

On temporal factors motivating the use of Finnish directional locatives

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The present paper aims to clarify the semantics of the Finnish locatives, especially those that complement or modify the verb with a directional local case marking even though no apparent change of location is involved. In Finnish, verbs such as (a) *jäää* 'remain', *jättää* 'leave', and *unohtaa* 'forget, leave behind', and (b) *hakea* 'search', *etsiä* 'look for' and *löytää* 'find', typically take a directional locative where some languages prefer a non-directional one. Recent explanations for the fact (e.g., Fong 1997; Huumo 2006, 2007) seem to talk at cross-purposes, the reason for which may lie in the inaccurate rendering of some of the earlier explanations.

Dahl (1987: 150–154) sees the class of verbs in (a) to exemplify borderline cases between what are prototypically seen as location (e.g., *be situated*) and direction (e.g., *move*). The complement of the Finnish verb *jäää* is marked formally as direction (1) whereas in Russian the corresponding phrase is marked as location. As for the complements of the English *remain*, location and direction are not kept apart by any overt marking. (See the English and Russian counterparts of the example 1 below.)

Dahl (1987: 153) suggests that we may regard the complements of *remain*-type verbs as expressing either location or direction, depending on how we delineate direction. The directional locative in the illative in (1), *Lontooseen*, does not fit the usual definition for the semantic role GOAL, namely "the final point of a movement" as no apparent change of location is involved but rather "the point at which something is located as the result of what is said to take place in the sentence". Similarly for the class of verbs in (b), the directional locative in the elative in (2), *taskusta*, will not take on the definition "the initial point of a movement" for the semantic role SOURCE, better conveyed by "the point at which the object is situated at the beginning of what is said to take place in the sentence" (cf. Dahl 1987: 153, footnote 6; Rahkonen 1977: 43–44).

- (1) Hän jäi Lontooseen. (Dahl 1987: 152.)
He-NOM remain-PST.3SG London-ILL
'He remained in London (Russ. On ostalsja v Londone)'
- (2) Hän etsii avainta taskusta. (Dahl 1987: 153.)
(S)he-NOM look for-PRS.3SG key-PART pocket-ELA
'He is looking for the key in (his) pocket'

Dahl's (1987) temporally-oriented conception of directional locatives has been criticized by Fong (1997) and by Huumo (2006, 2007). Interestingly enough, Fong (1997: 20) claims that "Dahl's theory overgeneralizes" whereas Huumo (2007: 79) sees the problem in that "[the explanation] cannot be generalized to explain all kinds of inchoative or terminated events where a participant either is in the location before the event or remains there after the event, since in general the static [i.e., non-directional] cases are used in such sentences".

The reason Fong (1997: 20) gives for her claim of the putative overgeneralization of Dahl's theory is that "sometimes, goals are expressed by direct objects, in accusative or partitive case". Her examples are of the Finnish verbs *saavuttaa* 'reach' and *tavoitella* 'strive for'. She adds that *remain*- or *stay*-type verbs such as the Finnish *jäää* do not take goals in the accusative case. Fong's (1997) interpretation of Dahl (1987) suffers from the fact that the semantic role GOAL has also been used for PATIENT and THEME as well as for RECIPIENT. It is for this reason Blake (1994: 70) prefers the role DESTINATION to GOAL, or DIRECTION, the meaning of which is not transparent.¹

¹ Dahl (1987: 150–151, footnote 4) notes that he is "using the terms *location* and *direction* in a pre-theoretical way and *location* and *goal* for the corresponding notions in case grammar".

Huumo (2006: 47–48; 2007: 79) gives credit to Rahkonen (1977) for first putting forward an idea that temporal factors are involved in the use of a directional locative in lieu of a non-directional one in Finnish, even though the explicit argument for such factors was formulated by Dahl (1987). What Huumo does not give credit to, however, are the original arguments. I will first comment on Huumo's (2006, 2007) rendering of Rahkonen (1977), then of Dahl (1987), in light of the examples (3–5) below.

- (3) *Lapsi rakensi pöydälle tornin.* (Rahkonen 1977: 27.)
 child-NOM build-PST.3SG table-ALL tower-ACC
 'The child built a tower on the table'
- (4) *Kalle löysi taskustaan markan.* (Rahkonen 1977: 43.)
 Kalle-NOM find-PST.3SG pocket-ELA-3SG.PX mark-ACC
 'Kalle found a mark (coin) in his pocket'
- (5) *Liisa lopetti tanssin pöydällä.* (Huumo 2007: 79.)
 Liisa-NOM stop-PST.3SG dance-ACC table-ADE
 'Liisa stopped/finished (her) dance on the table'

In (3) the directional locative in the allative, *pöydälle*, would indicate that the referent of the object remains on the table after being completed, i.e., it continues its presence in the location after the actual event has ended whereas in (4) the locative in the elative, *taskustaan*, would indicate that the money was in the pocket before it was found, i.e., the entity in question was already in the location. (Huumo 2006: 47–48; 2007: 78–79.) Contrary to what Huumo thinks seems to be the case, Rahkonen does not claim that the tower in (3) remains on the table after being completed but where it is after being completed, and the mark coin in (4) is in Rahkonen's words not presupposed but implied in the pocket. (Rahkonen 1977: 28–29, 43; see also Hakulinen & Karlsson 1979: 207–208.)

The above comments also apply to Huumo's (2006, 2007) critique on Dahl (1987). In choosing to speak of events instead of verbs and their possible complements, Huumo clearly extends the domain of Dahl's (as well as Rahkonen's) original argument. The terminative aspect Huumo (2007: 79) refers to in (5) is irrelevant as Liisa's presence on the table is not the result of what is said to take place in the sentence, and we remain in the dark as to whether Liisa remained on the table after she finished her dance. It is clear that the semantic role of the adjunct *pöydällä* is not DESTINATION but LOCATION. Non-directional locatives in Finnish do not contain any implication on what happens to the referent in question after the actual event has ended (Rahkonen 1977: 28; Hakulinen & Karlsson 1979: 208).

I will discuss the expression of directionality of the Finnish locatives and will in this context argue for a semantic analysis which also elucidates dependency relations within the sentence.

References

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