajilta kysyttiin "onko kääntäjän työllä mielestäsi taloudellista, poliittista, yhteiskunnallista tai muuta vaikutusta", vastausten keskiarvoksi muodostui 3,06. Muutama vastaaja jopa valitsi vaihtoehdon "erittäin paljon". Vastaajat siis vaikuttivat pitävän kääntäjiä ainakin hieman vaikutusvaltaisina.

Kääntäjiltä kysyttiin vielä erikseen ajatuksia siitä, miten käännösalan ulkopuoliset ihmiset näkevät kääntäjien ammattikuvan. Kysymys siitä, missä määrin käännösalan ulkopuoliset ihmiset mieltävät kääntämisen erityisosaamista vaativaksi alaksi, synnytti keskiarvovastauksen 2,72. Vastaajat siis selvästi ajattelivat, että ulkopuoliset eivät arvota kääntäjiä samalla tavalla kuin he itse.

Vastaajien arvion mukaan käännösalan ulkopuoliset ihmiset myös ajattelevat, että kääntäminen vaatii ainakin vähän lukion jälkeistä koulutusta, ja että kääntäjän kuukausitulot ovat keskimäärin 2 363,64 € kuukaudessa. Tämän perusteella kääntäminen olisi melko keskiluokkaisen ihmisen ammatti.

Kun kääntäjiä pyydettiin arvioimaan, ajattelevatko käännösalan ulkopuoliset ihmiset, että kääntäjien ammattikunnalla on taloudellista, poliittista, yhteiskunnallista tai muuta vaikutusta, vastausten keskiarvo oli vain 1,91. Vastaajat siis olivat selvästi sitä mieltä, että kääntäjien vaikutusvaltaa ei tunnusteta yhteiskunnassa.

Koko kyselyn kenties tärkein kysymys kuului seuraavasti: "Miten paljon kääntäjän ammattia mielestäsi arvostetaan Suomessa?" Kun tismalleen sama kysymys esitettiin Ruokosen ja Mäkisalon tutkimuksessa, vastauksien keskiarvoksi muodostui 2,55. Tässä kyselyssä keskiarvo oli 2,71, eli hyvin samanlainen. Tämä antaa ymmärtää, että hypoteesin vastaisesti Fiverr-kääntäjien status ei ole matalampi kuin muiden kääntäjäryhmien, vaan suunnilleen yhtä matala. Tässäkin on kuitenkin muistettava, että vertailu ei ole tilastollisesti merkitsevä, ja asiaa pitäisi selvittää lisää laajemmalla tutkimuksella.

Kyselyaineisto sisältää myös avovastauksia, joissa nousi esiin mielenkiintoisia teemoja. Useampi vastaaja esimerkiksi kertoi, että matalamman tulotason maissa asuvat Fiverr-kääntäjät pitävät työn hinnat niin alhaalla, että länsimaalaisten on vaikea kilpailla niiden kanssa. Erään vastaajan sanoin "Fiverrissä menestyminen vaatii sen, että – – suostuu tekemään käännöksiä nälkäpalkalla vähintäänkin alkuun". Moni vastaaja uskoi, että alustan edullisimmat kääntäjät suorittavat työnsä konekääntimellä ja saattavat tarjota suomen käännöksiä, vaikka eivät oikeasti edes osaa kieltä.

Osa vastaajista kuitenkin näki Fiverr-kääntämisessä myös myönteisiä puolia. Alustan käyttö nähdään helppona, ja se voi toimia "ponnahduslautana aloitteleville kääntäjille". Erään vastaajan sanoin "Suomessa voi olla hankalaa päästä ilman papereita mihinkään töihin, joten me itseoppineet, kunnolliset ja yhtä ammattitaitoiset kääntäjät joudumme käyttämään maan ulkopuolisia palveluita".

Vaikka tässä tutkielmassa esitelty tutkimus on pieni eikä se onnistunut vahvistamaan tutkielman hypoteesia, siitä voidaan tehdä kiinnostavia sivuhavaintoja. Ensinnäkin tutkimus osoittaa, että kaikki Fiverr-alustan myyjäprofiilit eivät kuulu todellisille freelance-kääntäjille. Osa niistä on kielialan yritysten hallinnoimia, ja osa vaikuttaa siltä, että niiden kautta myydään manuaalisiksi käännöksiksi naamioituja konekäännöksiä. Tämä vaikeuttaa "oikeiden" kääntäjien tunnistamista ja sitä kautta paitsi palveluiden ostamista, myös tämän tyyppisten tutkimusten tekemistä.

Lisäksi tutkimus antaa tukea Firatin, Gough'n ja Moorkensin (2024, 2) esittämälle näkemykselle, että alustakääntäminen on helposti saavutettavaa: tutkimuksen perusteella Fiverrissä voi hyvin työskennellä kouluttamaton tai jopa alaikäinen kääntäjä. Suomessa alustakääntäminen vaikuttaakin olevan pääasiassa sivutyö, josta voi ansaita "taskurahaa". Tilanne on valtavan erilainen esimerkiksi Turkissa, jossa alustakääntämisestä saatavia tuloja saatetaan tarvita perustarpeiden täyttämiseen (Firat 2021, 57).

Se, että kyselyn vastaajat eivät pitäneet omaa statustaan matalampana, kuin muut kääntäjät, saattaa johtua juurikin rennosta suhtautumisesta työhön. Koska kääntäminen oli monelle vastaajalle vain sivutyö, heillä ei välttämättä ole erityistä "kääntäjän identiteettiä", ja he saattavat ajatella, ettei alustakääntäjän kuulukaan nauttia suurta arvostusta. Moni vastaaja vaikutti olevan sitä mieltä, että kääntäjänä voi toimia kuka tahansa, jolla on "luontaista kielipäätä", eikä se vaadi muodollista koulutusta.

Tutkimuksen edetessä kävi myös selväksi, että töiden saaminen Fiverrissä on todella epäsäännöllistä. Tähän nähden kysely sisälsi liikaa kysymyksiä, jotka keskittyivät siihen, miten *usein* jotain tapahtuu. Esimerkiksi kysymys keskimääräisistä kuukausituloista ei välttämättä ollut mielekäs, vaan olisi ollut saattanut olla parempi kysyä, kuinka suuren palkkion yhdestä projektista keskimäärin saa tai millaista sanahintaa kääntäjät pyytävät työstään. Tällä tavalla mukautetulla kyselyllä voisi tehdä paljonkin jatkotutkimuksia.