

Talousmetsien Suomi / Commercial Forest Finland

Ecolinguistic studies of the Metsien Suomi / Forest Finland campaign

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Finnish forests in numbers

Forests in Finland	75% of the area of Finland
Commercial forests in Finland	Over 97 % of Finnish forests
Primeval forests	Less than 3 % of Finnish forests
Protected primary forests	Ca. 2,5 % of Finnish forests

Source: Natural Resources Institute of Finland (Luke)

Nykyisin metsäkeskustelussa näkee usein myös väitteen "Suomessa on metsää enemmän kuin koskaan". Tällöin yleensä tarkoitetaan metsän sijasta puustoa, esimerkiksi elävän puuston tilavuutta maassamme. [...] Sekä metsän että puuston määrästä keskustelemista mutkistaa se, että olemme ojittamalla muuttaneet miljoonia hehtaareita suota metsiksi. Näistä puhutaan yleisesti turvemaiden metsinä, vaikka rehellisempää voisi olla puhua vaikkapa kuivatulla suolla kasvavasta metsästä. (Panu Halme) <https://www.aka.fi/tietysti/kysy-tieteesta/vahenevatko-suomen-metsat/>

From Forest Words into Forest Action / Metsäsanoista metsätekoihin (SeedLING)

Kone Foundation In the Woods Initiative (Metsän Puolella) 2024 – 2027

(Maijala, Kuusalu, Krizsán, Peura, Kuusela + Laippala, Stibbe)

The project targets the long ongoing **commercialization of Finnish forests**, in order to invoke change towards more sustainable relationships to them.

- we study the ways **Finnish forest operators communicate** to the public about forest related topics
- we produce information about (possible) **alternative ways of language use** about forests in order to enable different (than commercialized) views on forests and an open social discussion about what forests mean in Finland

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Focus

- 1. Ideologies and values** in Metsien Suomi / Forest Finland, the **online communication campaign** of the mainstream forestry related institutions of Finland (*e.g. the Finnish Forest Foundation / Suomen Metsäsäätiö, the Finnish Forest Industries Federation / Metsäteollisuus Ry or the Finnish State-Owned Forestry Company / Metsähallitus*)
2. The current public opinion on forest related issues in Finland; the effects of various forest related discourses on the public opinion

Main methods

Ecolinguistic content analysis, ecocritical discourse analysis, systemic-functional multimodal discourse analysis (*meanings across semiotic modes*), Transitivity (*verbal semantics*) and Appraisal (*evaluative language*) analysis; corpus assisted discourse analysis, unassisted machine learning (*topic modelling*), quantitative and qualitative analyses of survey data

What is Metsien Suomi / Forest Finland?

TIESITKÖ TÄMÄN

AJANKOHTAISTA

MIKÄ ON METSIEN SUOMI?

UUTISKIRJE

MATERIAALIPANKKI

Forest Finland

It is a place for excursions, berry picking, hunting, walking your dog, a place to enjoy nature.

It is a workplace, a source of income and an investment in the future.

It is a treasure trove of diversity.

It produces sustainable solutions for our everyday lives.

It is the forest.

Forest Finland tells about all this

Forest Finland is the joint communication project of the Finnish forest sector, launched in May 2020. The campaign will awaken and raise peoples' interest and encourage discussion about the forests' and wood-based products role in everything we have in Finland.

Forest Finland talks about the sustainability of the use of the northern forests and about the solutions the sustainable use of them offers. The forest will be seen on TV and heard on the radio, in outdoor advertising and in social media.

The first WP

Studies

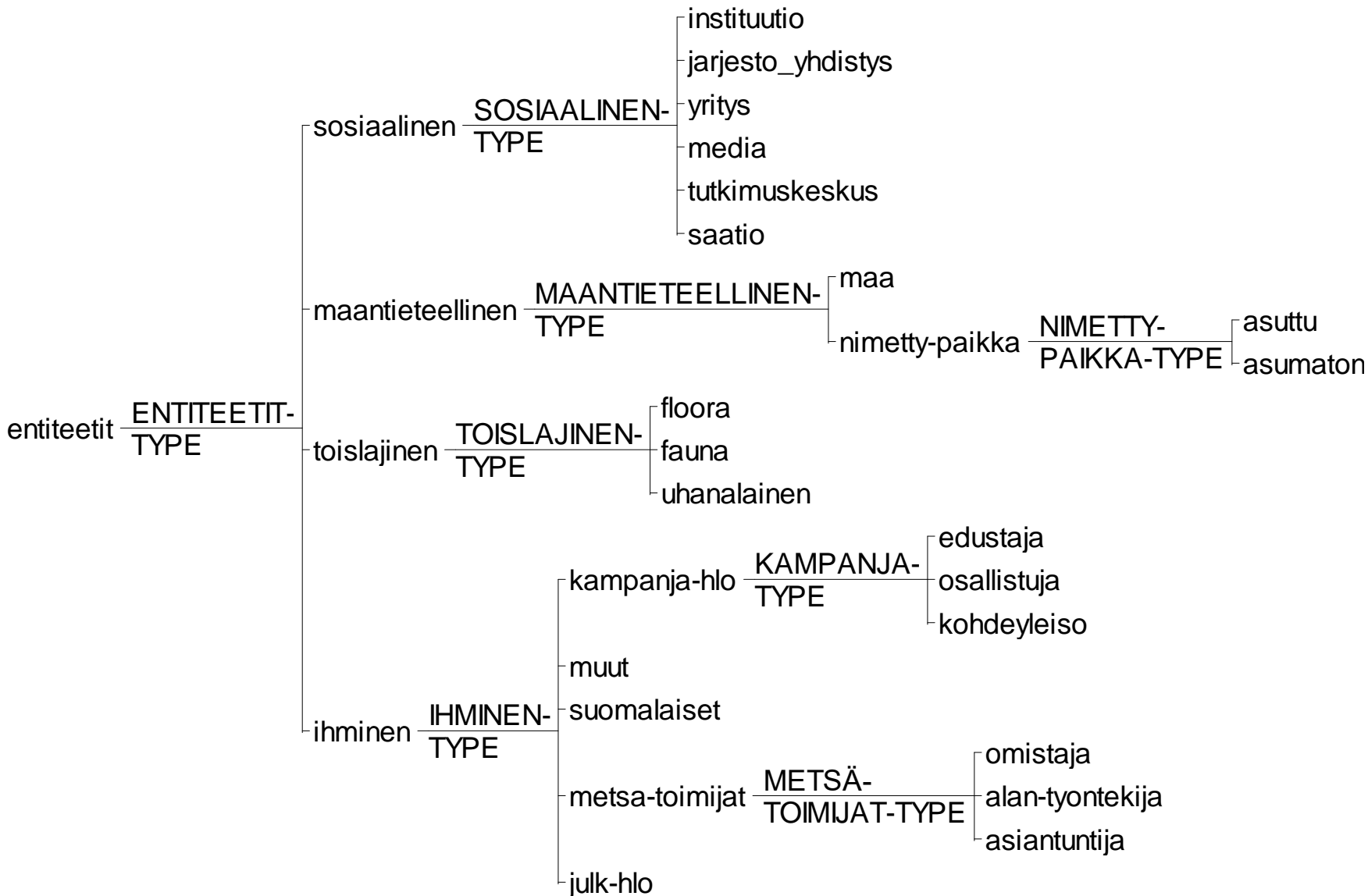
1. Representing the Finnish forests on the Metsien Suomi webistes: **ideologies and worldviews**.
2. Voicing and silencing forests related knowledge: The analysis of **values and positioning** on the Metsien Suomi websites.
3. The **Multimodal rhetoric of promotion** on the Metsien Suomi websites

Research questions

- What kinds of **ideologies and values are taken for granted** in the texts produced for the campaign
- What **other kinds of ideologies and values are present** in the data and in what ways
- How do the above **represent Finnish forests**, i.e. what kinds of **thinking and behavior patterns** towards the forests (including patterns towards forest animals) are **promoted**?
- What kinds of **changes in the communication** would promote **more sustainable relationships** between **humans, other-than-human beings** and the **forests** in Finland?

Findings / trends appearing during the preliminary work on the data

Entities / Telma Peura



- no uninhabited places (such as national parks or forest areas) mentioned in the data

- Helsinki is the most often mentioned place (16 hits out of 26); Europe is second (8 hits)

Forest types / Telma Peura

- Commercial forest (talousmetsä) is overrepresented compared to other types of forest

TOKENS	CASE NUMBERS
metsä (metsä, metsät, jne) NB Metsien-Suomi	271
talousmetsä (talousmetsien, talousmetsissä, jne.)	25
lähimetsä (lähimetsästä, lähimetsissä, jne.)	4
sekämetsä (sekämetsät)	2
suomalaismetsät	1
yksityysmetsien	1
kuusimetsän	1
kangasmetsän	1
kasvatusmetsästä	1
metsikön	1
suojelumetsistä	1

- Ancient forests (luonnonmetsä, ikimetsä, etc.) or other natural forests were absent

Positive self-image, creating interest and collective identity construction via P1

1) What 'we do': P1 verbal usage (without P1 pronouns)

- most 'actions' performed by Metsien Suomi (21 / 32 cases) - > what' we' do in the campaign
- most common verb: '*kerro(i)mme*' (10 cases) -> 'verbal process (sayer)', active role in (one directional) information exchange towards the audience; position of 'expertise'

***Kerromme** myös faktatietoa Suomen metsistä; **Kerromme**, millä kaikilla tavoilla monimuotoisuuden turvaaminen on osa metsäalan arkista...*

- Verbs with positive connotations are frequent: *yllätämme*, *tiedämme*, *onnistuimme*, *herätämme*, *kuulemme*, *valmistamme*

***Yllätämme** jälleen suomalaiset sillä, missä kaikessa metsä on meillä mukana; Ympäristöviranomaisten teettämistä uhanalaisarvioista **tiedämme**, että metsälajien uhanalaisuus on pysynyt pitkään ennallaan.*

2) Pronominalized P1 usage:

- 'me suomalaiset'; 'meillä Suomessa' frequent -> collective identities

***Me suomalaiset** ulkoilemme ja rentoudumme parhaiten metsässä; **Me suomalaiset** elämme metsässä ja metsästä. Metsien Suomi kertoo siitä, kuinka metsät ovat **meillä Suomessa** kaikessa mukana.*

A One-Slide Introduction to SFL

- Systemic-functional theory is built on a **systemic description of language functions** (what language does in communication and how)
- According to Halliday, there are **three main functions** of language:
 - 1) THE IDEATIONAL (META)FUNCTION**
 - > the way we use language to represent 'reality' (i.e. our experience of the world)
=> described via **Transitivity**
 - 2) THE INTERPERSONAL (META)FUNCTION**
 - > the way we use language to establish social relations (i.e. to interact)
=> described via **Mood and modality**
 - 3) THE TEXTUAL (META)FUNCTION**
 - > the way we use language to organize our message (i.e. to codify meanings of textual development)
=> described via **Theme and thematization**

The Theory of Transitivity

(Halliday & Matthiessen 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*)

There are **three components** of what Halliday calls a transitivity process:

- ◆ the **process** itself (realized by a verbal group)
- ◆ **participants** in the process (nominal groups)
- ◆ **circumstances** associated with the process (Adverbial group or prepositional phrase)

If there is **no complement**, there is **one participant**, and if there is **one complement**, there are **two participants**.

E.g.

<i>the girl</i>	<i>kicks</i>	<i>the ball</i>
Participant [1]	Process	Participant [2]

Process types

(Halliday & Matthiessen 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*)

1. **Material processes:** processes of doing. (Actor and a goal or a patient).
2. **Mental processes:** processes of sensing (perception, affection or cognition). Always a human / personified participant.
3. **Relational processes:** processes of being (being identical to something, being in a state or possessing something).
4. **Verbal processes:** processes of saying.
5. **Existential processes** mark when something exists or happens.
6. **Behavioral processes** denote physiological and psychological behavior (eg. breathing, smiling, etc)

Endangered species (uhanalainen): preliminary transitivity analysis (*i.e. who does what to whom?*)

Process type	Participant		brief explanation of the participant types
Material (doing)	goal (P2)	2	<i>participant affected by the action</i>
	recipient (P2)	3	<i>receiver (of goods / services)</i>
	attribute (P2)	1	<i>a quality attributed to an entity</i>
Relational (being, possessing, becoming)	carrier (P1)	4	<i>an entity having an attribute (eg., being in a state)</i>
Mental (perceiving, thinking, feeling)	phenomenon (P2)	1	<i>an entity felt, perceived or thought about</i>
verbal (information exchange)			
behavioral; existential			

- Jos suunnitellulta hakkuualueelta siis löytyy **uhanalaisia lajeja (goal)**, se ei välttämättä ole huono uutinen. Luonnonhoidon avulla **niidenkin selviämistä (recipient)** voi parantaa.
- Tiedetään, että useiden kovakuoriaislajien ja yksilöiden, myös joidenkin **uhanalaisten määrä (carrier)** nousee merkittävästi säästetyillä lahoppuilla avohakkuun jälkeen

What can be said / speculated at this point?

- **Anthropocentrism** apparent: e.g. definition of Forest Finland
- Various nonhuman **animals are present** (mostly as species)
- Representation of forests
 - > **commercial forest dominates** (the nature of the campaign dictates)
 - > but: **commercial forest** is constructed as 'the forest' = **natural state**
 - > the role and existence of **natural forests and primeval forests are erased**
- Constructing **positive image** for the campaign, creating **interest** and making **connection** to the audience via collective identities
- Endangered species are used for e.g. **positive framing of clearcutting**

Thank you!