

## A force-dynamic account of the Finnish verbs of REMAINING: when staying can involve a shift in force dynamics

Gäidig Dubois  
University of Helsinki, Sorbonne University  
gaidig.dubois@helsinki.fi

Keywords: force dynamics, remaining, (non-)motion, aspect, polysemy

This paper presents a force dynamic account of the Finnish verbs of REMAINING, following the theory developed by Talmy (1988, 2000). According to Talmy (2000: 410–411), force dynamics, as one of the fundamental categories that language uses to structure and organize meaning, is most directly evident in grammar – however, it also plays a prominent role in structuring lexicalization patterns for open-class lexical items. For instance, the verbs *stay* and *remain* in English (along with the verbs *leave*, *hold* and *keep*) are prominent lexical verbs that manifest strong force dynamics (ibid., p. 426–428). The same observation can be extended to the Finnish verbs of REMAINING.

Finnish traditionally distinguishes between two verbs of REMAINING, i.e. denoting in their most basic sense the continuation of a spatial or more abstract relationship: 1) the verb *pysyä* ('to remain, stay'), which governs a locative argument in a stative case (*Kai pysyi kotona* 'Kai stayed [at] home'), and 2) its near-synonym *jäädä* ('to remain, stay'), requiring its locative argument to be marked with a directional local case, implicating motion (or change) towards something (*Kai jäi kotiin* 'Kai stayed [into] home'). The motion-orientedness of *jäädä* and more specifically the contradiction of non-motion with (a path of) motion is quite idiosyncratic and can fundamentally be linked to the verb's aspectuality. Unlike the verbs of REMAINING in English, aspect is indeed where the fundamental distinction between *jäädä* and *pysyä* operates: *pysyä* is durative and unbounded; *jäädä* is punctual and bounded.

Force dynamics has great explanatory power for analyzing this aspectual distinction and other semantic features of the Finnish constructions of REMAINING. In the two examples above, the Agonist, appearing as subject, has a force tendency toward rest, while the Antagonist (left implicit) has a tendency toward action. In this force-dynamic interaction, the Agonist is stronger and the Antagonist can only hinder the Agonist without blocking it, resulting in the subject staying where he already was. To capture the aspectual contrast between the two verbs, I rely on the distinction that Talmy makes between a *steady-state force-dynamic pattern* and a *shifting force-dynamic pattern*. The latter, adding the factor of change through time, is useful for describing the aspectuality of the punctual and motion-oriented verb *jäädä*, while the earlier applies quite accurately to the stative verb *pysyä*. The originality of applying this distinction to the Finnish verbs of REMAINING, however, lies in that the force-dynamic shift occurring with *jäädä* in its continuative meaning, unlike Talmy's analyzed examples, involves a change that is invisible to the physical world.

The present analysis is in line with what has been put forward by Huumo (2007: 94–95), who suggests that "sentences with *jäädä* designate only a punctual force-dynamic interaction between the alternative scenarios of leaving and not leaving". This paper thus expands Huumo's hypothesis by providing a systematic analysis of the different force-dynamic patterns featured by the Finnish verbs of REMAINING and their implications for the verbs' semantics. It is based on naturally occurring written Finnish collected from the Finnish TenTen corpus.

Describing the Finnish verbs of REMAINING in terms of steady-state and shifting force-dynamic patterns is powerful as: a) it corroborates previous analyses of the verbs' image schemas (Author), b) it accounts for the polysemy of *jäädä*, which exhibits, besides its continuative meaning, a change-of-state one (*Kai jäi työttömäksi* 'Kai became unemployed (lit. 'remained [into the state of being] unemployed)') and an adversative one (*Teksti jäi lyhyeksi* 'The text remained somewhat short (lit. 'remained [into the state of being] short)') and c) it helps to describe e.g. variation between voluntary and involuntary remaining (*I stayed home for a nice and cozy evening* vs. *I remained stuck at home*). The verbs of REMAINING at a general semantic level are particularly relevant to the theory of force dynamics in that they crystallize several crucial aspects of it.

### References

- Huumo, Tuomas (2007). Force dynamics, fictive dynamicity and the Finnish verbs of 'remaining', in *Folia Linguistica* 41 (1–2), 73–98.
- Talmy, Leonard (1988). Force dynamics in language and cognition, in *Cognitive Science* 12, 49–100.
- Talmy, Leonard (2000). *Toward a cognitive semantics*. Volume I: *Concept structuring systems*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.