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Translating *Cards against Humanity* for Finnish Users

What Should Be Taken into Consideration?

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**ABSTRACT**

Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena oli kääntää poliittisesti epäkorrekti korttipeli nimeltä *Cards against Humanity* siten, että suomenkielinen versio olisi mahdollisimman käytettävä ja hauska. Tämän tavoitteen saavuttamiseksi tutkielmassa hyödynnettiin Tytti Suojasen, Kaisa Koskisen ja Tiina Tuomisen luomaa käyttäjäkeskeinen kääntämisen teoriaa (UCT) ja sen tarjoamia työkaluja, kuten mentaalimalleja ja heuristista arviointia. Lisäksi hyödynnettiin lingvistiikan sekä huumorin ja kulttuurin kääntämisen tutkimuskirjallisuutta. Tutkielman hypoteesi oli, että mitä paremmin käännöstyössä huomioidaan pelin tulevat käyttäjät ja tutkimuskirjallisuus, sitä parempi käännöksestä tulee.

Käytettävyyden ja hauskuuden arvioimiseksi tehtiin käytettävyytstudkimus, joka suoritettiin testipelien ja kyselylomakkeiden avulla. Tutkimukseen osallistui 42 henkilöä, jotka pelattuaan suomennettua peliä vastasivat taustatietokysymyksiin ja arvioivat mm. korttien käytettävyyttä ja ymmärrettävyyttä, kieltä, hauskuutta, loukkaavuutta ja kokonaisuutta. Kyselylomakkeiden tuottama aineisto analysoitiin kvantitatiivisesti ja kvalitatiivisesti, ja lopuksi aineisto arvoitiin heuristisesti.

Tutkimuksen mukaan käänнос onnistui käytettävyyden ja hauskuuden tavoitteissaan, ja ennakko-oletuksen mukaisesti tulevien käyttäjien profiloinnilla ja tutkimuskirjallisuuteen tukeutumisella oli positiivinen vaikutus käännöksen laatuun. Käännöksen suurimmat ongelmat liittyivät korttien kokoon ja määrään, sekä sanojen tunnistukseen ja korttien yhteensopivuuteen. Nämä ongelmat olisi olleet todennäköisesti vältettävissä seuraamalla UCT-teoriaa kokonaisvaltaisemmin.

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**KEYWORDS:** translation, user-centered translation, usability, humor, questionnaire



## 1 INTRODUCTION

“*Cards against the Humanity* is a party game in which players complete fill-in-the-blank statements using words or phrases typically deemed as offensive, risqué or politically incorrect printed on playing cards” (Wikipedia 2020). This is the most simple depiction of the game that is the topic of this Master’s thesis. The reason why I chose to study *Cards against the Humanity* (CAH) was that I had had two kinds of experiences with this English game: playing it with English speaking people I had understood the language but not all references which had made me feel like an outsider. When playing the game with Finnish speaking people I was an insider because now everybody had trouble with language and references. So, neither of these experiences had been as fulfilling as I imagined playing CAH might be with ideal circumstances, first and foremost with one’s own native language. When I began this thesis there was no Finnish version of this game, so I decided to translate it myself, and that decision led me to ask, “what needs to be considered in order to translate a Finnish version of *Cards against Humanity*?”

This question led to more specific questions. The mechanics of the game, combining cards with different kinds of linguistic materials, led me to ask, “what should be considered in order to make the language function as well as it does in the original CAH?” The humor of the game, being politically very incorrect, made me ask, “what should be considered in order to create similar humor in Finnish?” The references of the game, being culturally very specific, prompted me to ask, “what should be considered in order to translate especially for Finnish audience?” To answer these questions, I turn to a quite recently introduced translation theory *user-centered translation* (UCT).

UCT, created by Tytti Suojanen, Kaisa Koskinen and Tiina Tuominen, is my main theoretical framework because its and mine focus is on the user of the translation – the game can only work if the players feel it works. UCT offers translators tools with which I can, not only answer the questions above but also design my entire translation process,

and therefore UCT practices are present all through this thesis. One key concept of UCT is *usability*, meaning “the ease with which users can use a product to achieve their goals”, and another is *user experience*, meaning “a holistic concept encompassing issues such as aesthetics, fun and pleasure” (Suojanen et al. 2015: 2–3). Based on this, and my personal experience with CAH, I named the goal of my translation and its users as *fun*: in this thesis ‘fun’ is defined roughly as laughter inciting. To reach this goal the translation should be as *usable* as possible: in this thesis ‘usable’ includes both *usability* and *user experience*, and is characterized by being linguistically functioning, humor-wise apt, and culturally fitting, etc. These conditions led me to augment my initial question and to form my main research question “what needs to be considered in order to translate a usable and funny Finnish version of *Cards against Humanity*?”

This question again led to another: “how can I find out whether my translation is usable and funny?” To answer this, I will find real users and ask them by conducting a survey in which people will play the Finnish game and fill out a questionnaire asking about usability and funniness. Now that the aim of my thesis, translate CAH into Finnish and have its usability and funniness tested, is clear I need to review not only UCT but also other translation theory literature to know what all needs to be considered to reach this aim. My hypothesis is that the more I focus on the users and on the science of translation the better the game will be.

In the following Chapter I will introduce the materials and methods used in this thesis, then follows a literary review of user-centered translation (Chapter 3.1) and of the other translation theories (Chapter 3.2). The survey material is analyzed in chapter 4 and finally, the conclusions are presented in Chapter 5.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The set of material of this research consists of three parts. Firstly, there is the UK version of CAH that I use as source material. Secondly, there is the Finnish version of CAH that I translate, and the third set of material comes from the survey. The materials and their corresponding methods are introduced later in this Chapter.

Every research involves methods, and choosing and following suitable research strategies, data collection methods and analysis methods is important. Beginning with research strategies, this research can be viewed as a case study due to its narrow focus on one phenomenon (CAH) to gain deep enough understanding of it in order to interpret the results of the research in broader contexts (Koppa 2010). It can also be called an autoethnographic and an ethnographic study because, on one hand, I rely on my personal knowledge and taste to create the Finnish game but on the other hand, I observe and interpret the reactions and comments of other people (Koppa 2010). My data collection methods are varied, and they are explained further in this Chapter and throughout the thesis. The data analysis methods are both quantitative and qualitative, and they are also further explained later.

All these materials and methods are intertwined with the *user-centered translation* UCT, explained in Chapter 3.1: translating user-centered translations requires a translator to study their audience, translations require usability testing, test data requires analysis and so on. Choosing to use the UCT practice dictates the path of my thesis, including the materials introduced next.

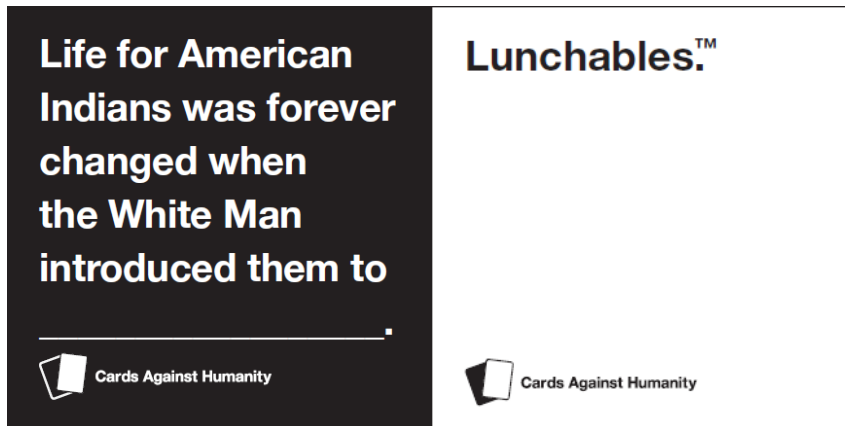
## 2.1 The English game

*Cards against Humanity* (CAH) was created by a group of eight high school friends<sup>1</sup>, who wanted to make a game for themselves (Lagorio-Chafkin 2014). They describe their product as “a party game for horrible people” and elaborate, that it is “as despicable and awkward as you and your friends” (cardsagainsthumanity.com 2013). The objective of this card game is to laugh at offensive and politically incorrect material; hence the title that plays with the phrase “crimes against humanity”. First the cards were circulated amongst fellow students before the inventors made it available online for anyone to download for free, until 2011 when the friends crowd-funded the game into its physical form to be purchased online. The game can still be downloaded from the company’s home page free of charge and legally under a Creative Commons license.

There are several official versions of the game (US, CAN, UK, AUS) and each is created to generate horrible scenarios with local elements, for instance, with local politicians, cuisines, grocery stores, alcohol brands, etc. For example, the US deck has cards with which scientology, Judge Judy, and Walmart can be introduced in the same sentence. The UK version naturally draws humor on the Queen and drinking tea, whereas the Canadian version laughs at Yanks and ice hockey, and finally the Australian version plays with shark attacks and neighboring Maoris. To give an example of the game play, here is one possible outcome in a game played with the US cards:

---

<sup>1</sup> Max Temkin, Josh Dillon, Daniel Dranove, Eli Halpern, Ben Hantoot, David Munk, David Pinsof, and Eliot Weinstein.



**Picture 1.** An example of US cards

Picture 1 is an example of how humor transpires in CAH, via connection of unexpected items such as American Indians and pre-packed lunches. Vivid cultural referencing is not the only characterizing feature of CAH cards: they are also built with linguistic meticulousness: almost all card pairs match each other grammatically.

I use as my source text (later often referred to as the *original deck*) the UK version as it is available to me. As seen in Picture 1, the game consists of black “question” cards that have either questions or fill-in-blanks phrases printed on them, and of white “answer” cards with single words or sentences on them. The basic rules are as follows:

<p><b>Basic Rules</b></p> <p>To start the game, each player draws ten White Cards.</p> <p>The person who most recently pooped begins as the Card Czar and plays a Black Card. The Card Czar reads the question or fill-in-the-blank phrase on the Black Card out loud.</p> <p>Everyone else answers the question or fills in the blank by passing one White Card, face down, to the Card Czar.</p> <p>The Card Czar shuffles all of the answers and shares each card combination with the group. For full effect, the Card Czar should usually re-read the Black Card before presenting each answer. The Card Czar then picks the funniest play, and whoever submitted it gets one Awesome Point.</p>	
	<p>After the round, a new player becomes the Card Czar, and everyone draws back up to ten White Cards.</p> <hr/> <p><b>PICK 2</b></p> <p>Some cards say PICK 2 on the bottom.</p> <p>To answer these, each player plays two White Cards in combination. Play them in the order that the Card Czar should read them—the order matters.</p>

**Picture 2.** Basic rules of CAH

## 2.2 The Finnish game

The Finnish game is made by, first, *categorizing* both the UK deck and the Finnish one. This is done by cutting out 75% of the English deck and dividing the remaining 25% into thematic categories, as is explained in following subsection. Next step in making the Finnish game is the translation work, discussed in subsection 2.2.2. There I explain the use of *user-centered translation* and how it guides my translation process. In this subsection I also introduce such tools of the UCT practice as *audience design* and *heuristic evaluation* (see Chapters 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 respectively for detailed discussion). I also refer to methods emanating from translation theories in the fields of linguistics, humor and culture, such as *linguistic analysis*, *register breaking*, *benign violation*, and *allusion classification*, however these terms are not elaborated on before Chapter 3.2.

### 2.2.1 Making the deck smaller

The original deck consists of 550 cards, which is significantly more than what is needed for the scope of this thesis. I use only 25% of the original deck due to game technical reasons: with four players and a hundred white cards it is possible to play 16 hands or 4 rounds, which I estimate as long enough time for the participants to get the feel of the game. I limit the material in a following way: (1) by creating categories within the decks, (2) by counting the ratios of cards within the categories; and (3) by selecting the cards from each category to be translated. The purpose of counting the ratios (2) is to transfer the vast content of the original CAH to the condensed translation, and to make sure that the Finnish deck categories are directly proportional to those of the UK deck – for instance, if 15% of the UK deck is related to history, then 15% of the Finnish deck needs also to be related to history, and so on.

Out of the 550 original cards 460 are white ‘answer’ cards, and 90 black ‘question’ cards. These I sort into seven white and four black categories. The categorization process consists of analyzing the card texts and identifying themes. This form of data analysis is called *thematic analysis*. It befits ethnographic studies and the idea of it is that certain patterns that rise from the data are recognized and categorized (Aronson 1995, Saldanha & O’Brien 2014: 189–190).

White cards fall in seven categories, as can be seen in Figure 1. *People and groups* category<sup>2</sup> has 43 cards, which is 9% of the white cards. The categories *Cultural phenomena*<sup>3</sup> and *History etc.*<sup>4</sup> both comprise of 37 cards (8%), *Fictitious items*<sup>5</sup> has 27 cards (6%), and *Sexual references*<sup>6</sup> category consists of 60 cards (13%). The final category is *General*, and it has two sub-categories, *Neutral* and *Charged*. I divide the

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<sup>2</sup> This category includes such cards as “William Shatner.” and “One Direction’s supple, hairless bodies.”

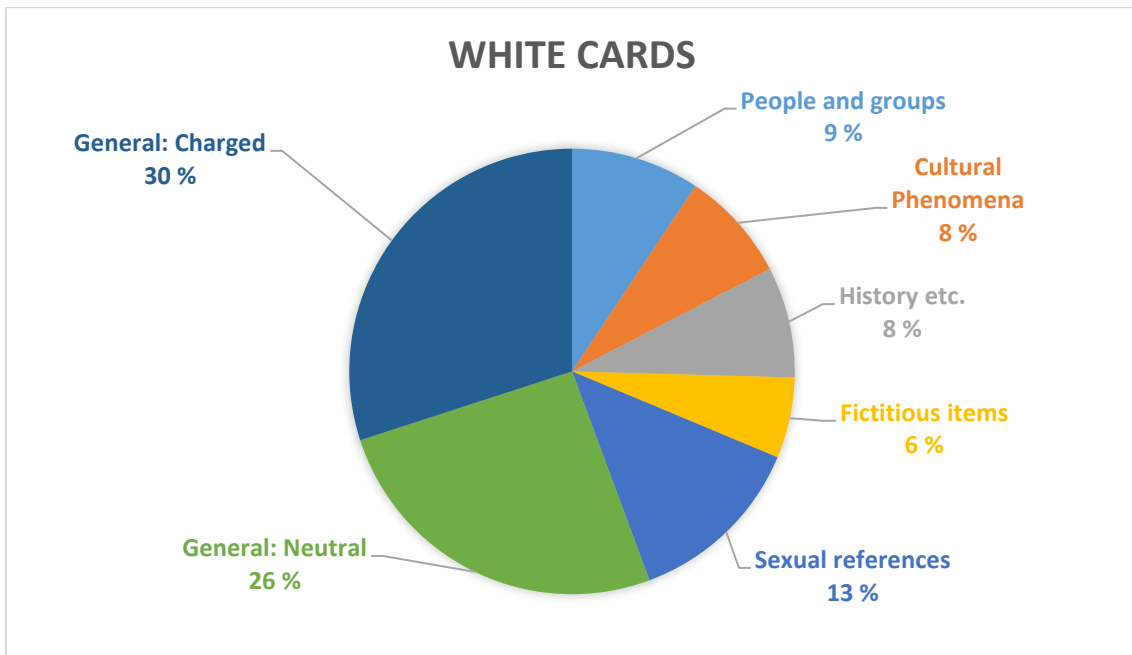
<sup>3</sup> “Egging an MP.” and “Germans on holiday.”

<sup>4</sup> “An entrenched class system.” and “Poorly-timed Holocaust jokes.”

<sup>5</sup> “Darth Vader” and “The entire cast of Downton Abbey.”

<sup>6</sup> “Gloryholes.” and “Not reciprocating oral sex.”

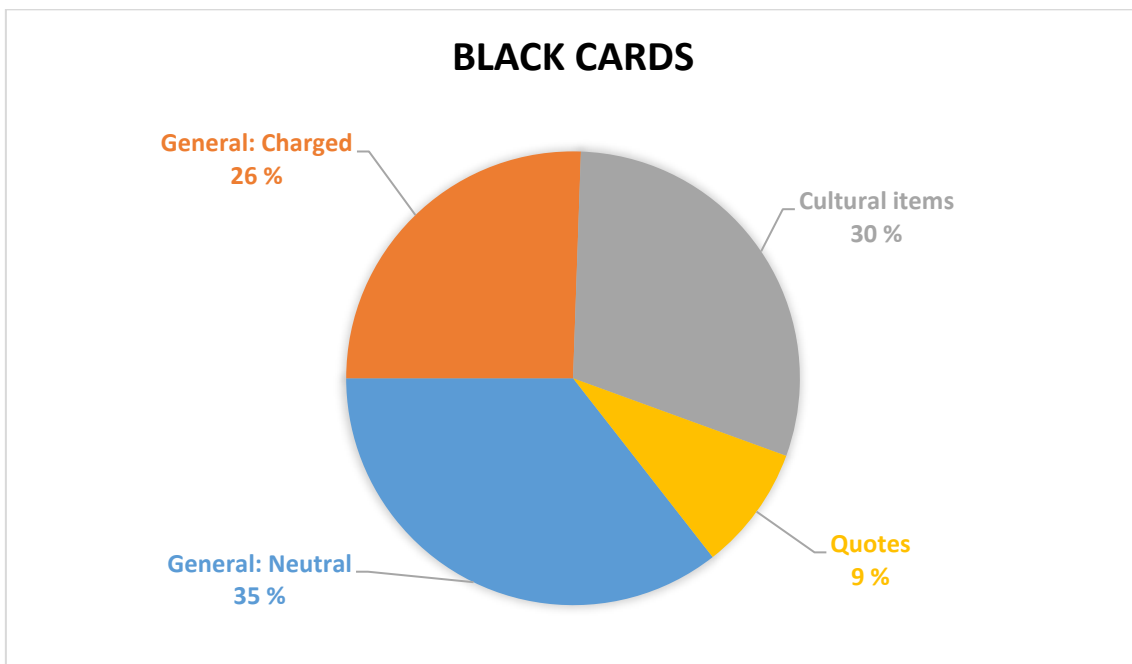
cards into these two sub-categories based on the relative “normality” or “abnormality” of the content. This division is based on purely subjective assessment, but it is necessary due to the strong polarization between the contents of the cards. In the *Neutral* category, for instance, cards read “a really cool hat” and “synergistic management solutions”, whereas the *Charged* cards read “a pyramid of severed heads” and “a defective condom”. This manner of division safeguards the balance of “normal” and “abnormal” in the Finnish translation. It is especially important to have this division because the percentages of the two are closely similar: there are 118 *Neutral* cards (26%) and 138 *Charged* cards (30%).



**Figure 1.** Distribution of categories within white original cards

The black cards are divided into four categories, as can be seen in Figure 2. Similarly, as with the white cards, there is a *General* category, which is divided into sub-categories

*Neutral*<sup>7</sup> and *Charged*<sup>8</sup>. *Neutral* has 32 cards, which makes 36% of the black cards, and *Charged* has 23 cards, which is 26% of the total. Third category is *Cultural items*<sup>9</sup> with 27 cards (30%), and finally the category *Quotes*<sup>10</sup> consists of 8 cards, representing 9% of all the black cards.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of categories within black original cards

Once these categories are created (1), the next step is to count the ratios of cards within the categories (2). The Finnish deck being 25% of the original deck, there should technically be 115 white cards and 22.5 black cards but since the cards need to be rounded

<sup>7</sup> An example of this category could be “What’s a girl’s best friend?” or “What’s that sound?”.

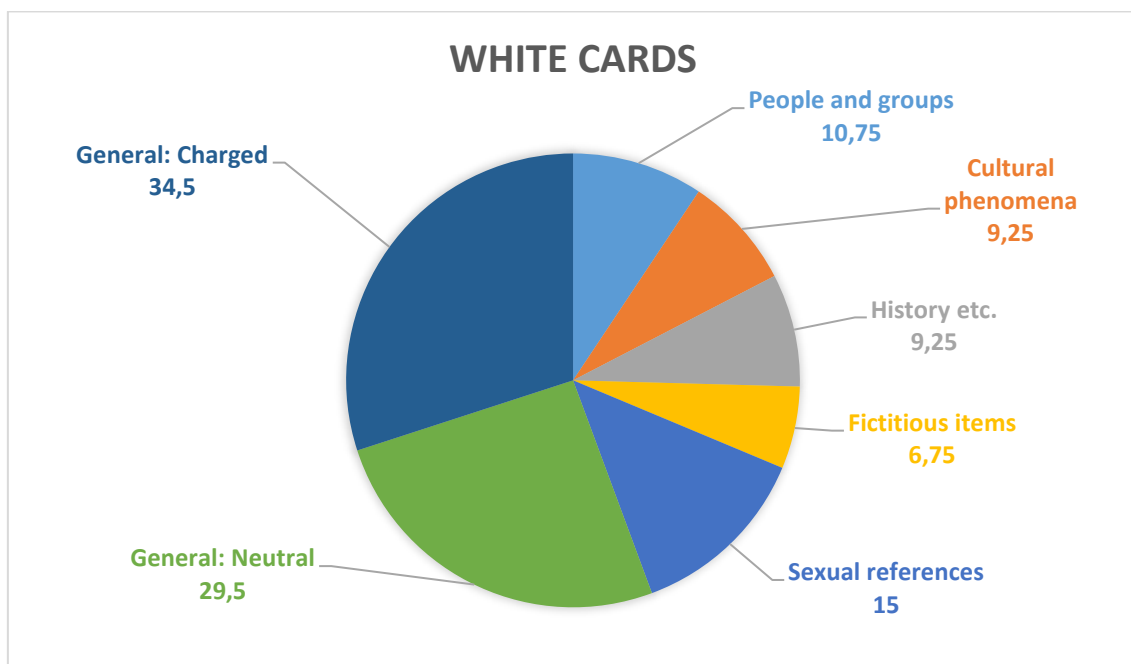
<sup>8</sup> “How did I lose my virginity?” and “I drink to forget \_\_\_\_\_.”

<sup>9</sup> “Instead of coal, Father Christmas now gives the bad children \_\_\_\_\_.” and “And the BAFTA for \_\_\_\_\_ goes to \_\_\_\_\_.”

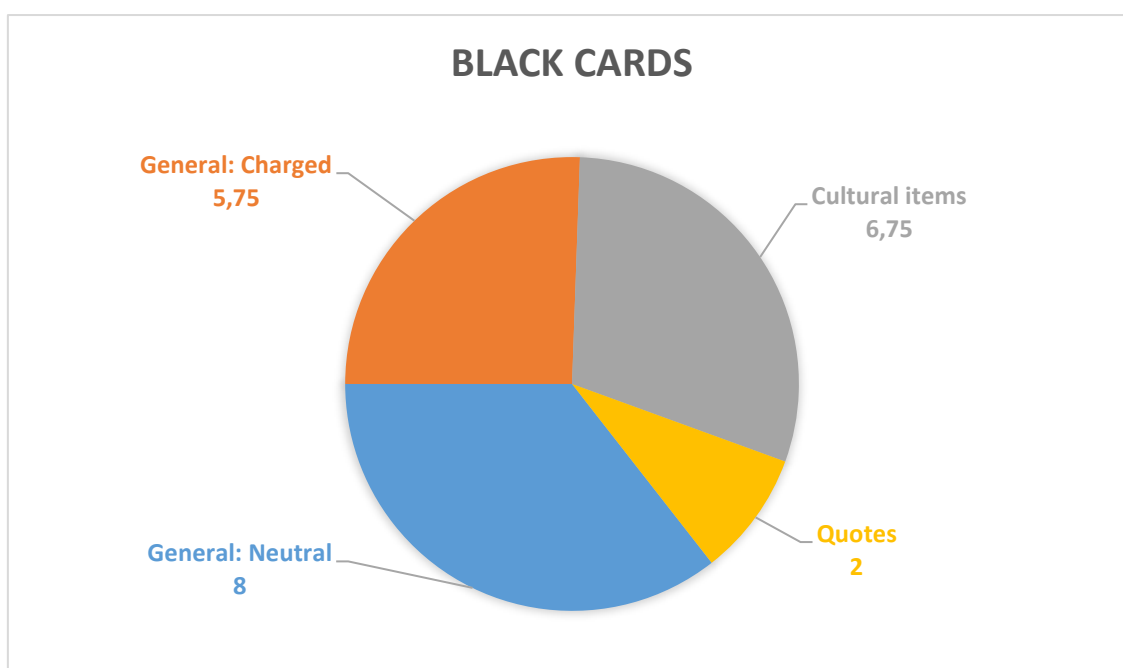
<sup>10</sup> Quotes -category includes such cards as “Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition! Our chief weapons are fear, surprise, and \_\_\_\_\_.” and “I got 99 problems, but the \_\_\_\_\_ ain’t one.”

within the categories there is one additional white card and a half of a black card. Thus, there actually are 116 white cards and 23 black ones.

The Finnish deck categories are titled similarly as the UK deck ones, but the values in the Figures 2 and 3 are denoted with integral and decimal numbers instead of percentages to enlighten the process of rounding the values up and down. For example, the category *People and groups* is rounded up to 11 cards, whereas *Cultural phenomena* and *History etc.* is rounded down to 9 cards, and so forth. The following Figures 3 and 4 show the distribution of the white and black cards in the Finnish deck:



**Figure 3.** Distribution of categories within white Finnish cards



**Figure 4.** Distribution of categories within black Finnish cards

For step (3), to select the cards that are translated, I use a data collection method of non-random sampling, where a particular criterion or the researcher selects the objects to be studied (Routio 2007). I choose cards that, in my opinion, best represent the game and benefit the translation – its target language, culture, audience etc. The translation will not be a word for word version of the original, and sometimes I will use the UK cards merely as inspiration, but the crucial point is that the category contents are one to one. Since there are 9 history related cards in the condensed original deck, so are there 9 in the Finnish translation – this to maintain and transfer the spirit of CAH.

### 2.2.2 Translation

To recap the material and method so far, first the source text was made smaller by categorizing the thematic contents of the UK deck, and by counting the ratios of cards

within the categories to be able to replicate the content into the, now equally small, Finnish deck. To now explain the method of my translation process I, due to clarity, begin with a model of my thought process. Translating the game, I followed three rules:

1. Follow the categories
2. Remember the end user
3. Utilize theories and evaluation heuristics

For example, a white card picked from the category “sexual references” reading “A ginger’s freckled ballsack.” needed to be translated to also (1) include a sexual reference. A word for word translation would have been a possible strategy if only rule (1) existed, but that strategy would have neglected the end user. Red-haired people are not a common butt of jokes in Finland, and therefore the sentence might have not evoked similar associations for a Finn as for a Brit. One solution, Finns being quite blonde, could have been to perhaps use an albino’s ballsack, or then to create a completely new sexual reference, always keeping in mind the end user (2). The rule (3) was crucial in making sure the language of the cards worked in game play, in maximizing humor, and in translating culture-bound references. I evaluated my work with help from UCT heuristics to maximize the usability of the translation and continued in this manner until the translation was ready.

Finally, the physical deck also needed consideration. To maximize usability, the cards needed be easy to use, they could not be too slippery nor flimsy. They also needed to look identical to enhance the game play situation; to make the game feel more like “a real game” and to make the players perhaps forget they are in a research situation. Also, the cards needed to be legible, meaning not handwritten. Therefore, I downloaded blank cards from the CAH home page, used editing software to write the texts on the blanks, printed them out, glued them on white and black cardboard and cut off the cards. (During the survey process some of the cards needed glue maintenance.)

I also translated the set of rules. The original game is for 4–20+ players, but this translation was optimized for four players, because any more would have increase the translation work and any less would have made a dull game: one person asking, and two answering would have created little mystery as to whom has answered what.

### 2.3 The survey

The survey material is feedback from the end users of my translation, and it was collected as part of usability testing (see Chapter 3.1.4) to assess how successfully I had considered all aspects of user-centered translation in my work. The two main methods of collecting this material were test play and a questionnaire (see appendices). Let us first look at how the material was collected and then at the material itself and its analysis.

The feedback was collected with paper questionnaires: I briefly considered making the questionnaire electronic to ease the data analysis but ultimately felt that paper would give the participants more freedom to express their opinions and there would be less hassle with electronic devices. The questionnaire was four-pages long with twenty-two questions. The questions were mainly designed via heuristic analysis (for details see Chapters 3.1.3 and 3.1.4). Other factors that influence the question design, such as *benign violation theory*, are also discussed during literary review in Chapter 3. The background questions regarding interests were modelled after the Finnish public libraries classification system.

There were 11 test plays, and they were organized in several ways: to find groups of four I contacted teachers, student union and other student organizations, and my friends. As a result, I found one course-full of students and a few sets of friends of mine. This method of participant selection is called *non-probability sampling* (explained further in Chapter 3.1.4). The students were surveyed on University of Vaasa campus, and the other participants at various locations around Vaasa and Hyvinkää. Most test teams had four

players, only a couple of teams consisted of three or six players. The participants were thanked with a small chocolate bar as a surprise.

The survey material consists of data extracted from 42 filled-out questionnaires from as many participants. The questionnaires were stored in random order and only viewed, once all test plays had been conducted to increase the degree of anonymity. At the beginning of analysis, the questionnaires were numbered. The material was analyzed first with the methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis, including thematic analysis. Then followed a heuristic analysis, as is explained in Chapter 4.

### 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This Chapter is dedicated to translation theories that I used as aids in my translation process, in conducting the survey, and in data analysis. The Chapter begins with an inspection of the *user-centered translation* UCT, during which we look at the process of using UCT in translation work in its entirety; at ways of bringing the users to the fore; at ways of evaluating translation work and final translations; and at usability testing. The Chapter closes with reviews of translation study theories in the fields of linguistics, humor, and culture.

#### 3.1 UCT – User-centered translation

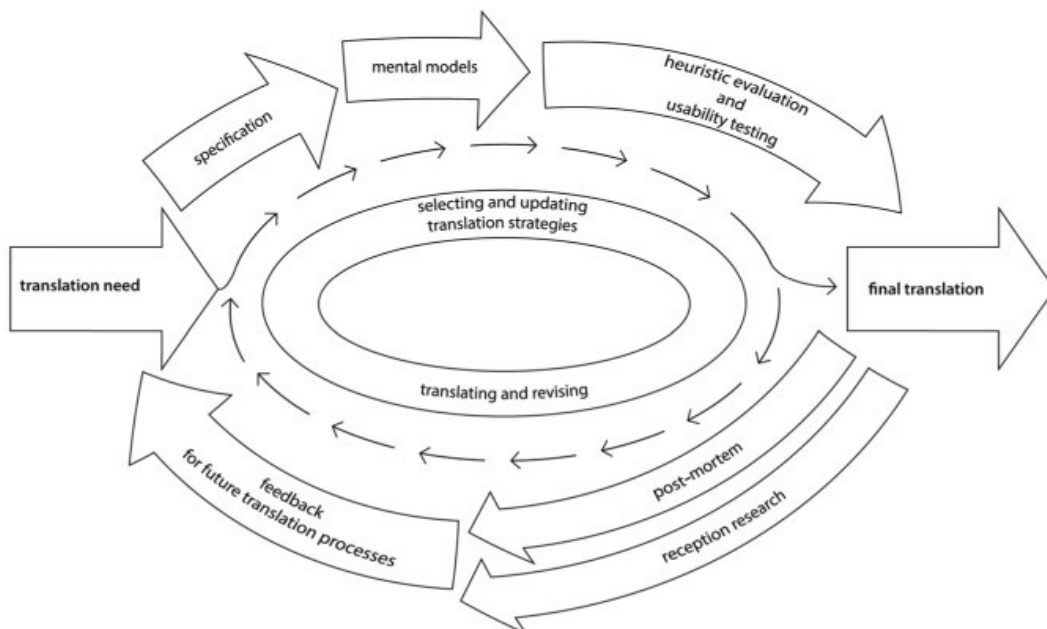
*User-centered translation* (UCT) is a translation practice introduced by Tytti Suominen, Kaisa Koskinen and Tiina Tuominen in their monograph by the same name (2015). It is a way of approaching the entire process of translating from the perspective of the user. This is my main theoretical framework and my ‘toolkit’, because UCT helps me to know my audience. Only when I know to whom I am translating for, I can truly translate usable and funny material – once again, the game can only work if the users think it works.

Knowing that I needed to focus on the user raised questions: when does a translation ‘work’ and how does one create a translation that ‘works’? What do the users want and how to give it to them? Not many translation theories offer concrete tools with which to tackle these questions, but UCT does just that (Suojanen et al. 2015: 3). The tools that UCT offer are based on two key concepts, *usability* and *user experience*. As explained in the introduction, these two mean the ease of using a translation and the latter encompasses every aspect of using a text – easiness, enjoyability, usefulness and purposefulness. The terms are borrowed from the world of technology sciences, but in their research, Suojanen et al. harness usability and user experience to serve translators’ and, most importantly,

the users' needs. (2015: 2– 3) To discover how to make a translation that emphasizes *usability* and *user experience*; a translation that suits its users and their needs in addition to being an all-around positive product to experience we next look at a complete, from start to finish model of a translation process suggested by Suojanen et al. (2015: 4–6).

### 3.1.1 Model of translation process

Traditionally, translation process begins from place A and end at place B, but within UCT process this is just the trial part. Errors within a translation are more a rule than an exception, and the way UCT attacks the errors is by using a cyclic, iterative process that start at A, and moves through B, to return to A and B again, until the product is a usable as possible. Next, I will itemize this process presented in Figure 5 and explain how it applies to my CAH translation project.



**Figure 5.** A user-centered model of translation (© Anni Otava in Suojanen et al. 2015: 4)

The Figure 5 presented in *User-Centered Translation* is a proposal for a user-centered model of translation containing nine elements. Translating CAH follows this model with only one modification: after the last element, *feedback for future translation processes*, my process ends instead of beginning another process cycle. The circle is built around the inner circle of **translation strategies, translating and revising** which represents the core of translation work, meaning the actual writing process. The strategies I use for writing the game arise from UCT, linguistics, humor translations studies and theories of translating culture. The last three sources of strategies are discussed in Chapter 3.2.

**Translation need** is the first step of every translation process. Suojanen et al. speak of “communicative need for the translation” (2015: 4) and for my translation, the need springs from witnessing native Finns struggle with the original CAH. Even though statistics show that over 80 percent of Finns under the age of thirty describe themselves as adequate users of English (adult education study by Statistics Finland 2017), understanding CAH language and culture can be difficult for many. With this translation I want to communicate the CAH experience to Finnish speakers.

Suojanen et al. discuss the element of **specification** as “mutual understanding” (2015: 5) between the translator and “stakeholders”, such as publicists and commissioners. As I am the only stakeholder in this project, I must draft my own list of usability goals and at the end of this process assess whether the goals have been met. One of my usability goals is to create a game that will amuse the test players, and the methods of reaching this goal (heuristic evaluation, usability testing, other translation theories) are introduced later in this Chapter. The assessment takes place in the analysis Chapter 4.

The element of **mental models** is important for knowing your audience. To learn mine I use one of the audience design tools of UCT: a method of developing *personas*. This means imagining the future players of the game and visualizing them, before translating anything, in such detail that, in addition to their faces and lives, also their needs become

clear to see. I will be inventing genders, ages, professions, hobbies, and so on for the *personas*, or the representations of the future players of my translated game. This element of mental model and *personas* will be discussed in Chapter 3.1.2.

**Heuristic evaluation and usability testing:** Heuristics, or usability guidelines, are part of assessing and re-assessing the translation work to gain “information about the usability of the text during the translation process” (Suojanen et al. 2015: 5). I use a ten-point heuristic (see Table 2) to assess my translation, to create the questionnaire for the survey, and to analyze the survey data.

**Final translation** of this process consists of the cards and of the set of rules. In a proper iterative UCT process, after the survey, the translator would return to edit the text based on the feedback received from usability testing, but in the scope of this thesis the final translation will not be edited after the survey.

**Reception research** in this process is the survey that consist of the game play and the questionnaire. Suojanen et al. stress that the purpose of gaining feedback from the end users is not only “to find out how readers understand translated texts or what kinds of translation strategies are most useful and acceptable from the readers’ perspective” (2015: 6) but also to learn how the translation should be edited before hanging it out the client. Again, since there is no client and I am the only stakeholder in this process and I am not going to re-translate the game, my reason for conducting a reception research is to find out what the test subjects thought of the game.

**Post-mortem**, according to Suojanen et al., “covers not only the finished text but also, and in particular, the process behind it from the negotiation phase to the accuracy of mental models, reliability of usability evaluation, and so on.” (2015: 5– 6). The final analysis of everything (*personas*, the survey, heuristics and translation theories) is my post-mortem, and I use it to evaluate how accurately I have considered all the aspects of translating CAH into a usable Finnish version.

In this translation process the element of **feedback (for future translation processes)** is represented by the conclusion Chapter where I summarize the findings of this thesis and, amongst other things, present suggestions for future research. Also, even though I will not return to this translation process, this feedback may prove valuable for other future translation projects.

### 3.1.2 Personas representing players

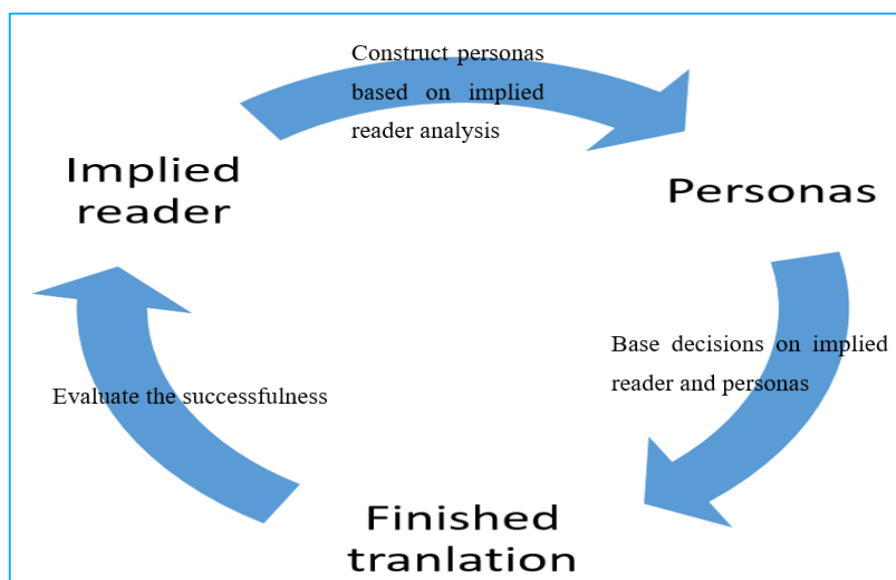
Creating *personas* is a method of constructing mental models of the target audience (see the element *mental models* in Figure 5). Mental models are created before translation begins and used to help the translation process. In order to create these mental models, the translator needs to collect data about the future users and their conceivable characteristics. Based on this information the users can be sorted into groups and these user groups are represented by *personas*. Personas are fictive archetypes of users (2015: 61). Suojanen et al. explain that “[w]ith the help of a persona, the designer can find a connection to the user: a persona has a name, background, personality and often even a physical appearance (e.g. a photograph)” (2015: 70).

Suojanen et al. list a few purposes for using personas. Of these purposes two serve my study: personas help me “[t]o recognize what textual features should be emphasized in a translation at both macro and micro levels” and they “[...] offer a concrete point of comparison for the translation’s quality assessment” (2015: 71). This means that the personas help me not only throughout the entire process of translation (macro) and with isolated translation strategies (micro), but also with the reception research and post-mortem (for results see Chapter 4).

To create these personas the translator needs to first collect data about the future reader. One way to do that is to look at the source text and find the reader in there. Suojanen et al. use the term *implied reader* and explain, that while the future reader will be a real

flesh-and-blood person, texts are usually written for imaginary people. These implied readers are “hypothetical readers to whom writers target their texts or whom a researcher can construct from the text through textual analysis.” (2015: 63) To find these implied, future readers – in this case, players – I study the CAH cards and, for instance, analyze that a person who laughs at ginger’s freckled ball sack is most likely a younger person, probably in their teens or early 20s. Now it would be safe to assume that a 23-year-old could well be an *implied reader*, and therefore one of the personas could resemble this person.

Following this logic, I will look through all the cards and seek for more details of the implied readers. I will also take into consideration the creators of CAH, who have said that they made the game to amuse themselves (Lagorio-Chafkin 2014). Having read a little about the creators, it is surely no leap to say that at least one of these personas could be a young university student. As the personas are supposed to be stereotypes and representations “of general tendencies within the readership” (Suojanen et al. 2015: 63) I also assume the players will not be parents, as many of their age are not. The following Figure 6 expounds on the progression of creating personas and finally assessing their accuracy:



**Figure 6.** Creation and assessment of personas

A translation truly relying on UCT should also, in addition to analyzing the source text, gather information about the readers via studying real people. In a proper UCT translation the future audience is constructed based on knowledge about actual readers (Suojanen et al. 2015: 65). Since my translation is merely part of a MA thesis and as such a translation exercise, the only ‘real people’ I use for gathering information are the inventors of CAH, people who I have seen playing the game or talking about it, and myself.

Assuming ages and appearances is one part of creating personas, another is to think about their brains. To translate in a way that maximizes usability, I need to take into consideration the question “what do they know?”. Suojanen et al. quote Inkeri Vehmas-Lehto (1999) who says that translations are based on an estimated *average knowledge* (2015: 24). To estimate the users’ levels of knowledge I assign different kinds of interests and educational backgrounds to the personas, and I also take their ages and genders into account. Whether the users have played CAH before might also influence the playing

experience: it for instance likely that players with previous experience are more accepting of dark humor – why else would they wish to play again? – and perhaps this positivity will reflect in their overall scores of the gaming experience.

As is important to assess the average knowledge of the personas, it is equally significant to consider *my* average knowledge, and try to adjust these two, mine and the players' average knowledges to converge. Suojanen et al. (2015: 24) warn translators not to use themselves as yardsticks when assessing what the users might or might not know, but since I have not gathered information about the true future users of my translation, me and my knowledge are a significant part of creating the humor and cultural references in the translation. To avoid ending up with a Finnish CAH that only pleases me, I consider the personas and the other translation theories, especially the humor and culture ones.

In conclusion, below are the two personas I created based on the implied reader discovered via source text analysis, and the assumed average knowledge and CAH experience. I have also taken into consideration the chance that I might not find players who fit these personas. They are, therefore, probably less detailed than those of proper UCT practices. In Picture 3 I have imagined how the future players might look, and their further characteristics are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Personas in detail

<b>Ville.</b> Man, 23 years old	<b>Emilia.</b> Woman, 30
Student, engineering major	University graduate, communications major
Finnish native speaker	Finnish native speaker
No previous experience with CAH	Previous experience with the CAH
Plays computer games, describes himself as pop culture junkie, goes to the movies often, enjoys internet culture	Interested in 80s music, reads blogs and watches reality tv
No children	No children



**Picture 3.** Personas Ville and Emilia

### 3.1.3 Heuristic evaluation

Heuristics are tools of problem solving, and as such highly useful with assessing the usability of the translation. Suojanen et al. write that “heuristics can be used for either for analyzing translated texts or for generating texts”, but their emphasis is on the invention, that is to say, on text generation, because “translators need more concrete tools to be able to produce a target text appropriate for its users.” (2015: 89) I use heuristics to both invent and to assess my translation work.

I use a ten-point heuristic created by Suojanen et al. (2015: 90) to ensure, that during translating, I remember to consider all the aspects I have deemed important for translating CAH. These aspects include the card categories, the personas, and the theories of translating linguistic differences, humor and culture. Using a heuristic in this way, to invent or to generate text, should help me not to forget the end user and usability. I also

use the heuristic to analyze my work, and this is done by following the ten-point list to build the questionnaire and to finally analyze the survey findings and the entire process. The heuristic is presented below and followed by explanations and examples of how each rule was used.

**Table 2.** Usability heuristics for user-centered translation (Suojanen, Koskinen & Tuominen 2015: 90)

1	Match between translation and specification	Why is the translation needed and does it fulfil the requirements defined in the specification?
2	Match between translation and users	Who are the users of the translation and how do their characteristics affect translation solutions? Are there possibilities for supporting different kinds of users? Do the textual choices reflect the information needs of the users?
3	Match between translation and real world	Is the translation aligned with its cultural context? Is cultural adaptation required?
4	Match between translation and genre	Does the translation match the conventions of the genre in question? Are the visual, auditory and other multimodal elements appropriate for the new context?
5	Consistency	Is the translation consistent in terms of style, terminology, phraseology and register?
6	Legibility and readability	Do the visual elements of the translation correspond to the reader's physiological capabilities and relevant cultural guidelines? Is the user guided through the translation by using appropriate signposting for the genre in question? Are the user's efforts of interpretation sufficiently minimized?
7	Cognitive load and efficiency	Is the translation well crafted enough to be easy to memorize and learnable – that is, clear and comprehensible? Do the users need guidance for using the translation and, if so, in which format?
8	Satisfaction	Does the translation produce a pleasurable and/or rewarding user experience?
9	Match between source and target texts	Has all relevant source material been translated? Is there unwanted linguistic or structural interference?
10	Error prevention	Have the potential risks of misunderstanding been minimized?

Point number 1, **match between translation and specification**, impels me to remember that this translation is supposed to be usable and funny. This echoes the process of defining specifications for the user-centered model of translation introduced in Figure 5. Point number 2, **match between translation and users**, reminds me to always consider the personas. Point number 3, **match between translation and real world**, has to do with translating culture, and for that I inspect the theories of translating culture. Point number 4, **match between translation and genre**, means that the translation must resemble a game. Therefore, the cards need to be “card-like” (stiff, hand-size, identical in size and appearance...), and, like in every game, there needs to be an easy to read and understand set of rules.

Point number 5, **consistency**, could be summarized in this thesis as “break the rules but not too much”. Consistency in terms of style, terminology, phraseology and register is not significant in this translation: in fact, having some inconsistencies and variations is, in this case, a good thing. Having stylistically different kinds of card texts adds to the element of surprise and shock, and it allows the players to tap into their own vein of humor. If all the cards were bleak, someone with a sunnier disposition might grow weary of the game. Therefore, there are cards with miniature pigs and rainbow as well as cards with AIDS and holocaust. But then, there should not be too much inconsistency. For instance, one card reads “salin timmein munkki” [the most fit monk of the gym], which means a person who is not only religious in their training but also the most religiously trained trainer at this one gym. If no one knows this term “munkki” I have broken the rule of consistency too much. If at least player know what a term or phrase means they can then enlighten the others. These instances, in my opinion, are part of the game’s charm, as they can create a sense of unity and interplay. Also, changes in register can be a means to create humor, as will discussed later in Chapter 3.2.2.

To observe point number 6, **legibility and readability**, I chose the font Calibri in size 11; card dimensions of 5,5 x 6 cm; and black text on white background. The card size was dictated chiefly by how easy or difficult the cards would be to read or handle, but also by

paper and cardboard sizes (A4), cost and workload. Point number 7, **cognitive load and efficiency**, is met by the set of rules, which are hopefully easy to understand and refer to.

Number 8, **satisfaction**, refers to *user experience* and is judged by the target audience. Whether the players enjoy the translation or not is revealed in the questionnaire. Finally, the two remaining points, (9) **match between source and target text** and (10) **error prevention** are observed by analyzing the theories of linguistics to see how the Finnish texts can function similarly as English texts (see more 3.2.1). Avoiding typos is important for the cards and the set of rules, whereas the latter should also be free of ambiguities and entanglements to minimize the risk of misunderstanding.

#### 3.1.4 Usability testing

To test the usability and user experience of my translation I used a survey that consisted of a test play and a questionnaire. This subsection deals with the theoretical aspects of usability testing and participant-oriented research, also expounding on topics such as questionnaire design and participant sampling already briefly introduced in material and method Chapter 2.3.

Suojanen et al. (2015: 95) write that to know if usability testing is the right method for a study the researchers need to carefully consider the purpose and goals of the test. Since the main purpose of this survey is to find out whether the translation is usable and funny it was, in my opinion, logical to ask for other peoples' opinion. After deciding to include real users into my thesis work I needed to decide on the instrument of my participant-oriented research, and a questionnaire seemed the most apt one.

Why did I choose to use a questionnaire? Saldanha and O'Brien list the strengths and weaknesses of questionnaire survey: on one hand questionnaires take less time than individual interviews and the results are easier to analyze, on the other hand, it is easy to design the questionnaires improperly. It was important for me to conduct the study fast,

and there was an attempt to avoid design issues, as is discussed later in this subsection. Saldanha and O'Brien also warn that "although questionnaires are good for collecting exploratory data they are not the best instruments for collecting explanatory data (for example, about emotions, opinions and personal experiences)" (2014: 152): if my research question had been "why the translation is usable and funny" instead of "is it" it would have been useful to interview the participants, but since the *why* was merely a secondary interest to me the questionnaire enough.

Another problem related to questionnaires is a validity threat of *social desirability*, meaning that people tend to improve their behavior and answers in study situations (Saldanha and O'Brien 2014: 153). To minimize the risk of only getting polite data I tried to find as many strangers as possible to partake the survey instead of just using my friends as test subjects. I also removed myself from the game play situations to allow the players to discuss and enjoy the game freely. For the duration of filling out the questionnaires, however, I was at hand to explain the questions when needed.

Another questionnaire issue regards openness. To avoid bias of any kind I, at first, wondered whether I should withhold all details about me and my thesis from the participants but soon realized that to be impractical. In fact, Saldanha and O'Brien clarify that "for the research to be valid, [participants] need to be fully informed stakeholders whose consent is free and revocable" (2014: 150). Accordingly, I decided to be open about the process: there was a short introduction in the beginning of the questionnaire stating the field and aim of my thesis, and I answered all the questions that the participants posed.

Openness is also part of ethical considerations. Saldanha and O'Brien write that the participants need to be informed and assured about confidentiality and anonymity, and the participants need to be able to "fully understand what they are consenting to participate in" (2014: 43). To follow these principles the participants were presented with an informed consent form that outlined the research and asked for the participant's

signature. The participants were also presented with a GDPR<sup>11</sup> document informing them of what identifying information is gathered, and how the information is stored, protected and ultimately destroyed. These documents also informed the participants that they were free to exclude themselves from the survey whenever: before the game, during the game, or weeks after the game. I also saw it necessary to warn the participants about the politically incorrect nature of the game during recruitment and before the game play.

The participants recruitment was based on non-probability sampling, which means that the people in the survey are the people I was able to find. This scenario does not allow for much statistical inference and naturally, the results cannot be used to generalize anything (Saldanha and O'Brien 2014: 165). However, as Saldanha and O'Brien continue, 'convenience samples' can be useful sometimes (2014: 165) and I feel this is one of those times: I just want to know what this set of people think. Also, this is a case study of a narrow topic in a form of a MA thesis survey and there will be no attempt to generalize the results: usability might be adjustable for most, but all humor rarely fits all. I set no upper limit for participant number.

Now that we have discussed the aims of the study in connection with choosing the proper test instrument and test subjects it is time to look at the questionnaire itself. The purposes and goals of research can only be met with equally careful question design (Suojanen et al. 2015: 95). This is reiterated by Saldanha and O'Brien (2014: 153) when they stress that if there are errors in questionnaire there will be errors in the analysis and results.

To determine what is the appropriate number of questions Saldanha and O'Brien (2014: 154) remind the researchers to consider whether the questions asked ask what they are meant to: to help me with this I used the ten-point heuristic (see Chapter 3.1.3) to make sure that the questions asked were, in fact, measuring usability and fun. Another thing to consider is the time required to answer the questions. I estimated that filling out my four-

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<sup>11</sup> Short for European Union's General Data Protection Regulation that aims to strengthen individuals' rights over their personal data.

page, twenty-two-question document would not take more than 15 minutes. With the game play of another 15 minutes, I estimated that half an hour would not be too long a time to affect the participants negatively.

The phrasing and order of the questions also needed consideration. Clarity and sensitivity are the main principles concerning language of questionnaire design: the language needs to be unambiguous and wording not leading; jargon should be avoided; and it is preferable to begin with a simple question, and move onto more complex ones (Saldanha and O'Brien 2014: 155–158). It is also important to ask one question at a time and to not build questions that elicit socially desirable answers, or which are face-threatening (2014: 156). As with participant sampling, it is equally important in question design to remember that people tend not to readily reveal their negative sides, and if asked to, the participants might show constrain in their responses or opt out entirely (2014: 156). For the same reason background questions eliciting personal data should be separated from other questions (2014: 154).

Finally, whether the questions should be closed or open is also important to consider, as closed questions might restrict the answers and open questions take time to answer and effort to analyze. Vice versa, closed questions are fast to answer, and they elicit data that is easy to analyze, and open questions allow the participants to explain their answers (Saldanha and O'Brien 2014: 157). The open answers should be collected with boxes that are not too small or restrictive nor too large to overwhelm and tire the participants. It is good practice to always have a 'something to add' box at the end of a questionnaire to allow participants to complement their answers and to comment on any other topic (2014: 157). I used as my closed questions mostly semantic differential scales that asked the participants to rate different phenomena. Here is an example of both types of questions, in which the phenomenon measured is the naturalness of language:

b) Olivatko korttien sanavalinnat ja rakenteet sinun suuhusi sopivia? Arvioi, kuinka luontevaa kieli oli.

1 Ei ollenkaan luontevaa | 2 Vähän luontevaa | 3 Ei luontevaa eikä epäluontevaa | 4 Melko luontevaa | 5 Luontevaa

c) Oliko korteissa sellaisia sanoja, ihmisiä tai muita asioita, jotka olivat sinulle vieraita? Anna esimerkkejä sanoista tai ilmauksista, joiden merkityksiä et tiennyt.

**Picture 4.** A closed and an open question

### 3.2 Translation theories

Now that I have explained the relationship of UCT practices and my translation process it is time to examine the three aspects of translation studies: linguistics, humor and culture translation. In order to create a usable and funny translation I need to consider the differences between Finnish and English languages, with an emphasis on how Finnish functions. The research in the field of translating humor provides me with tools to understand what makes us laugh and how to, hopefully, design fun. Culture studies help me to see the world (i.e. the translation) through the eyes of the future users.

#### 3.2.1 Translating linguistic differences

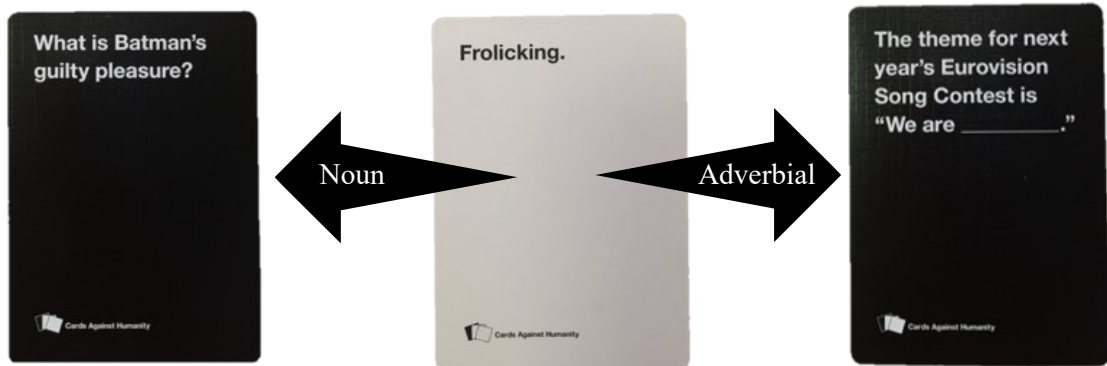
Initially I worried about translating CAH because Finnish, as a part of Ural–Altaic language family, differs in many ways from English, a Germanic language of the Indo-European language family. In this subsection I highlight some differences between

morphology and syntax of the two languages and explain, what is their effect on translating the cards and ultimately on the usability of the game.

Lumenlearning.com (2015) explains linguistics as follows: morphology is the study of words and it consists of morphemes and lexemes. Morphemes are the basic unit of morphology, and the smallest meaningful unit of language. In other words, a morpheme is a series of speech sounds that has a special meaning. If a morpheme is altered in any way, the entire meaning of the word can be changed. Think about *rat* and *bat*. Lexemes, then, are the set of inflected forms taken by a single word. For instance, *swam* and *swimming* are inflected lexemes of the uninflected word *swim*.

Syntax is the study of sentences and phrases. It is a set of guidelines for constructing full sentences out of words and phrases in a meaningful order. Word order is important in English whereas in Finnish, word order doesn't matter for general meaning; different word orders are used to emphasize different parts of the sentence. If the words from a sentence *Clive eats a hot dog* are moved around, in English the outcome would be nonsensical. In Finnish a hot dog can be eaten by Clive in any order because these words are inflected in a way that accommodates free mobility (Lumenlearning.com 2015).

In CAH, the structure of every white card should match the structure of every black card. Here are a two morphological mechanics that, in the white UK cards, further this kind of linguistic compatibility: the first one is using the suffix *-ing*. It is used to inflect verbs, and these verbs can be used as present participles, gerunds, nouns or adjectives, depending on how the cards are combined. For instance, if a white card reads "Frolicking.", this verb alone can be used as a noun or an adverbial. Combine it with a black card that asks "What is Batman's guilty pleasure?" and frolicking functions as a deverbal pure noun. If the black card announces that "The theme for the next year's Eurovision song contest is 'We are \_\_\_\_.'" then frolicking is a gerund verb in adverbial use. Most black cards do seem to render *-ing* ending verbs into deverbal forms, making them pure nouns and pure adjectives. The functions of *-ing* form can be compared here:



**Picture 5.** The *-ing* form functioning as a noun and an adverbial

Another morphological mechanic that contributes to black and white card compatibility is favoring simple nouns and noun phrases in white cards. “Grandma.” and “A good sniff.” are easy to combine with nearly everything, although there are some exceptions. There is a black card that says “For my next trick, I will pull \_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_.” Here the player needs to present two white cards, and if those cards are respectively “Frolicking.” and “A good sniff.” the result is odd, and perhaps too confusing to amuse. However, if the white cards are presented in opposite order the sentence seems to work (better, at least). Why this might be, is contemplated next.



**Picture 6.** Alternative orders of playing the cards

The black UK cards are built with three syntactic structures. Firstly, in many cards the blank space that the white card is designed to fill, is preceded by preposition such as *with*, *to* or *of*. Therefore, with these kinds of black cards the white card content functions as the object of the combined sentence. “Most of the time”, according to Karl Hagen (2007), “the object of the preposition is a noun phrase.” which means that any white card can be combined with a black card that, for instance, reads “TFL<sup>12</sup> apologizes for the delay in train service due to \_\_\_\_.” Equally with the sentence “For my next trick, I will pull \_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_.”, the content after the preposition *out of* will almost automatically be or function as a noun. *Pull* is an intransitive verb. Normally intransitive verbs do not allow direct objects, but this is an exception. On its own *pull* does not need an object, but in this sentence, it will have one, and if the object already is a noun phrase (“a good sniff”) the pull retains its concrete intention. This concreteness, in my opinion, makes the sentence less disruptive than if the pulled object was “frolicking” – a verb merely functioning as a noun. However, this kind of sampling for tone variations is bordering chomskian<sup>13</sup> arguments of intuition. Ultimately, pull frolicking out of a good sniff and pull a good sniff out of frolicking both are grammatical sentences, even though, in my ears one sounds less weird than the other.

The two other syntax structures of the black UK cards render themselves less nuanced, meaning that these black cards combined with white cards create less disruption for the game play, in my opinion. Some black cards have questions, to which *-ing* ending phrases and noun phrases fit easily. Finally, some cards have constructions that allow single word phrases and all else to act as sentences, for instance in a card like this: “\_\_\_\_. It’s a trap!”.

What does all this mean in terms of translating the Finnish deck? To start again with the morphology, the words and inflections used in the white and black cards need to match.

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<sup>12</sup> Transport for London.

<sup>13</sup> “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously” is Noam Chomsky’s example of a sentence that is grammatically correct but semantically absurd.

To achieve maximum usability with the translated deck I need to firstly consider the amount and type of inflections in the Finnish language. Since such many syntactical units – nouns, pronouns, adjectives, numerals and verbs – are modified and inflected in typical linguistic use, I need to pick the most pliable grammatical categories and keep the language simple.

Simple nouns and noun phrases in (singular or plural) nominative case, such as “vaapukkamehu” [raspberry juice] and “Matti Nykänen”, seem to work in the Finnish white cards as well as they work in the UK deck. The *-ing* forms of the white UK cards can, for one, be replaced with *-nen* ending verb forms. For instance, “Waiting ‘til marriage.” type of phrase can be translated into semantically similar, nonfinite verb phrase “Hääyön odottaminen.”. Another substitute for suffix *-ing* is suffix *-us*, as in “Hääyön odotus.”, which is a noun phrase. Even though “odotus” is a synonym of “odottaminen”, there is a slight stylistic difference. “Odottaminen” describes action or position, whereas “odotus” is a position oriented towards future. I will use the nonfinite verb form and the noun form alternately depending on how they advance humor. Set expressions naturally affect the choice: the invasion of Poland in Finnish is *Puolan valtaus*, and so it shall remain.

Black cards in Finnish also have direct questions, as they seem to be the most straightforward sentence type to accommodate compatibility between white and black cards. Questions need to be formed with interrogative pronouns (mostly with “mitä” [what]) instead of with suffix *-ko* or *-kö*, and the word order needs to be neutral: what did what, what is what. One slightly unorthodox but recently emerged syntactic phenomenon is using a subordinate clause beginning with just the word “koska” [because]. I have used this structure in one black card not only to benefit compatibility, but also because it theoretically mimics the speech acts of the target audience and it allows for imagination to color the humor. Young people, not exclusively, use sentences such as “Koska raha.” [Because money.] to express that something might be impossible due to lack of money;

that money is the only thing that matters in the world; or that they can buy everyone a round at the pub since they had a lucrative hand in poker.

Some black also cards allow a white card to act as a full sentence on its own, having only a blank line and a full stop. Finally, there are black cards that have sentences where the white card element functions as an object or a subject. These are the main morphological and syntactic aspects I use to build the Finnish deck whilst keeping in mind the final users (personas) and usability. Technically these solutions should work – grammatically they should be able to elicit laughter. To maximize giggles, I next consider what the semantic content of these translated cards should look like.

### 3.2.2 Translating humor

Translating humor into the Finnish CAH takes more than just apt grammar. Delia Chiaro states that humor “travel[s] poorly”, and translating humor is about achieving “an adequate degree of equivalence” (2010: 8). How to make the humor of CAH travel as well as possible is the topic of this subsection. The first item discussed here is the nature of CAH humor; the second, how this humor may be achieved; and the final issue perused in this subsection is how the translation might fail to be funny.

The humor format of CAH is difficult to name. There are no jokes, puns or other customary forms of verbal humor. The CAH humor can be nonsensical, surreal and absurd; there can be double meanings; it most certainly contains dark elements; it can be described as politically incorrect... One thing common to these descriptions is that they all are a crack in the face of normalcy. Therefore, within this thesis, the content of the cards is simply referred to as (dark) humor.

If humor travels adequately the recipients will experience a physical reaction (smile, laughter, snort...). It does not have to be a visible reaction as long as the recipient knows they have been amused. Chiaro (2010: 17) points out that one could also tickle people or

serve them nitrous oxide to induce a physical reaction, but here the reaction is partly created via academic elbow grease: by following the card categories, using audience design (personas), and by leaning on scientific research to create cards that are funny and usable. To create a reaction in the players I have chosen words that I think might be humorous, but ultimately it is the players who choose the humor. They can pick a white card that either amuses themselves or a card that might make most players laugh – maximizing everybody’s fun –, or they be strategic and play card that is most likely to please the Card Czar – maximizing one’s own points. In the end, it is difficult to credit (or blame) any one person or one act for the possible reactions, but without reactions there assuredly is no humor.

Salvatore Attardo (quoting Alexander 1984: 58–62) writes about a “comical confusion’ of two registers” (1994: 235) and this confusion, I think, is one of the CAH elements that creates most of the players’ humorous reactions. To Alexander, *registers* mean style levels (academic language and colloquial speech, for instance, being on two distinct style levels), and register-based humor is created by taking lexemes or phraseological units from one register and inserting them into another register. Usually straying from registers can lead to receivers growing irritated or distracted, whereas with CAH this type of incongruence should summon e.g. jubilant, surprised or even shocked responses from the receivers, which then, theoretically, culminate in laughter.

Attardo writes (1994: 230–253) that academics have struggled to crystallize their theories of register-based humor. He says the registers described by the theories, although they clearly exist in the real world, lack “unique formal definition” and there is “variation in “register coverage” (1994: 236). Even though it may not possible to assign or recognize a register for every word or other linguistic unit people can still sense that they exist. Attardo (1994: 237) gives two further definitions for *register*, both from Halliday:

A register can be defined as the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associated with a situation type (1978: 111).

A register is a cluster of associated features having a greater-than-random (...) tendency to co-occur; and like a dialect, it can be identified at any delicacy of focus (1988:162).

Even though Attardo nor Halliday are able to hand me a ready list of registers, I sense the different registers in the game, and so do the players, whether they have similar ‘delicacy of focus’ or range of experiences to those I have. To register a register, I need to assume what the recipient knows, or their cultural knowledge. (More on how to translate cultures in Chapter 3.2.3.) Then, to be able to deliberately break registers and to create comical confusion I however need a check list of sorts, and for this translation I use Katharine Reiss’ text typology.

Reiss’ typology, first introduced in 1971, sorts texts into three (later four) categories based on their communicative purpose and function: informative, expressive, operative, and multimedial. *Informative* text types, such as the news, inform the reader. *Expressive* texts, such as poems, convey artistic and aesthetic content, and *operative texts*, such as cooking recipes, persuade action or reaction from reader. *Multimedial* text type, the newest addition to the typology, is a hybrid of the previous text types and it consists of text and image or music. (Reiss & Vermeer 1984/2014: 181–191) Excluding the latter due to lack of multimedial material, I infused the three text types into my translation, for instance in a following way:



**Picture 7.** Examples of my use of Reiss' text types

Black cards texts are easy to pigeonhole into their respective text type categories. “Anna virpojalle...” [Give to (an Easter) trick-or-treater...] can be labeled as operative by type, and “Neuvostoliittoi auttoi Karjalan orpoja...” [USSR helped the orphans of Karelia...] as informative, etc. White card texts, then, are harder to label because of their shortness. It is possible to say that the sentence “Hetki, jolloin Fredrika tortun keksi.” [The moment, when Fredrika the torte invented.] is, with its unusual word order, more artistic in its style than the syntactically regular “Liian kuuma keitto.” [Too hot soup.], and so on, but in order to break more registers than just those provided by Reiss' text type typology I need to employ another theory, as well.

This theory is H. Paul Grice's maxims of communication. Communication, according to Grice (quoted by Attardo 1994: 271–292), is successful if four maxims are followed, namely the maxims of quantity, relation, manner and quality. These maxims mean that a communicator should give enough, but not too much, information to their recipient

(maxim of quantity). They should also stay on topic (maxim of relation), avoid ambiguity (maxim of manner), and speak truthfully (quality) (Attardo 1994: 272–3). In order to be humorous a communicator needs to violate these maxims, Attardo summarizes the findings of humor research (1994: 271–292).

Attardo reports that some humor academics accentuate only two maxims, those of *quantity* and *relation*, saying that every joke in the world breaks these “super-maxims” (1994: 291–2). Even though CAH texts are not jokes, *per se*, these maxims apply to them, as well. I argue that in this game there are two communicators, the translator (I) and the player choosing a white card. I have no control over the player and their game strategy, but I can give the players a large variety of texts with which they are free to violate these maxims, if they so choose.

For instance, in connection of violating the maxim of quantity I have considered the amount of details that the white cards contain. What is funnier, the simple utterance “Balls.”, or something more elaborate, like “My balls on your face.”, or the exhaustive sentence “Firing a rifle into the air while balls deep in a hog.”? These examples are all from the original CAH deck, and, letting the players answer the question above, I have translated similar gradations of detail into the Finnish deck as well. Repetition is another way to violate this maxim. The official set of rules instructs the Card Czar to “re-read the black card before presenting each answer” for ‘full effect’, and this instruction is likewise reproduced in the translation.

Absurdity and straying from topic are features that should be avoided in interference-free communication, presents the maxim of relation (Attardo 1994: 273). Creating humor by creating interference via absurdity is an integral part of CAH. It cannot be avoided, because sometimes the cards at hand are semantically and logically incompatible, but they have to be played anyhow with absurd outcomes, such as “How did I lose my virginity” combined with “400 hundred years of colonial atrocities”. With imagination, some may find this funny *as is*, but mostly, I would argue, it is the surprise and randomness that

make this funny, if anything. Additionally, Attardo and Raskin write about “willing suspense of belief” saying that even though there is incongruity between language elements and the hearers can detect that they have been misled, in most cases hearers are willing to accept the communication violation, for the joke’s sake (1991: 337–8).

One, language extraneous, factor that can make my translation to induce laughter is that the test subjects are put in a situation where laughter is expected, or even promised, thus they are “in the mood” and might therefore be more prone to react accordingly. Saldanha and O’Brien (2014: 153) list this “mood” as a validity threat in their article on research methodologies, noting that people aim to please their observers in a study situation. This threat may work to my benefit – it is not a huge problem if the test subjects enjoy the game in order to observe niceties and there is little that could be done to avoid it – but there are other threats that may dilute the fun.

For one thing, CAH is not designed to amuse those who are averse to dark humor. Also, the game will fail to exhilarate in a positive way a player to whom the topics are psychologically not distant enough. Taboo and moral violation can create humor, as long as the violation does not feel like rubbing salt on an open wound. In other words, the violation needs to be benign, state McGraw and Warren in their study of moral psychology and humor (2010: 1141–1149). According to *benign violation theory* there are three conditions that need to be met in order to make a violation benign and humorous: “(a) the presence of an alternative norm suggesting that the situation is acceptable, (b) weak commitment to the violated norm, and (c) psychological distance from the violation” (2010: 1141).

The condition (a) is fulfilled by the game itself. While the players may find the cards disgusting or wrong, the game situation and the other players’ presence and reactions may raise the bar of what is morally acceptable there and then. The condition (b) is reinforced by delimiting the participant pool. To invite weak commitment, I opted to not ask, *inter alia*, people with children or the elderly to play the game. This may be a prejudiced way

of thinking, but I am unconvinced that a parent of a three-year-old would enjoy pedophile banter, which there is plenty of in CAH. The condition (c), however and unfortunately, is difficult to control, and not meeting this condition is one of the biggest possible errors that could befall the game play. The violation (for instance, talking about a dead parent) becomes unbenign and unhumorous if a player has recently lost their mother. To minimize the risk of creating hurtful incidents of this kind, I warned the participants when first contacting them that the game can be offensive. I also repeated this warning before the game play and reminded them that they are free to opt out the survey whenever – before, in the middle of or after – if they so choose. These cautions together with the delimiting of the participant pool will hopefully manage to eliminate at least some of the risks of dealing with dark humor.

Other factors that can stifle laughter are, inconveniently, the flip sides of the humor creating factors listed above. Even though repetition can be funny, too much of it will wane the novelty quickly. Choosing the wrong target audience or creating wrong content into the translation may also induce indifferent reactions. Finally, in my opinion, humor is born with the ineffable ‘it’. It is possible to calculate what is funny up to a point, but there is no mathematical scheme to formulate humor. What is the equation that proves that farts are funny? How is it possible to analyze why Pekka Haavisto is undeniably less funny than Paavo Väyrynen? After all, humor is in the ear of the beholder, and even with all this theorization all I can do is hope that I find the right ears, that the ‘it’ travels from the original CAH, and the players find the translation (not just offensive but also) funny.

### 3.2.3 Translating culture

Translating culture is always a part of translating; translating is not just about words. To properly acknowledge the audience, I need to speak the language of their culture not just morphologically and syntactically, but also semantically. In the previous subsection, when discussing humor and register breaking, I said that I need to anticipate the recipient’s cultural knowledge – to look at their world through their eyes – to be able to

translate the semantics of their culture, as well. In this subsection we look at a concept of cultural usability, culture-bound references (allusions) and those things that could hinder communication between a translator and their audience.

In UCT *cultural usability* encompasses not only the translation product but also the entire iterative UCT process (Suojanen et al. 2015: 26–7). I have already discussed the importance of understanding one’s target audience and created a representation of my audience (i.e. the personas in Chapter 3.1.2), and it is those personas that represent the target culture of this translation and it is their world that I need to anticipate. With the survey I should be able to assess, among other things, the success of cultural usability.

Another part of the translation process, besides looking at the target audience, is to look at the source text. The original CAH deck is built around cultures of United Kingdom (indigenously on top of US cultures,), and I have preserved parts of those cultures by categorizing the UK deck and mirroring those categories in my translation. Ritva Leppihalme, who has studied culture and translation, says that Finnish readers are well versed in Anglo-American culture and share much of the Western tradition (1997: 4–5), therefore these categories should feel familiar to my audience. The following is speculation, but if the original game came, say, from Asia, perhaps the categories would have different contents and volumes. There are naturally also differences between Finns and Brits; for instance, nudity, especially in family circle, is less of a taboo in Finland and therefore perhaps less humorous.

When it comes to creating the Finnish deck some words or concepts I have replicated *as is*, but ultimately most of the culture injected into the Finnish deck is mine. In a way, the two cultures that need to meet within this translation process are my culture and the players’ culture. On one hand, that should not be too hard, given that I am much alike the personas, but on the other hand... what if I am not? I cannot know beforehand who my players are going be, and there are many ways in which communication between two cultures can go wrong.

Leppihalme uses a term *culture bump* to describe communication errors in translation, and compares a bump to a mild, less-serious culture shock (1997: viii). These bumps happen when culture-bound elements, such as allusions, confuse readers. Leppihalme quotes standard definitions of literary studies that define an allusion as a “reference to something” (1997: 6). Leppihalme continues that the concept of allusions is not entirely dissimilar to Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality, as both recognize the impact of inserting old elements into new and that “all texts owe something to other texts” (1997: 8). In literature, culture bumps happen when a reader does not recognize the old elements, and thus misses a part of the intended reading experience.

In Leppihalme’s discussion on culture bumps, allusions are viewed less as literary phenomenon and more as “translation problems requiring problem-solving and the use of appropriate strategies” (1997: 3). As CAH is pregnant with allusions, to avoid culture bumps in my translation and its reception, I have sought help from Leppihalme’s classification of allusions (1997: 10– 11). She classifies allusions mainly as being either (I) proper name and key phrase allusions (*allusions proper*) or (II) stereotyped allusions. Allusions (I) include proper names like “Pirkka-olut”<sup>14</sup> and “annos Subutexia” [a dose of Subutex] as wells as key-phrases such as “kaiken maailman dosentit” [docents of all sorts]<sup>15</sup> and “paavikänni” [pope drunkenness]<sup>16</sup>. Allusions (II) are stereotyped, which means they are clichés, proverbs and other frequently used saying, that are no more necessarily used in their original sense. As stereotyped allusions I have, for example, used a prayer (“Levolle laske luojani, \_\_\_\_\_ ole suojani”), a television ad quote (“Taitaa tyttö tietää, että seinän takana olisi \_\_\_\_\_ tarjolla”) and a catch phrase from a children’s program character (“Voi änkeröinen!”).

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<sup>14</sup> A beer brand.

<sup>15</sup> A derogative phrase used by a Finnish prime minister of experts and consultants.

<sup>16</sup> Getting so drunk three people are needed as escorts – two to lean on and one to translate.

Leppihalme's classification is yet another tool for me to ensure that my translation is as usable as possible: for one, if I take a culture-bound reference such as "the way James Bond treats women" from the original deck I need make sure the allusion works in Finnish and with my audience, as well. James Bond and his ways are familiar to Finns, so this allusion is likely to receive acceptance from the survey participants without any modification. "Jimmy Savile", then, is not an allusion that could be used *as is* but using another proper-name allusion with similar connotations ("Jammu-setä") solves the issue. Paying attention to allusion classifications helps me to replicate them. Secondly, using Leppihalme's research as an aid helps me to remember that making the allusion function properly means more than just manufacturing apparent similarity between the source and target text. One of the functions of allusions is that the (translated) allusions should spark joy of recognition in the receiver. Before explaining this "joy" let us look at the other functions that allusions have.

Leppihalme distinguishes allusions to function on six levels: author, translator, readers, text, micro- and macro-levels (1997: 31). To summarize these levels: authors use allusions for personal (gender, education, reading history...) and/or literary reasons (characterization, humor, relationship indication...), translators then work with the allusions to their best abilities, and readers either notice the allusions or not. Text with allusions in effect is like a puzzle, or a game of hide-and-seek, Leppihalme explains (1997: 32–34), where the receiver (reader) is given a clue to seek elements that the sender (writer/translator) has hidden in the text. The receiver may either find the collectively agreed-upon connotations; find nothing; or they can find their own subjective associations. The latter is highly likely to happen when playing CAH, because the cards allow creating double-entendres and absurdity – as mentioned, one way to play the game is to not employ the intended allusions or the objectively recognizable connotations, and to be subjectively funny. These players might not win the game but at least they will probably have a good time, and that is all I need for my translation to be successful.

Worst case scenario is if the reader finds zero allusions. Writer/translator is of course not expected to communicate in a way that speaks to all levels of knowledge, but the less allusions a reader finds the less they feel party to the text (Leppihalme 1997: 36). On macro-level, which refers to the structural and thematic use allusions, the player should already recognize the allusion in the name of the game (*cards/crimes* against humanity word play) and be prepared for absurdity and humor. As the game proceeds the player should at last notice the micro-level allusions that occur on lexico-semantic and stylistic level. If even the sheer amount of allusions does not rouse the player to seek for familiarity in the allusions, or if all the allusions are unfamiliar to the player, he or she is likely to also bypass the other humor creating mechanisms of comical confusion, shock, register breaking, taboo violation etc.

All this would be detrimental to the aforementioned “joy”. If the allusions fail to function – if, for instance, I have misspelled a name thus making the allusion unrecognizable, if a player finds the entire game obnoxious or is utterly unlike the target audience personas – the player’s sense of participation may be impaired. The game should not only make the player feel like, in recognizing the allusions, they are “somehow participating in the creation of the text and may consequently be rewarded by a sense of achievement and self-congratulation” (Leppihalme 1997: 32), but also to make the player feel like a part of the group with the other players. Being part of these in-groups (reader-writer and reader-other readers) gives people “intellectual joy” (ibid: 33), and this joy should, and hopefully will, act as a solid foundation for readiness to laugh. I proposed earlier (see Chapter 3.2.2), that players being “in the mood” is beneficial to both the game play and the survey, and hopefully the allusions I have translated into the text are effective enough to make the players laugh and to evaluate my translation positively.

Finally, translating culture is a vast field of scientific research, and hopefully this narrow harvest from that field is enough to help me to maximize the usability of my translation. I have taken some risks with my allusions as there are a couple of them that I have only googled and/or heard other people use. I do not entirely know how commonly people use

such *allusions proper* as “salin timmein munkki” ([the most fit monk of the gym], previously explained in 3.1.3.) and “Seppo” (an allusion to a character on a popular Finnish television series *Salatut elämät*), and therefore am not entirely confident about using them myself in real life. However, adding these allusions to the translation is a risk I am willing to take, because (as explained in 3.1.3. and 3.2.2.) breaking registers (in this case, my register) may yield humor. It is interesting to see how these allusions will be received by the test subjects.

## 4 ANALYSIS

In this Chapter I present the results of the survey conducted via test play and questionnaire and introduce the findings. This Chapter follows the order of the questionnaire, first presenting the results of background questions, then proceeding in numerical order from question one to question fourteen. The questions were grouped under 4 theme headings (1) *set of rules*, (2) *cards: text*, (3) *cards: humor*, and (4) *summation*, and the first two groups I discuss in subsection 4.2 pertaining to usability, and the third group in humor subsection 4.3. The summation group, that is questions 6 and 7, is presented in 4.4. Each of these fourteen questions and data collected with them was compared to the background data to see whether any patterns emerged.

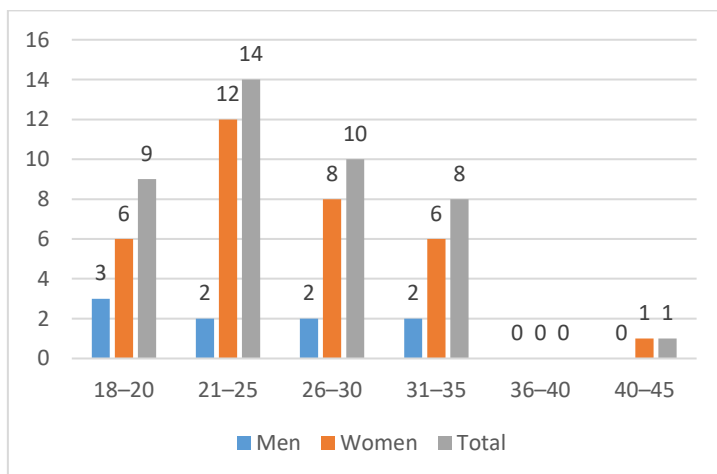
Of the fourteen questions (excluding the background questions) in total eleven were quantitative questions, and three were qualitative questions. The quantitative material was collected with closed questions, namely with pre-coded scales (mostly semantic differential scales), and the data was analyzed mainly according to the frequency and the shape of distribution of the findings. The qualitative material was collected with open questions that allowed the participants to write their comments in mid-size text boxes. This data was analyzed thematically by coding the answers into adjective and noun groups. All findings are analyzed and evaluated heuristically in the post-mortem subsection 4.5.

### 4.1 Background questions

On the first page of the questionnaire the participants were asked the following seven background questions: gender, age, profession/education, native tongue, whether they had played CAH before, and in what kind of things they were interested in. This last background question was divided into two parts, first one asking about what kinds of

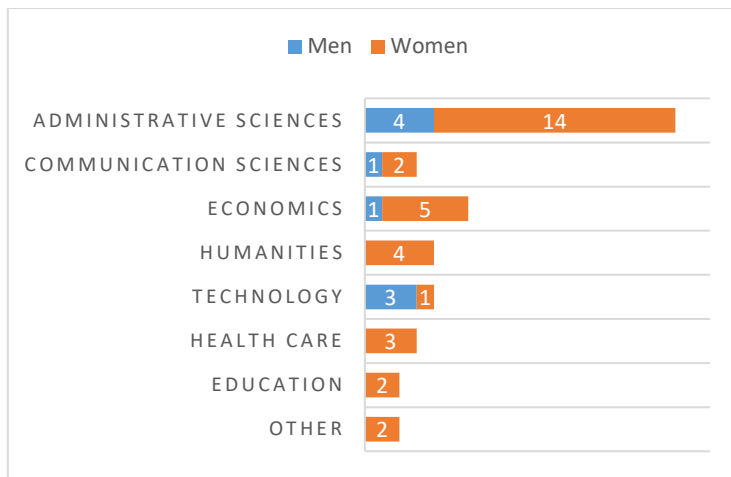
media the participants most often use weekly, whether they read books, listen to radio, engage in social media etc. The second part was designed to reveal what kinds of topics the participants were interested in, such as fiction, humor, crafts, or sports etc. In order to compare the real participants to the imagined personas I selected the most common answers of both genders and filled them into a similar table as can be seen in Chapter 3.1.2. This average participant table (Table 3) is first presented at the end of this subsection, and again in the post-mortem subsection with the persona table for easy comparison and analysis (Table 5).

In total there were 42 players, out of which 9 were men and 33 women. The participants were grouped according to ages into six groups, ranging from 18–20-year-olds to 40–45-year-olds. The youngest player was 19, the oldest 43, and there was no one in the group 36–40-year-olds. The male participants were slightly younger than the females, crowding the youngest age group whereas the women were most populous in the age group of 21–25-year-olds (see Figure 7). To compare the ages of the participants to the ages of the personas I chose the most populated groups and calculated the averages of those groups, so that the most common male participant realizes as 19,5 years old and female as 22,5 years old.



**Figure 7.** Age distribution by gender

The question for profession and/or education was an open question, therefore the answers were fashioned into classes (administrative sciences, humanities...) during analysis. Most commonly both genders either studied, had studied, or worked within the field of administrative sciences (see Figure 8).

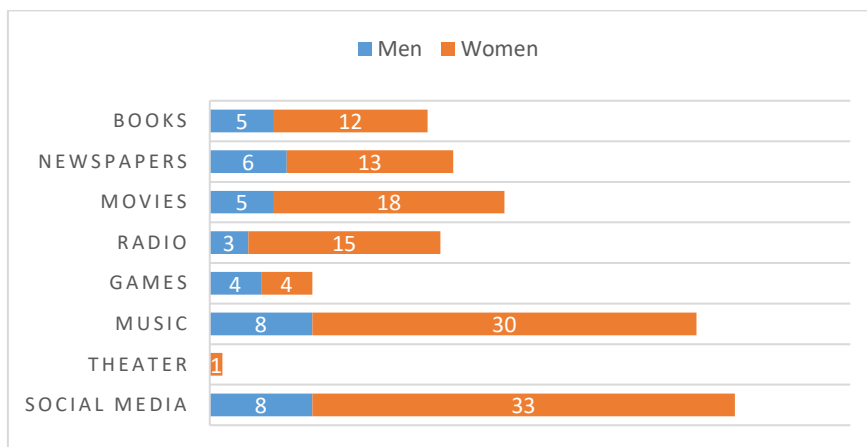


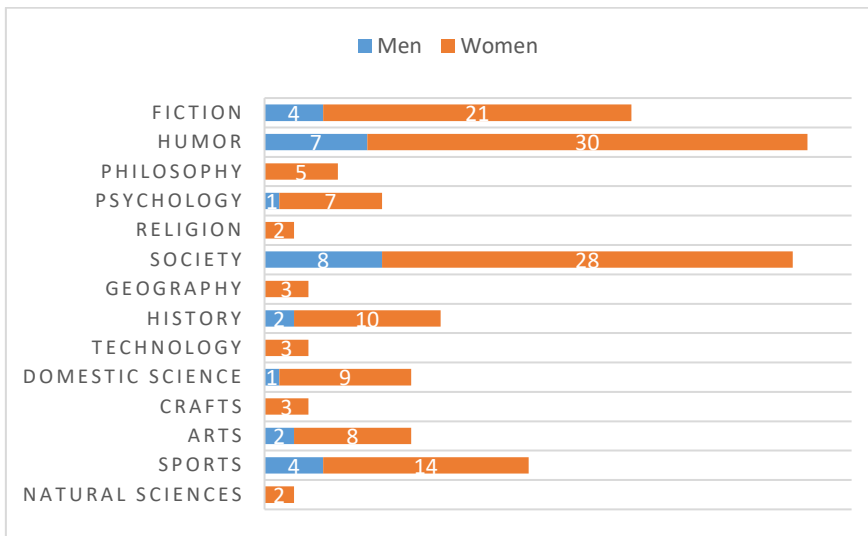
**Figure 8.** Professions and/or educations by gender

All the participants were native Finnish speakers (rather unsurprisingly as one of the criteria for participation was proficiency in Finnish). However, had there been non-native speakers, and since most of the surveys were conducted in bilingual Vaasa this was a real possibility, the results in usability and humor section might have been affected by the level of language skills. Therefore, with this set of participants, variation in language skills was automatically excluded from the analysis.

The question about whether the participants had previously played CAH yielded very symmetrical answers: in both gender groups there was practically a fifty-fifty divide with 5 out of 9 men and 17 out of 33 women answering not having played CAH before. With this set of answers, the true average participant would have been a person who simultaneously has and has not played the game before, and since that is impossible, as a compromise, I randomly assigned the average man to be a player with no previous experience and the average woman to be a player with experience.

The questions about what kinds of media and of what kinds of subject topics' the participants followed weekly were designed to gauge the participants' levels of knowledge. In the Chapter 3.1.2 we discussed the importance of assessing what the end users might know and how compatible their knowledge might be with my knowledge, and to that end I chose this approach. The data showed that men most favored books, newspapers, movies, music, and social media (see Figure 9) that were mostly related to humor and society (see Figure 10). In the corresponding Figures it can be seen that women were most interested in movies, music, and social media (Fig 9) mostly related to fiction, humor, and society (Fig 10). In the Table 3 of average participants, I have added in parentheses less common but still striking and noteworthy answers.



**Figure 9.** Weekly most used media by gender**Figure 10.** Weekly most used media's subject topics by gender

One difference between the two tables is that originally I estimated that the participants would not have children. However, in the questionnaire design stage I forgot to include the question about possible parenthood, so that detail is also now excluded from the analysis. In sum, based on the background information the average male and female participant look like this:

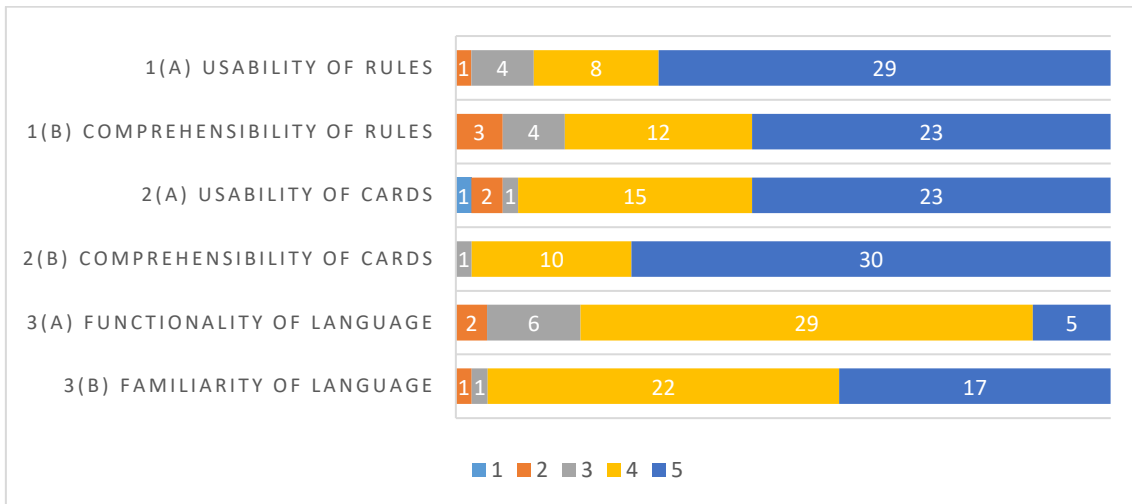
**Table 3.** What the participants looked like on average

<b>Man</b> 19,5 years old	<b>Woman</b> 22,5 years old
Background in administrative sciences	Background in administrative sciences
Finnish native speaker	Finnish native speaker
No previous experience with CAH	Previous experience with CAH

Media used: books, newspapers, movies, music, and social media (games)	Media used: movies, music, social media
Interests: humor, society (sports and fiction)	Interests: fiction, humor, society (sports)

#### 4.2 Usability questions

Usability was tested with seven questions, six of which were asked with closed semantic differential scales with 1–5 response continuum, 1 being a negative, 3 a neutral, and 5 a positive response. For all these six, closed questions see Figure 11. The last usability question was an open question with a mid-sized text box, and for these results see Figure 12.



**Figure 11.** Responses of usability questions

The first two questions were about the set of rules: 1(a) about the usability of the rules (font, font size etc.), and 1(b) about the comprehensibility of the rules (legibility and

readability). On average, the participants rated the usability of the rules as 4.5 and the comprehensibility as 4.3. One person criticized the manner of selecting the first Card Czar saying that they did not enjoy recounting their bowel movements. Interestingly, this critique was not mirrored in this person's scale response. There were also no visible explanations for the few other lower end responses. No visible pattern emerged between this set of data and the background responses.

The deck of cards was tested with similar phrasing: 2(a) asking about the usability (font, font size, and size of the cards etc.), and 2(b) about comprehensibility of the cards (legibility and readability). On average, the participants rated the usability of the cards as 4.4 and the comprehensibility as 4.7. One person had not answered the question 2(b). The size of the cards was the subject of 5 comments, and I received similar feedback during the test situations. 4 out of these five comments came from participants who had played the game before. Also, some participants remarked that the cards were not durable enough, and as the game plays cumulated some of the cards, being pieces of papers glued to cardboard, began to partially come apart. This durability problem was however not echoed in the open questionnaire answers. No visible pattern emerged between this set of data and the background responses.

The language of the cards was first tested with the question 3(a) on the functionality of the text, meaning how fluent and grammatically correct the sentences and phrases were to the participants. The average value here was 3.9. The answers to the question 3(b) on how familiar and natural the language was to the participants yielded an average value of 4.3. One participant did not answer this question. In total 6 participants itemized the language problems they had encountered during the game play: for instance, the card "Ope, ope! En voinut tehdä läksyjäni, koska \_\_\_\_." [Teacher, teacher! I could not do my homework, because \_\_\_\_.] was mentioned as a linguistically dysfunctional black card. As discussed earlier in 3.2.1, using this "koska" structure was an unorthodox translation strategy, and perhaps it partly explains some of the lower end scale rates.

To another participant “Salin timmein munkki” [the most fit monk of the gym] had sounded foreign, and “lentomailit” [frequent flyer miles] had created in their mind an association with the colloquial word “maili” [e-mail]. Perhaps the word “lentomailit” was too inexact, misleading or uncommon to invoke a connection with “frequent flyer miles” for this participant. They suggested using kilometers, which implies that the word was interpreted to mean distance flown instead of points collected. The card ”1: \_\_\_\_, 2: \_\_\_\_, 3: menesty” received critique from three participants for having created merely unfunny and unnatural combinations (apparently people don’t like this card even in the original CAH). Additionally, there was one typo: ”Päivi Räsänen” had been written “Päivä Räsänen”. No visible pattern emerged between this set of data and the background responses.

The last question on usability was an open one, asking the participants to give examples of allusions (words, names, or other content from the cards) that had been unfamiliar to them: in total there were 26 participants who did (one participant did not answer this question). These participants listed 13 separate allusions, and in total, these words and names occurred in the answers 35 times (see Figure 12). Most unfamiliar was *eugenics* (12 mentions<sup>17</sup>), then *Incel*<sup>18</sup> (5). Famous people (10 mentions) who participants did not recognize and named were *Greta Thunberg* (3), *Chrissy Teigen* (2), and *Fredrika*<sup>19</sup> (1), the rest were titled with a variation of “some people”. One person also reported not knowing the word “insolvenssi” [insolence] which was not in any of the cards.

There was little difference between genders on this score, 44% of men reported not knowing the same allusions as most of the women (67%) did. To see if age or reported interests (or education) had any connection to participants not knowing certain allusion I selected the three most reported allusions (eugenics, famous people, and incel) and the

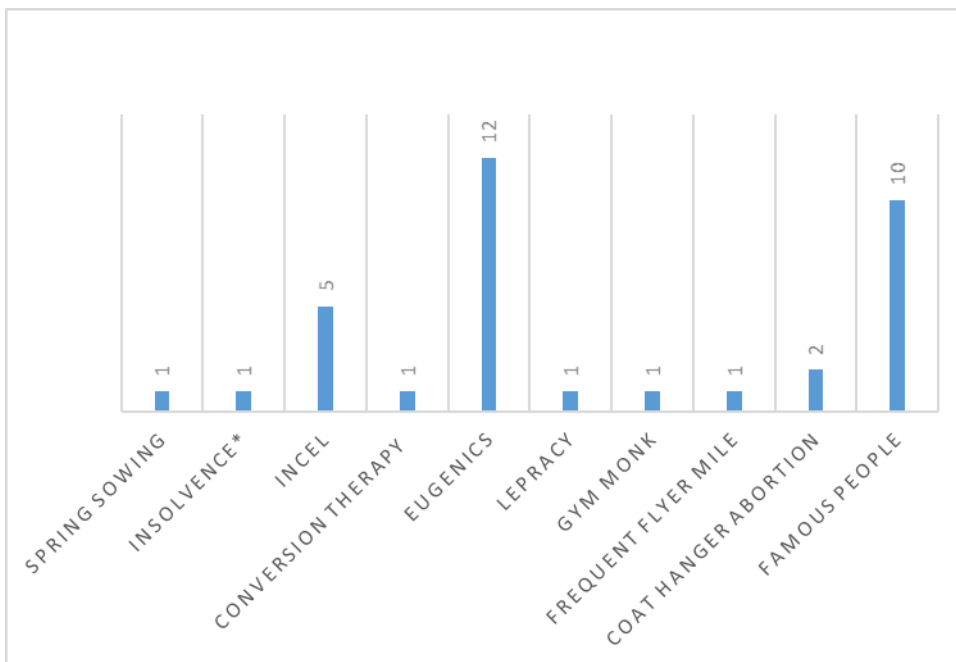
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<sup>17</sup> Tally of 12 includes 10 mentions of *eugenics* and 2 of *Eugenia*, assumingly meaning the same.

<sup>18</sup> A portmanteau of “involuntary celibate”, referencing to a subculture of mostly young men who feel unable to find love or sex.

<sup>19</sup> The Fredrika from the white card ”Hetki, jolloin Fredrika tortun keksi” [The moment, when Frerika the torte invented] is F. Runeberg, a possibly the one and only, famous, alleged Finnish torte inventor.

participants who listed them and compared their background information, not only, to one another, but also to me. However, this was an unfruitful endeavor as these participants were of all ages and interested in a large variety of topics.



**Figure 12.** Unfamiliar allusions

### 4.3 Humor questions

Humorousness of the game was tested with five questions. The first aspect of humorousness asked about was funniness, and this was done with two questions. The second aspect asked about was offensiveness, third disgust, and fourth psychological distance.

Questions 4(a) and 4(b) asked whether the game was fun to play – did it induce laughter, smiling, or other type of positive, physical reaction. The question 4(a) was in the form of a closed semantic differential scale with 1–5 response continuum, 1 being a negative, 3 a neutral, and 5 a positive response. All the responses to this question were either 4 (5 pcs) or 5 (36 pcs), and the average value of answers was 4.9. One participant did not answer this question.

All men gave humorousness a grade 5: it makes sense that men would like a product made by men for themselves (see Chapter 2.1) even with a female translator having influenced the content. Over half (5) of the men participants (9) were in the age groups ranging from 19–25, and when the responses of these men were compared to the responses of women of the same age there was a slight difference. Every single grade 4 (5 pcs) was given by 20 to 24-year-old women, which means that where 100% of the younger men gave full marks “only” 78% of the younger women did so. I say *only* in quotation marks because this observation is more an interesting blip in the data than a proper variation, especially since, other than that, age did not statistically seem to affect the responses. There was no connection between having or not having previous CAH experience and the experienced humor.

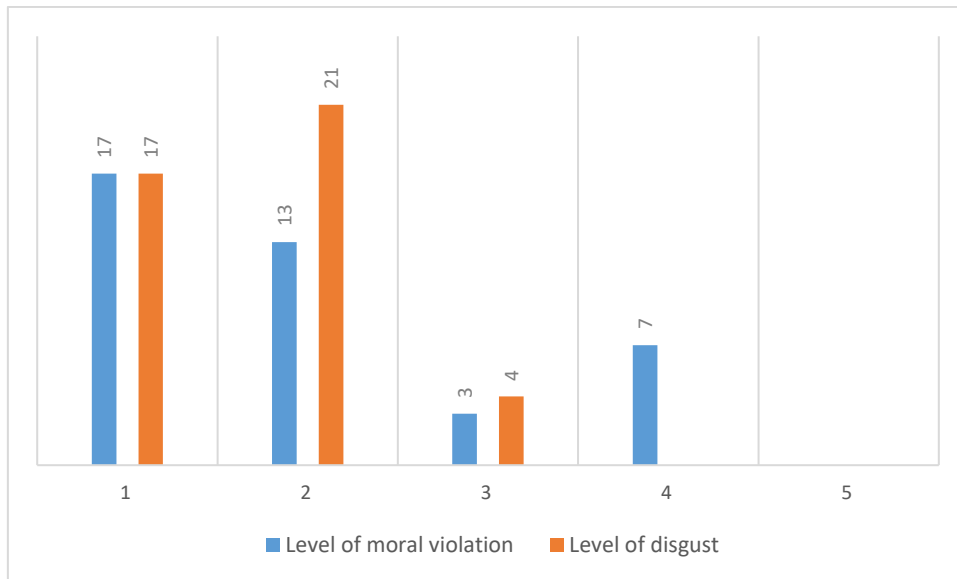
4(b) was an open question asking the participants to itemize what was fun and what was not. The phrasing of this question was not ideal, and therefore it was difficult to guess of some of the answers whether they were positive or negative comments. However, all the ambiguous answers were preceded by scale grade of 5 for funniness, so it might be safe to tentatively assess adjectives that loosely translate as “weird” and “obscene” as positive comments. Clearly stated positive answers (24 pcs) included such aspects as the (politically) incorrect nature and content of the cards, the (functioning) card combination, being able to play in one’s own native language, laughing (together), and being able to use one’s own imagination to affect the game play. The negative feedback (11 pcs) said that card incompatibilities, too small deck, boring cards, and content that was “too much” diminished funniness. 16 participants did not answer this question, including one who did

not answer any question on this page. No visible pattern emerged between this set of data and the background responses.

The second and third aspects of humorousness – offensiveness and disgust – were also tested with semantic differential scales with 1–5 response continuum, 1 being a negative, 3 a neutral, and 5 a positive response. The questions asked to what extent the card contents went against the participants’ personal moral codes (5(a)) and how disgusting the card contents were (5(b)). The fourth aspect, psychological distance, was tested with question 5(c), a three-point semantic differential scale. The participants were asked to select either ‘1’ for *yes*, ‘2’ for *no*, or ‘3’ for *no answer* to comment whether any of the themes in the cards had been personally so sensitive that they had diminish humorousness of a situation or of the entire game. The idea was to test the theories of benign moral violation discussed in Chapter 3.2.2, and to see how these people would response to morally off-color humor of CAH. Unfortunately, due to the ambiguous design of these questions, the validity of these results is questionable. Many participants asked for help with these questions but, as it turned out, I could not explain what I had meant, and in any case the scales were unable to mimic the tests of benign violation theory. Yet, in a makeshift attempt to measure the moral violation in some way I asked the participants to comment on this topic in the questionnaire’s ‘something to add?’ section (question 7).

As a result, as can be seen in Figure 13 most participants stated that nothing or nearly nothing was wrong with (75%, one participant did not answer) or disgusting about (90%) the card contents. For question 5(c) 98% (41 participants) answered that there were no personally sensitive subject matters; one selected ‘no answer’. The qualitative answers to not only the open questions 4(b) and 7 but also the ones written in the margins of the questionnaire were such as “[a small portion of the game was morally wrong] but that did not matter”, “[a small portion of the game was disgusting] but funny!”, and “in reality [the content] is morally wrong/very offensive/against personal values, but in this context it is fun”. Two participants said that there was not enough offensive content. Even though the instruments were ill-equipped to measure what they were meant to, it seems that the

translation had managed to balance being morally questionable and humorous quite well. There was no attempt to compare this data to the background responses.

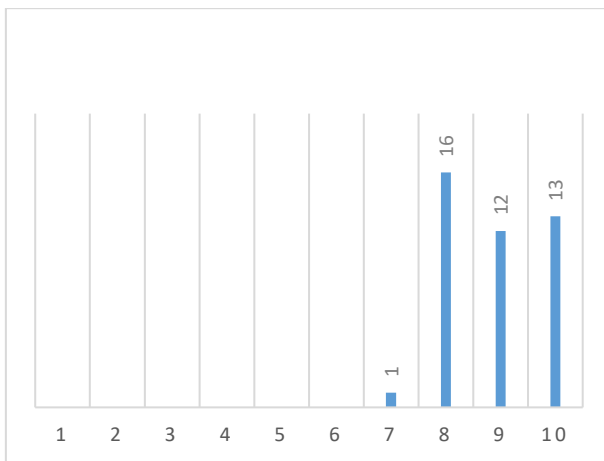


**Figure 13.** Levels of moral violation and disgust

#### 4.4 Summation questions

Question 6 asked the participants to grade the entire game on a scale from 1–10. All 42 responses were of value 7 (one response) or higher, with a quite even distribution between grades 8–10, averaging grade value of 8.9 (see Figure 14). I should perhaps have asked the participants to grade the *gaming experience* instead of just the *game*, now there may be some distortion in the answers if some participants have meant that they like CAH in general.

Participants who had played CAH before criticized more the amount (and size) of the cards than those who had not. No other visible pattern emerged between this set of data and the background responses.



**Figure 14.** Grades of the entire game

Question 7 was the ‘something to add’ section, and it gathered all in all 24 responses. In addition, I also looked at the other answers and margin comments to get a sense of the of opinions in their entirety. The positive comments reported that the game was fun, and/or the playing was fun (13 mentions). The translation was said to be well-done (8 mentions), and the target culture successfully considered (3). It was also mentioned how nice it was to be able to play CAH in native tongue with culturally familiar allusions. A couple of participants liked the topicality (one listed that as a negative thing) and gender neutrality of the texts.

Some people had wished that they could play the game again, (or even recommended having it published), or at least that the game had lasted a longer time, and this latter wish was the root of most of the negative feedback: there were too few cards (5 mentions +

several more during study situations). This was an error of my own doing, because I did not explain the number of the cards nor the logic behind such short game time before the test play, and I should have. Had the participants known that the deck was in fact meant only to be a ‘demo version’ their responses might have been more positive all around the questionnaire. As mentioned earlier, size of the cards was another issue (5 mentions). No visible pattern emerged between this set of data and the background responses.

#### 4.5 Post-mortem of all results

In this subsection the results are compared to the same ten-point heuristic I used making the translation and the questionnaire (Table 2). For the purpose of comparison, here is Table 4, in which in the left-hand column are the usability goals for a user-centered translation, and in the right-hand column I have evaluated the realization of each goal.

**Table 4.** Heuristic analysis of questionnaire answers (cf. Chapter 3.1.3)

<b>1 Match between translation and specification</b>	The translation was needed because humor is culture and language sensitive. The translation was well accepted.
<b>2 Match between translation and users</b>	The translation was appropriate for the users
<b>3 Match between translation and real world</b>	Translation was culturally adequate
<b>4 Match between translation and genre</b>	The game adhered to genre conventions adequately
<b>5 Consistency</b>	Translation was consistent enough
<b>6 Legibility and readability</b>	Usability and comprehensibility of the cards was good
<b>7 Cognitive load and efficiency</b>	The amount of guidance was appropriate
<b>8 Satisfaction</b>	Excellent
<b>9 Match between source and target text</b>	Slight interference
<b>10 Error prevention</b>	Risk of misunderstanding only minor

In point number 1, **match between translation and specification**, the word *specification* meant that the translation should meet its usability goals (see 3.1.1), in this case that the translation should be usable and funny. As the entire game was graded with an average value of 8.9 I registered the match as *good*. Participants also commented that it is nice to have the CAH experience in their own language and cultural allusions, meaning that there was a need for this translation.

Point number 2, **match between translation and users**, asked translator to think about what kind of people their audience consists of and how their characteristics affect translation strategies. My audience design was represented by *personas* introduced in Chapter 3.1.2. These personas were presented in Table 1, and I created a similar Table with data collected from the questionnaires to represent the average male and female participants (Table 3 introduced in Chapter 4.1). The Tables compare like this:

**Table 5.** Personas compared to average participants

Personas	
<b>Ville.</b> Man, 23 years old	<b>Emilia.</b> Woman, 30
Student, engineering major	University graduate, communications major
Finnish native speaker	Finnish native speaker
No previous experience with CAH	Previous experience with the CAH
Plays computer games, describes himself as pop culture junkie, goes to the movies often, enjoys internet culture	Interested in 80s music, reads blogs and watches reality tv
No children	No children
Participants on average	
<b>Man</b> 19,5 years old	<b>Woman</b> 22,5 years old
Background in administrative sciences	Background in administrative sciences
Finnish native speaker	Finnish native speaker
No previous experience with CAH	Previous experience with CAH
Media used: books, newspapers, movies, music, and social media (games)	Media used: movies, music, social media

My target audience was older than the average participants, but educationally there was little variation as nearly all participants had academic backgrounds. As stated earlier, the participants native tongue was excluded from the analysis as uninfluential factor. Previous experiences with CAH were distributed evenly throughout the population, as expected. The interests of the personas and participants were quite alike, but I did forget a few things in the audience design and, as a result, in the translation work and questionnaire design: there was nothing sports or (e-)games related in the cards and the possible parenthood was not asked about. Also the method of using the Finnish public libraries classification system as model for these questions, though comprehensive, was not ideal because since some of the options, such as *society* or *domestic science* were quite vague I, and assuredly the participants as well, had to make interpretations.

Point number 3, **match between translation and real world** asked whether the translation was aligned with its cultural context, namely whether there were any *culture bumps* such as discussed in Chapter 3.2.3. All in all, the allusions translated into the cards were received quite well, with only little over half of the population naming one or more allusions unfamiliar to them. Also, the fact that the most mentioned allusions were the same few nouns seems to indicate that I had considered the target audience adequately. The questionnaire was unsuited to measure reasons behind these culture bumps, and it is admittedly difficult to speculate why people do not know all the same things that other people know. It is possible that differences in gender, age and/or interests play a role in allusion recognition, but this survey does not substantiate that. Perhaps a pilot study, which Suojanen et al. recommend (2015: 5), would have decreased the number of culture bumps.

Point number 4, **match between translation and genre**, meant that the translation product needed to match the convention of game genre. The players had a set of rules, and the game looked like a game – the one thing that possibly hampered the feeling that this was ‘a real game’ was the small number of cards. This could have probably been easily avoided by explaining that the card number was limited on purpose.

Point number 5, **consistency**, asked if the translation was “consistent in terms of style, terminology, phraseology, and register” (Suojanen et al. 2015: 90), or in this case, did I break this rule enough but too much? My strategy was to create *comical confusion*, as Attardo instructed (see Chapter 3.2.2), and to break registers. On one hand, there was some inconsistency, at least for those who commented on “salin timmein munkki” being an unfamiliar term (as I suspected it might be). It is unfortunate that I did not ask whether the players discussed the unfamiliar allusions during the game play, as it would have been interesting to hear how these situations evolved and were experienced. (If only I had had kept the questionnaires in their filling order, I could have at least seen how the participants were grouped and the unknown allusions divided inside these groups.)

On the other hand, the wide variety of cards that were liked might be a result of me infusing into the cards different kinds of content with help from Reiss’ *typology* and Grice’s *maxims*. One participant said that it was nice to be able to use one’s own imagination to create humor, and this may have been a result of there being various styles and registers in the cards. Regardless, the comical confusion was achieved: there were 5 comments that lauded the game as “surprising”, “over the top”, “refreshing”, and “unpredictable”. Most importantly, even though there were measuring problems, it appears that the *benign moral violations* caused by the humor of CAH were benign enough, and no one seemed truly offended.

Point number 6, **legibility and readability**, asked about the translation’s visual elements and how they “correspond to the reader’s physiological capabilities and relevant cultural guidelines” as well as whether “the user’s efforts of interpretation [were] sufficiently minimized” (Suojanen et al. 2015: 90). The comprehensibility of the cards was rated better than that of the rules, but there was no explicit elaboration on how the rules were lacking in legibility or readability. Therefore, the problems probably were not too significant. The physical cards received criticism for their small size and glue

malfunctions, but this was the expected outcome of choosing to save time, money and energy.

Point number 7, **cognitive load and efficiency**, asked whether the translation was easy to use or if the users needed guidance with the product. The set of rules received good assessments on its usability and comprehensibility.

Number 8, **satisfaction**, asked whether the product was pleasurable and rewarding to use. Since the grades in the humorousness question were nearly unanimous and of the average value of 4.9 it is safe to say that the translation succeeded in this mission.

Point number 9, **match between source and target text**, asked whether there was any unwanted linguistic or structural interference. This requirement was not quite met as some participants commented that certain morphemes sounded unnatural, such as “lentomailit” and “menesty” – as reflected in Chapter 3.2.1 choosing the right suffix can create stylistic differences, and according to one participant “menestys” would have been more appropriate in that context. Some white cards did not match black cards smoothly, thus creating syntactic interference. The “because” structure (see 3.2.1) especially received critique, and the cards overall were said to be slightly less linguistically functional compared to the original game. Perhaps in such a short game event the smallest errors stand out more than in a longer game.

Point number 10, **error prevention**, reminded the translator to minimize the risk of misunderstanding. There was only one typo, which luckily did not seem to influence the game (everybody recognized Päivi Räsänen well enough even as Päivä).

In addition to what has already been discussed there are a few other things to remark. Firstly, why did people skip questions? One person, I think, did not notice one of the pages. Not all the questionnaires had printed out similarly, so this person might have had a different looking pile of papers in front of them than their teammates. I should have

checked the filled-out documents in the study situation. There was one similar close-call situation, but that unfilled page was noticed in time. The other two participants who had left questions blank probably also did so due to oversight.

Secondly, I paid a great deal of attention to research ethics and on not hurting people's feelings. The informed consent form and GDPR document were handed out to every participant, they were read and signed, and duly stored in my care. The participants were informed during recruitment and again before the survey that the game contents are possibly offending to some. (The student union was not able to advertise my study because of this.) The participants were also reminded verbally and in writing that were free to exclude themselves from the study whenever. To my relief, only one participant reported having felt uneasy (due to having to share their pooping history because of the rule stating that whoever pooped last acts as the first Card Czar).

Thirdly, the number of participants per each study situation was practical not only for game technical reasons: as mentioned in Chapter 2.2.2 the translation was optimized for four players, because any more would have increased the translation work and any less would have made a dull game. Two game plays had three player and one six, but the were no comments on groups sizes being too big or too small. This optimization was proven functional also because finding as many as four willing adults with matching schedules was laborious.

Fourthly and finally, I had qualms about comparing genders in my audience design and data analysis in a such binary manner, possibly stereotyping participants wrongly and/or drawing false assumptions about their responses. To minimize analysis errors, I attempted to be mindful not to overemphasis gender, even though I had given it prominence in audience design. I was pleased to read one of the comments saying that this participant had been happy to see such modern and gender-neutral allusions in the cards – this was an especially unexpected comment when said about a game designed to insult everybody. It was also a reassuring comment because, after all, the point of the audience design was

to translate to stereotypes, to build the deck out of “boy cards” and “girl cards”, and whilst my translation apparently was deemed balanced, it did feel insensitive to guess “what do boys like?” What I learned from this issue as well was that, as mentioned earlier, a pilot study could have been useful (this Chapter) and a translator using oneself as yardstick is not an ideal strategy (see Chapter 3.1.2).

## 5 CONCLUSION

In this Master's thesis I set out to discover what needs to be considered in order to create a usable and funny Finnish translation of the English game *Cards against Humanity*. My aim was to translate the game and have the two defining features, usability and funniness, tested with tools provided by UCT and other translation theories. *Usability* in my thesis was a combination of two key concepts of UCT, namely *usability*, described by Suojanen et al. as “the ease with which users can use a product to achieve their goals”, and of *user-experience*, meaning “a holistic concept encompassing issues such as aesthetics, fun and pleasure” (2015: 2–3). *Fun* denoted laughter and other similar positive physical reactions.

The tools that I used to create and measure these two features were multifold. To create and maximize usability and fun in the translation I followed the three rules introduced in Chapter 2.2.2 and used methods such as *categorization* of the cards, *audience design* with *personas*, *heuristic evaluation*, *linguistic analysis*, *register breaking*, *benign violation*, and *allusion classification*. To measure usability and fun, I used such methods as *heuristic analysis* and *usability testing*. Usability testing was conducted with a *survey*, that consisted of test plays and questionnaire interviews. The data from the survey was collected and analyzed with quantitative and qualitative methods such as *semantic differential scales* and *thematic analysis*, as well as with *heuristic evaluation*.

I had hypothesized that the more I focus on the users and on the science of translation, the better the game will be. My findings support the hypothesis: the post-mortem of all results and their heuristic evaluation yielded overall positive results, which indicates that my efforts in focusing on users and relying on previous studies were beneficial. Most notably, on those occasions when I consciously veered from my theoretical frameworks and translated onto certain cards words and structures that I had estimated less frequent in the target culture and amongst the target audience, the game received negative feedback. This finding indicates that focusing on users and previous research does influence translation quality positively.

The research had its weaknesses: in the survey the questions about interests and education/professions could have been formulated differently, and offensiveness and disgust questions designed in more detail. I made the mistake of not checking the questionnaires before beginning analysis – I could have learned from the first test situations what was wrong with the questions and helped the next participants to understand the questions. On one hand, had I followed the UCT practice more closely and conducted a pilot study and iterated the process I could have possibly avoided the biggest translation problems there were; the small number and size of cards; the culture bumps; and structural interference of cards not sometimes matching each other. On second hand, the biggest problem from my point of view was that the research project was already quite extensive for a Master's thesis, for instance the number of methods alone was high, and a less thorough literary review would have sufficed.

Despite these weaknesses the translation reached its goals of being usable and funny, with the study saying it did so adequately or well. I set out to make a game that would be enjoyable for the audience to use in their own language and with their own cultural references, and according to the findings, I did. The translation's humor seems to have achieved, as Chiaro stated, "an adequate degree of equivalence" ((2010: 8) see Chapter 3.2.2). To give a short answer to my research question "what needs to be considered in order to translate a usable and funny Finnish version of *Cards against Humanity*?" I quote Suojanen et al.: "know thy users" (2015: 30). This, I feel, summarizes all my rules – categorization, remembering the end user, and utilize theories – because without the user there would be little reason to translate anything.

Further research could be conducted by comparing translations made with UCT model of translation process and ones made without to see the degree of variation between usability and user experience. It would also be interesting to see a study that pursues to answer the question why other people know things that other, seemingly similar people, do not. CAH could be further studied with utilizing the benign moral violation theory and selecting a diverse participant pool, to see how offensive the game truly is.

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## Appendix. Questionnaire

## KYSELYLOMAKE

Tämä koetilanne on osa käännöstieteen alan Pro Gradu -tutkielmaani. Tutkielman tavoite on selvittää, mitä asioita tulee ottaa huomioon, kun suomentaa Cards against Humanity -pelin.

Lomakkeen ensimmäisessä osiossa kysytään taustatietojasi. Nämä tiedot tulevat esiintymään tutkielmassa vain hajautettuina siten, ettei niitä voi yhdistää keneenkään yhteen ihmiseen. Vastauslomakkeita ei kopioida tai tallenneta sähköiseen muotoon, ja ne hävitetään tutkielman julkaisun jälkeen.

Muissa osissa kysytään pelin teknisestä ja kielellisestä toteutuksesta, sekä sisällön toimivuudesta. Näitä kysymyksiä on yhteensä 14. Lopussa saat antaa vapaamuotoista palautetta. Vastaathan jokaiseen kysymykseen, kiitos!

## TAUSTATIEDOT

Sukupuoli \_\_\_\_\_

Ikä \_\_\_\_\_

Ammatti/opintoala \_\_\_\_\_

Äidinkieli \_\_\_\_\_

Oletko pelannut Cards against Humanity -peliä aiemmin? \_\_\_\_\_

Mitä seuraavista medioista käytät useimmin (~ joka viikko)? Ympyröi sopivimmat.

Kirjat	Lehdet	Elokuvat	Radio	Pelit	Musiikki	Teatteri	Sosiaalinen media
--------	--------	----------	-------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Mihin seuraavista aihealueista useimmin käyttämäsi mediat liittyvät? Ympyröi sopivimmat.

fiktio	humori	filosofia	psykologia	uskonto	yhteiskunta	maantiede
historia	tekniikka	kotitalous	käsityöt	taiteet	liikunta	luonnontieteet

## KYSYMYKSET

Vastaa kysymyksiin joko rastimalla sopivin vastaus asteikolta 1–5 tai omin sanoin, jollei toisin neuvota.

## PELIN SÄÄNNÖT

**1** Arvioi sääntöjen *käytettävyys* (esim. fontti, fontin koko) ja *ymmärrettävyys* (esim. ymmärsitkö heti lukemasi vai jouduitko kertaamaan tekstejä).

a) Sääntöjen käytettävyys:

1 Huono		2 Vähän huono		3 Neutraali		4 Vähän hyvä		5 Hyvä
---------	--	---------------	--	-------------	--	--------------	--	--------

b) Sääntöjen ymmärrettävyys:

1 Huono		2 Vähän huono		3 Neutraali		4 Vähän hyvä		5 Hyvä
---------	--	---------------	--	-------------	--	--------------	--	--------

## KORTIT: TEKSTI

**2** Arvioi korttien *käytettävyys* (esim. fontti, fontin koko, korttien koko) ja *ymmärrettävyys* (esim. ymmärsitkö heti lukemasi vai jouduitko kertaamaan tekstejä).

a) Korttien käytettävyys:

1 Huono		2 Vähän huono		3 Neutraali		4 Vähän hyvä		5 Hyvä
---------	--	---------------	--	-------------	--	--------------	--	--------

b) Korttien ymmärrettävyys:

1 Huono		2 Vähän huono		3 Neutraali		4 Vähän hyvä		5 Hyvä
---------	--	---------------	--	-------------	--	--------------	--	--------

**3** Arvioi korttien *kieltä* (esim. sujuvuus, oikeaoppisuus, tuttuus).

a) Olivatko mustien ja valkoisten korttien yhdessä muodostamat lauseet ja virkkeet kielikorvasi mukaan ”oikein”? Arvioi, kuinka usein yhdistelmät olivat toimivia.

1 Ei koskaan		2 Harvoin		3 Puolet ajasta		4 Yleensä		5 Aina
--------------	--	-----------	--	-----------------	--	-----------	--	--------

b) Olivatko korttien sanavalinnat ja rakenteet sinun suuhusi sopivia? Arvioi, kuinka luontevaa kieli oli.

1 Ei ollenkaan luontevaa | 2 Vähän luontevaa | 3 Ei luontevaa eikä epäluontevaa | 4 Melko luontevaa | 5 Luontevaa

c) Oliko korteissa sellaisia sanoja, ihmisiä tai muita asioita, jotka olivat sinulle vieraita? Anna esimerkkejä sanoista tai ilmauksista, joiden merkityksiä et tiennyt.

#### KORTIT: HUUMORI

**4** Arvioi pelin *hauskuutta*.

a) Oliko peli mielestäsi hauska (nauroitko, hymyilitkö tai koitko muun positiivisen, fyysisen reaktion korttien takia)?

1 Ei-hauska | 2 Vähän ei-hauska | 3 Neutraali | 4 Vähän hauska | 5 Hauska

b) Mikä oli, tai ei ollut, hauskaa?

**5** Arvioi pelin *loukkaavuutta*.

a) Oliko korteissa sellaisia sanoja tai ilmiötä, jotka olivat omien moraalikäsittejesi vastaisia? Arvioi, kuinka suuri osa pelistä oli moraalisesti ”väärin”.

1 Mikään ei ollut väärin | 2 Pieni osa oli väärin | 3 Noin puolet oli väärin | 4 Iso osa oli väärin | 5 Kaikki oli väärin

b) Oliko korteissa sellaisia sanoja tai ilmiöitä, jotka olivat mielestäsi kuvottavia? Arvioi, kuinka suuri osa pelistä oli kuvottavaa.

1 Mikään ei ollut kuvottavaa		2 Pieni osa oli kuvottavaa		3 Noin puolet oli kuvottavaa		4 Iso osa oli kuvottavaa		5 Kaikki oli kuvottavaa
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c) Oliko jokin korteissa esiintyvä teema sinulle henkilökohtaisesti niin arka, että se vähensi koko pelin tai yksittäisen pelitilanteen hauskuutta?

Kyllä		Ei		Ei vastausta
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#### KOKONAISUUS

**6** Minkä *arvosanan* annat pelille asteikolla 1–10?

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10
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**7** *Muuta* kommentoitavaa?

**KIITOS OSALLISTUMISESTA!**