

Mika Savola

**“NESTE’S STRATEGY IS GUIDED BY OUR PURPOSE TO
CREATE A HEALTHIER PLANET FOR OUR CHILDREN”**

Exploration of Conceptual Metaphors in Neste Annual
Report 2018 and Their Contribution to Neste's
Environmental Image

ABSTRACT

Mika Savola : "Neste's strategy is guided by our purpose to create a healthier planet for our children"
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Master's thesis

Tampere University

Master's Programme in English Language and Literature

January 2023

This study explores the use of conceptual metaphors in Neste Annual Report 2018. The purpose of the study is to learn how the use of conceptual metaphors contribute to Neste's environmental image in the context of corporate environmental communication.

Conceptual metaphors are analysed using conceptual metaphor theory as an analytical framework. The theory defines metaphor as understanding one domain of experience in terms of another domain of experience. For example, life is conventionally understood as a journey, which is reflected in expressions such as go forward, wander and milestone. The function of conceptual metaphor is to make abstract concepts easier to understand by conceptualizing them through more concrete and familiar concepts. Conceptual metaphors are not neutral representations of reality and can therefore influence how we understand abstract concepts. Conceptual metaphors have been recognized to have an important role in persuasive communication because they can be used to influence judgements in a way that is not easily noticed.

In order to learn how conceptual metaphors contributed to Neste's environmental image, relevant metaphorical expressions were first identified using a method that combined the use of intuition and the use of dictionaries. The identified metaphorical expressions were examined in order to find systematicity between metaphorical expressions and topics discussed in the report. If metaphorical expressions from a particular domain of experience were systematically used in reference to a particular topic related to the environment, the expressions were treated as linguistic realizations of a conceptual metaphor. For example, expressions related to journeys were consistently used to characterize progress in goal-oriented activities. These expressions were treated as linguistic realizations of the conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY.

15 metaphorical conceptualizations were examined more closely. The findings revealed that conceptual metaphors contributed to Neste's environmental image by portraying it as an environmentally responsible actor, a proactive and innovative developer of sustainable solutions and a company that effectively advances both local and global sustainability goals. Some metaphorical conceptualizations, especially the metaphor of creation, conveyed an unrealistic picture of Neste's capacity to improve the state of the environment. The report highlighted Neste as a company that is driven by environmental motives. This was found to conflict with the metaphorical portrayal of Neste as a global leader in renewable products. The leader metaphor entails that Neste's business in renewable products is primarily motivated by competitive success, not by the environmental cause.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, metaphor analysis, corporate environmental communication, environmental image

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Mika Savola : “Neste’s strategy is guided by our purpose to create a healthier planet for our children”
Exploration of Conceptual Metaphors in Neste Annual Report 2018 and Their Contribution to Neste's
Environmental Image
Pro gradu -tutkielma
Tampere University
Englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden maisteriohjelma
Tammikuu 2023

Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee metaforan käyttöä Nesteen vuoden 2018 vuosikertomuksessa. Tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaista yrityskuvaa ne rakentavat Nesteestä suhteessa ympäristöön.

Taustateoriana käytetään käsittemetaforateoriaa, jonka mukaan metafora on perimmältään ajatustason ilmiö. Käsittemetaforassa abstrakti käsite ymmärretään metaforisesti jonkin konkreettisemmän käsitteen kautta, minkä tarkoituksena on tehdä vaikeasti hahmotettavasta abstraktista käsitteestä helpommin ymmärrettävä. Esimerkki käsittemetaforasta on elämän ymmärtäminen matkantekona. Kielessä tämä ajatustason metafora ilmenee elämän järjestelmällisenä kuvaamisena matkantekoon liittyvillä ilmaisuilla kuten mennä eteenpäin, harhailla ja välietappi. Käsittemetaforat kuvaavat todellisuutta aina jostain näkökulmasta ja ne voivat näin ollen myös vaikuttaa siihen, kuinka ymmärrämme abstrakteja käsitteitä. Käsittemetaforilla onkin todettu olevan merkittävä rooli diskursseissa, joita käytetään vaikuttamistarkoituksessa, koska niillä voidaan vaikuttaa vastaanottajan näkemyksiin epäsuorasti.

Vuosikertomuksesta tunnistettiin metaforisia ilmaisuja, jotka käyttöyhteydessään liittyivät joko suoraan tai epäsuorasti johonkin ympäristöön liittyvään teemaan. Tunnistetut metaforiset ilmaisut luokiteltiin ryhmiin niiden merkitysten mukaan. Metaforisesti käytettyjä ilmaisuja olivat esimerkiksi matkaan ja sotaan liittyvät ilmaisut. Jos johonkin käsitteeseen liittyvien ilmaisujen havaittiin kuvaavan systemaattisesti jotain aihealuetta, ilmaisuja tarkasteltiin käsittemetaforan ilmentyminä. Esimerkiksi matkantekoon liittyviä metaforisia ilmaisuja käytettiin vuosikertomuksessa järjestelmällisesti kuvaamaan päämäärätietoista kestävään kehitykseen tähtäävää toimintaa. Tämän perusteella matkantekoon liittyviä metaforisia ilmaisuja tarkasteltiin käsittemetaforan PÄÄMÄÄRÄTIETOINEN TOIMINTA ON MATKA ilmentyminä.

Löydetyistä käsittemetaforista 15 valittiin lähempään tarkasteluun. Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että käsittemetaforat rakentavat kuvaa Nesteestä vastuullisena toimijana suhteessa ympäristöön, aktiivisena ja innovatiivisena kestävien ratkaisujen kehittäjänä, ja yhtiönä, joka edistyy tehokkaasti kestävään kehitykseen tähtäävässä toiminnassaan. Tutkimuksessa havaittiin myös, että jotkin metaforat, erityisesti luomismetafora, antoivat epärealistisen kuvan Nesteen kyvystä parantaa ympäristön tilaa. Vuosikertomuksessa korostetaan ympäristömotiivien ohjaavan Nesteen yritystoimintaa. Tämän havaittiin olevan ristiriidassa vuosikertomuksessa kätetyn kilpailumetaforan kanssa, jolla kuvattiin Nesteen suoritusta uusiutuvien tuotteiden liiketoiminnan alueella. Kilpailumetaforan mukaan Nestettä motivoi ensisijaisesti menestys suhteessa kilpailijoihin eikä ympäristö.

Avainsanat: käsittemetafora, metafora-analyysi, yritysten ympäristöviestintä, yrityskuva

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1 Introduction

Corporations have been facing increasing pressure to transform their businesses in an environmentally responsible manner (Jose & Lee, 2006, p. 307) and they are expected to be more transparent about their impact on the natural environment (White, 2016, p. 5). It has therefore become necessary for companies to start paying more attention to sustainability in order to prosper in the future (White, 2016, p. 5). Environmental reporting is an important channel for companies to address these concerns and to demonstrate that their businesses are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner (Brennan & Merkl-Davies, 2014, p. 606). Environmental reports can be regarded as a combination of reporting and promotional genres (Bhatia 2004, as cited in Mason & Mason 2012, 485–486). This means that besides serving as a medium for disclosing corporate environmental impacts (White, 2015, pp. 28–29), environmental reports also provide an opportunity to promote a positive corporate environmental image (Mason & Mason, 2012, p. 486). Reporting on corporate sustainability efforts can enhance corporate reputation, foster trust in the company (White, 2015, p. 26) and create economic opportunities (White, 2016, p. 17). The present study investigates Neste Annual Report 2018. The aim of the study is to explore how metaphorical language used in the report contributes to Neste's environmental image. Rhetorical aspects of environmental reports have been studied using various content and discourse analytical approaches (Jaworska, 2018, pp. 197–200) but metaphorical language has received relatively little scholarly attention. In order to explore how metaphor contributes to Neste's environmental image in the report, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What conceptual metaphors used in the report have a bearing on Neste's environmental image?
2. How do they contribute to Neste's environmental image in the context of corporate environmental communication?

Metaphorical language used in the report is analysed within the framework of conceptual

metaphor theory, originally proposed by Lakoff & Johnson (2003). It is a cognitive theory of metaphor, which views metaphor fundamentally as a matter of thought and metaphors in language as manifestations of the metaphorical nature of thought (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 6). Metaphor use often follow patterns (Maslen, 2017, p. 88). For example, the concept of money is systematically used to talk about time (e.g. “You're *wasting* my time”; “That flat tire *cost* me an hour”; “You're *running out* of time”) (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 7–8) and the concept of war to talk about arguments (e.g. “Your claims are *indefensible*”; “His criticisms were *right on target*”; “I *demolished* his argument”) (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 4). According to conceptual metaphor theory, we use particular concepts in order to talk about other concepts because “most concepts are partially understood in terms of other concepts” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 56). Consequently, we speak of time in terms of money because we partially understand time in terms of money and we speak of arguments in terms of war because we use the concept of war to understand arguments.

“[U]nderstanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 5) is called *conceptual metaphor*. Understanding arguments in terms of war is an example of a conceptual metaphor and “the metaphorical linguistic expressions” *indefensible*, *right on target* and *demolish* are linguistic manifestations of this conceptual metaphor (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7).

Conceptual metaphors help us understand abstract concepts by conceptualizing them through more concrete and familiar concepts (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7). They are not neutral representations of reality (Deignan, 2005, p. 126) and they can therefore also influence how we understand abstract concepts (Deignan, 2010, p. 45). It is often possible to use different conceptual metaphors to understand “same abstract concepts” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 531). For example, the experience “with cancer can be described as a ‘fight’ or a ‘journey’” (Semino et al., 2016, 625–626). When cancer is understood as a fight, it becomes “an enemy or aggressor”, while the journey metaphor conceives of cancer as “a road to travel on” (Semino et al., 2016, p. 626). They reflect two different kind of understandings of cancer, but they can also reinforce a particular kind of

understanding of the illness (Semino et al., 2016, p. 626). Metaphorical expressions such as *indefensible*, *demolished*, *journey* and *fight* in the above examples are common everyday expressions known as *conventional metaphors*. Conventional metaphors have been recognized to have an important role in persuasive communication (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2004; Goatly, 2007; Deignan, 2005; Lakoff & Turner, 1989). Everyday reasoning depends greatly on unconscious use of conventionalized metaphors, which can be exploited in persuasive communication (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 63).

Milne et al. (2006) studied the metaphorical construction of sustainability as a journey in corporate environmental communication. They found that the journey metaphor often lacked the element of destination. They concluded that the lack of destination allows companies to communicate that they are making progress in sustainability, while at the same time hiding how far from attaining sustainability they still are (Milne et al., 2006). Ihlen & Roper (2009) studied sustainability communication in non-financial reports of the world's largest corporations. They found that many corporations claim that sustainability is already an established part of their businesses, implying that their “‘journey’ towards sustainability” has already been completed (Ihlen & Roper, 2009, p. 42). They also found that the metaphor of balance was frequently employed “to describe the relationship between the environment and the socio-economic system” and “as an indirect way of defining and operationalizing sustainability and sustainable development” (Ihlen & Roper, 2009, p. 48). They note that the positive connotations attached to the concept of balance makes it more likely that the message will not be questioned (Ihlen & Roper, 2009, p. 48). Yu (2020) studied CRS reports by Chinese, US and Italian companies and investigated how metaphor was used in them to conceptualize the relationship between companies and the environment. Sun et al. (2018) studied metaphor use in CSR reports of American and Chinese companies. The study focused on genre-specific metaphors and how they were used as part of corporate image building strategy. They found that both American and Chinese companies were presented as environmentally responsible through the use of war metaphor. Kapranov (2017) examined how CSR reports of two major fossil fuel

companies ExxonMobil and BHP Billiton constructed their relationship with climate change using conceptual metaphors (Kapranov, 90). Jaworska (2018) investigated climate change discourse “produced by major oil companies” between 2000 and 2013 (Jaworska, 2018, p. 194). As part of the investigation, she analysed the use of the metaphorical expressions *tackle*, *combat* and *fight*. Companies tended to use these expressions to communicate the importance of climate action but in most cases without indicating that they themselves would *tackle*, *combat* or *fight* climate change.

The studies discussed above have contributed to the understanding of the role of metaphor in specific aspects of corporate environmental communication. Studies that would investigate metaphor use in corporate environmental reporting in a more systematic and comprehensive manner, however, appear to be lacking. The limited number of existing studies on corporate environmental reporting and their narrow thematic focus means that there remains much to be explored on the topic. The present study sets out to explore metaphors used in Neste's report more widely in order to learn what metaphorical conceptualizations participate in the construction of Neste's environmental image and how they contribute to it in the context of corporate environmental communication. In order to achieve this aim, metaphorical expressions that have contextual relevance to Neste's environmental image are identified in the report using a method that combines the use of intuition and the use of dictionaries. The identified metaphorical expressions are examined in order to find systematic connections between metaphorical expressions and topics they refer to. Systematic connections that can be identified between metaphorical expressions and topics they refer to are analysed as manifestations of conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphor theory is then used as an analytical tool to explore how conceptual metaphors contribute to Neste's environmental image. The contribution of conceptual metaphors to Neste's environmental image is considered both in the particular contexts in which they are used in the report and in the wider context of corporate environmental communication.

The study is structured as follows. Chapter 2 discusses conceptual metaphor theory, which

provides the theoretical basis for the study. Chapter 3 presents the material investigated in the study and discusses the steps involved in the analytical procedure. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of selected conceptual metaphors and discusses their role in the construction of Neste's environmental image. Chapter 5 answers the research questions by summarizing the most important findings of the study. Finally, chapter 6 considers the significance of the study, discusses the limitations and proposes topics for future studies.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework employed in the study. Section 2.1 discusses the linguistic aspects of metaphor and how metaphors are normally used in discourse. Section 2.2 provides an overview of conceptual metaphor theory and introduces the concept of *conceptual metaphor*. Section 2.3 discusses the basis of conceptual metaphors in human experience. Section 2.4 considers different ways in which conceptual metaphors can influence and can be used to influence our understanding of abstract concepts. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 discuss ontological and orientational metaphors, respectively. Finally, section 2.7 reviews some of the main criticisms presented against conceptual metaphor theory.

2.1 Metaphor

Montgomery et al. (2013) defines metaphor as follows: "Metaphor occurs when a word or phrase in one semantic field is transferred into another semantic field, in order to talk about one thing as if it were a quite different thing" (p. 125). In the sentence "Achilles is a lion" (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 293), the word *lion* is a metaphor because it belongs to the semantic field of animals but used to describe a person. Metaphor is an implicit comparison of two entities (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 293). This differentiates metaphor from similes, which are explicit comparisons of two entities (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 293). Rephrased as a similitude, "Achilles is a lion" would become "Achilles is brave, like a lion" (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 293).

I.A Richards identified three separate components involved in metaphor (Montgomery et al.,

2013, pp. 128–129). He termed the metaphorical expression as *vehicle*, the entity the metaphorical expression refers to as *tenor*, and the common between vehicle and tenor as *ground* (Montgomery et al., 2013, pp. 128–129). In “Achilles is a lion” *lion* is the vehicle, *Achilles* is the tenor and the common ground between the two “the lion's qualities of courage and ferocity” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 293).

The sentence “Achilles is a lion” represents the kind of metaphor example that is typically found in traditional metaphor literature (Cameron, 1999, p. 15). It serves as a practical example for introducing different parts of metaphor but it does not represent how metaphors normally occur in language (Cameron, 1999, p. 15). In traditional metaphor examples, the topic and the vehicle are both nominal, and they both usually appear in the same clause or phrase (as in *Achilles is a lion*) (Cameron, 1999, p. 15). In natural language, the topic and the vehicle terms are not restricted within the boundaries of “the phrase and clause” and they can occur in various syntactic combinations (Cameron, 1999, p. 15). When both the vehicle and the topic are present in the same clause, the metaphor is called an *explicit metaphor* (Cameron, 1999, p. 15). When they are not present in the same clause, the metaphor is called an *implicit metaphor* (Steen, 1999, p. 84). It is also possible that the topic is not be expressed at all (Steen, 1999, p. 88), in which case it has to be inferred from contextual clues (Steen, 1999, p. 90). In “our *journey* of creating a healthier planet for our children” (Neste, 2018, p. 3), *journey* is an implicit metaphor because the topic it refers to, a “long term purposeful” activity (Lakoff, 1993, p. 220), is not mentioned in the text at all.

Another aspect of metaphor that traditional metaphor examples fail to capture is that metaphors often occur in systematic networks of “related metaphors” (Cameron, 1999, p. 16). In natural language, related vehicle terms may be used in reference to different aspects of the same topic to form “an extended metaphor” (Cameron, 1999, p. 16). For example, vehicle terms related to fire are used to describe different aspects of anger in a systematic way (e.g. “That *kindled* my ire”; “Those were *inflammatory* remarks,” and “She was *burning* with anger”) (Kövecses, 2017, pp. 14–15). Conceptual metaphor theory considers systematic patterns in metaphor use as evidence that

metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but a reflection of how people experience the world (Grady, 2007, p. 192). The next section will take a closer look at the cognitive dimension of metaphor.

2.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The publication of *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) laid the foundation for a highly influential theory of metaphor known as conceptual metaphor theory (Kövecses, 2017, p. 13). The theory challenged the traditional understanding of metaphor as merely a linguistic phenomenon (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. x) arguing “that thought itself is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 286). Traditionally, metaphor is regarded an ornamental device that is used in order to enhance the style of text (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 25), and only concerns “poetic and literary language” and rhetorical communication (Ng, 2018, p. 289). In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff & Johnson demonstrate that metaphor is not restricted to poetic and rhetorical language, but is a pervasive feature of everyday language (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 3). “[M]any of the most basic concepts” such as “time, quantity, state, change, action” etc. are understood metaphorically (Lakoff, 1993, p. 212) and often it is not even possible to speak about abstract topics without recourse to metaphor (Goatly, 2007, p. 14). The concept of time, for instance, is conventionally understood metaphorically as movement in space (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 290):

Christmas is *approaching*

We're *moving towards* Christmas

Christmas is not very *far away*

Metaphors We Live By made everyday language a common object of research in metaphor studies (Deignan, 2010, p. 47). Because metaphor is pervasive in language, the value of metaphor analysis extends to all sorts of discourses, not just literary and poetic language (Ng, 2007, p. 289). According to Lakoff & Johnson (2003), the pervasiveness of metaphor in language reflects the properties of “the human conceptual system,” which they argue “is metaphorically structured and defined” (p. 6).

They base their argument principally on linguistic evidence (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 4). In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff & Johnson demonstrate how individual metaphorical expressions are often part of larger metaphorical patterns. Consider the following sentences:

Your claims are *indefensible*.

He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.

His criticisms were *right on target*. I *demolished* his argument.

I've never *won* an argument with him.

You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*

If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*.

He *shot down* all of my arguments.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 4)

The italicized expressions above are not “random clichés” existing independently of each other (Gibbs, 1999, p. 34) but “are systematically motivated . . . by” the concept of war (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 9). Lakoff & Johnson argue that arguments are talked about in terms of war because that is how people understand arguments and how they act when engaging in arguments (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 5). “[U]nderstanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 5) is called *conceptual metaphor*. A Conceptual metaphor consists of two domains of experience, the *source domain* and the *target domain*, and is conventionally indicated by the formula CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 4). The formula indicates that CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A (the target domain) is understood in terms of CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B (the source domain) (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 4). Benczes & Kövecses (2010) define conceptual domain as “any coherent organization of experience” (p. 4). In the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, we utilize our coherently organized knowledge of wars in order to understand arguments (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 4). The target domain is usually more abstract, while the source domain is usually more concrete and relates to our everyday experiences

(Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7). The clear structure of concrete source concepts and the detailed knowledge we have of them makes it easier to understand abstract target concepts (Ng, 2018, p. 289). Because a concrete source concept is used in understanding an abstract concept and not vice versa, conceptual metaphors are usually unidirectional (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7). It is common to “talk about the illness of society” but not about “the society of illness” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 27). Conceptual metaphors, which occur in thought, are distinct phenomena from *metaphorical linguistic expressions*, which are linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7). In the above examples, metaphorical expressions *indefensible*, *attacked every weak point*, and *right on target* are linguistic realizations of the underlying conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. Patterns in the use of metaphorical expressions, such as war-related expressions above, are the principal means by which conceptual metaphors are identified (Deignan, 2010, p. 52).

Understanding one domain of experience in terms of another domain of experience is realized “as a set of systematic **correspondences** between the source and the target” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7), more technically known as “cross-domain mappings” (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203). The following figure lays out the correspondences between the domain of WAR and the domain of ARGUMENT, which realize the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR:

Source: WAR		Target: ARGUMENT
military conflict	→	verbal conflict
combat	→	exchange of utterances
military strategies	→	discourse strategies
actions: attack, defend	→	actions: express a view, express an opposite view
participants: at least two enemies	→	participants: discussants aligned with two views

results: win, loss	→	results: presenting more/less convincing points
tools: weapons	→	tool: expressions addressing specific aspects of the dispute

(Dancygier, 2017, p. 30)

The mappings listed above are formed between “constituent conceptual elements” of the source domain WAR and their corresponding “constituent elements” of the target domain ARGUMENT (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7). These correspondences occur in thought and they are based on structural similarities that can be established between the two domains (Steen, 2017, p. 77).

Mapping the structure of the concept of war onto the concept of argument makes it possible to refer to arguments with a specific set of war-related metaphorical expressions (Dancygier, 2017, p. 30). For example, the mapping between the source domain element 'actions: attack, defend' and the target domain element 'actions: express a view, express an opposite view' makes it possible to refer to a counterargument as an *attack*. The mapping between 'tools: weapons' and 'tool: expressions addressing specific aspects of the dispute' makes it possible to say that someone's argument is *demolished* (see p. 8).

2.3 The Experiential Basis of Conceptual Metaphors

The cognitive approach to metaphor, introduced in *Metaphors We Live By* needs to be understood against the rise of cognitive science in the 1970s (Steen, 2013, p. 30). A basic cognitive linguistic assumption is that “certain fundamental properties” of the human mind are manifest in language (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 5). In cognitive linguistic view, experience is “embodied,” which refers to the idea that “the unique nature of our physical bodies” influences the way in which we experience reality (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 45). Language is viewed as reflecting human experience and therefore language cannot be treated as a separate entity from “human experience” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 44). Metaphors represent an especially clear example of how properties of human

cognition are reflected in language (Grady, 2007, p. 188).

According to the traditional view, metaphorical expressions are motivated by similarity that can be observed between the two entities that are compared to each other (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 77). The similarity account can explain cases such as why it is possible to refer to someone's cheeks as *roses*, but not as *sky* (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 78), but it cannot explain expressions such as “digesting ideas” because no objective similarity exists between “digesting ideas” and “digesting food” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 79). The explanation based on similarity is not adequate because metaphorical language is often not based on similarity (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 79). Lakoff & Johnson (2003, pp. 244–245) maintain that most of the time metaphors are not motivated by similarity but rather by experience. Experiential motivation for metaphors derive from “the nature of our bodies, our interactions in the physical environment, and our social and cultural practices” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 247), which all represent different facets of human experience.

Experiential correlations that underlie conceptual metaphors are formed through repeated exposure to situations in which one event is accompanied by another event (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 79). The conceptual metaphor MORE IS UP is an often cited example of a metaphor that is based on direct correlation in experience. We frequently witness situations in which an increase in the amount of a substance is accompanied by a visible rise of its level, such as when fluid is added in a container (Lakoff, 1993, p. 240). Repeated exposure to such experiences results in the two events becoming correlated in our experience, and explains why MORE is conceptualized metaphorically as UP and LESS as DOWN (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 80). The metaphor MORE IS UP is manifest in metaphorical expressions such as “prices *rose*; his income went *down*; unemployment is *up*; exports are *down*” (Lakoff, 1993, p. 240).

Another source for conceptual metaphors which are based on direct experiential correlation, is our experiences of bodily functions (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, pp. 81–82). For example, the experience of anger is often accompanied by the sensation of increased body temperature (Benczes

& Kövecses, 2010, p. 81). The experiential correlation between anger and heat is manifest in expressions such as “*boil with anger*”, “*be seething*” and “*inflammatory remarks*”, which are instances of the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 81).

In other instances, the experiential correlation is less direct (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 80). The structural metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, as an instance, is not interpretable as a direct experiential correlation between the concepts of journey and life (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 81). LIFE IS A JOURNEY is a specific instance of a more generic level metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, which is realized by expressions such as “reaching one’s goals,” “working toward a solution” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 81). Unlike the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, the conceptual metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS is based on direct correlation in experience (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 81). The metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS is based on our recurrent experiences of having to go physically to different destinations in order to achieve purposeful goals involved in everyday life (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 81). Also life involves purposeful goals (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, pp. 80–81). Purposeful goals involved in life connects life experientially to journeys, because also journeys are done “in order to reach a predetermined destination” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, pp. 80–81). As Lakoff & Turner (1989) put it “[w]hen we think of life as purposeful, we think of it as having destinations and paths towards those destinations, which makes life a journey” (p. 3). Experiential motivation explains why certain source concepts and not others are used in understanding target concepts (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 79). The fact that the choice of a source concept is based on experience makes conceptual metaphors seem natural (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 79). However, conceptual metaphors are never neutral representations of reality (Deignan, 2005, p. 126), and they can therefore influence our understanding of abstract target concepts (Deignan, 2010, p. 45). Sections 2.4.1 through 2.4.4 discuss four different aspects of conceptual metaphors that can influence and can be used to influence our understanding of abstract concepts: the structure of source concepts, highlighting and

hiding, metaphorical entailments and conventionality of metaphor.

2.4 Metaphorical Meanings and Representations

2.4.1 Structural Metaphors

Lakoff & Johnson (2003) distinguish between three main types of conceptual metaphors: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors and ontological metaphors. This section discusses structural metaphors. Orientational and ontological metaphors are discussed in sections 2.5 and 2.6, respectively. Structural metaphors structure concepts in terms of other concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 14). Their function is to make the target domain comprehensible through the knowledge we have of concrete source concepts (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 37). The conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is an example of a structural metaphor. The figure on pages 9–10 illustrates how the concept of war provides structure to the concept of argument by mapping its “constituent conceptual elements” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 7) onto the concept of argument. The structure that an abstract target concept receives from a concrete source concept “is not there independent of metaphor” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 64) and the structure of a concrete source concept can therefore partly determine how we understand an abstract target concept (Deignan, 2010, p. 45). As an example, in the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, the concept of journey structures our understanding of the concept of life. Journeys take place along a path, but the concept of LIFE does not have an element that would correspond to the journey domain element 'path' (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 63). When LIFE is conceptualized as a JOURNEY, the source element 'path' is mapped “into the domain of life,” which creates a new element “COURSE OF LIFE” in our understanding of life (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 63). This makes it possible to consider life events as if they were separate “points of a path” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 63). In a similar way, “destinations”, “impediments to travel” and “vehicles” are not inherent elements of the concept of life, but understanding life as a journey incorporates them into our understanding of life (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 62) and partly determine how we understand the concept of life (Deignan, 2010, p. 45).

2.4.2 Highlighting and Hiding

The mapping between the source and target concepts is partial (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 91). This means that only some of the aspects of the source concept are mapped onto the target and only some of the aspects of the target concept “are involved in the mappings from” the source concept (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 91). Consequently, structural metaphors provide us only with “a partial understanding” of abstract target concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 12). When a target concept is structured through a particular source concept, some of its aspects become highlighted, while at the same time its other aspects remain hidden (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 303). Concepts usually have several aspects to them, but because metaphors highlight only some of them, other aspects necessarily “remain hidden” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 92). As an instance, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR highlights the aspect of “control over the argument” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 92), while at the same time hiding the cooperative dimension of arguments (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p.10). Because conceptual metaphors only focus on certain aspects of the target concept, they can be employed strategically to present a target concept from a particular perspective (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 303) and keep other possible perspectives hidden (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 65).

2.4.3 Metaphorical Entailments

Understanding arguments in terms of war was shown to to be realized as six distinct mappings between constituent elements of the domain of war and constituent elements of the domain of argument (armies mapped onto speakers, weapons onto facts, etc.) (see pp. 9–10). Our knowledge of concrete source concepts involves much more than what is involved in the constituent elements that are involved in the mapping, and we utilize this additional knowledge in understanding abstract target concepts (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 121). This happens by way of inference (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 121), following the logic that if something is possible in the source concept, it is also possible in the target concept (Evans & Green, 2006, pp. 298–299). As an example,

in the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY, the source domain JOURNEY has a “constituent element that the journey takes place along a path,” which corresponds metaphorically to the element “the progress of an argument” in the target domain of ARGUMENT (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p, 122). Our knowledge of paths includes the notion that it is possible to “stray from the path,” which entails that it is also possible to “digress from” the line of argument (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p, 122). Additional knowledge inferred from a source concept in this way is called *entailment* (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 298).

Entailments can be utilized to express evaluative judgements about target concepts in a way that is not readily obvious (Deignan, 2010, p. 359). Evaluations conveyed through entailments do not need to be explicitly stated but the reader or hearer can be guided to access their knowledge of the scenario evoked by the metaphor (Deignan, 2010, p. 359). In his discussion of the conceptual metaphor A NATION STATE IS A HUMAN BODY (Musolff, 2012, p. 303), Musolff (2012) demonstrates how metaphorical entailments can carry implicit evaluations. He analyses newspaper articles in which a nation state is metaphorically depicted suffering from various illnesses and infers the following entailments from this conceptualization: “a nation state can be *healthy* or *fall ill* and when it is ill, it needs treatment” (Musolff, 2012, p. 303). By invoking the reader's knowledge of illnesses, they are guided to draw an analogy between illnesses and socio-political problems facing the nation and draw the conclusion that: “just as it is imperative for a successful medical therapy to eliminate all agents of disease in case of a serious illness, so any socio-political elements of the nation that threaten its existence have to be eliminated” (Musolff, 2012, p. 303). Since entailments do not need to be made explicit, it is more likely that the perspective they offer will be accepted as valid (Schön, 1993, p. 138).

2.4.4 Conventional Metaphors and Persuasion

The term *conventional metaphor* refers to metaphors that have become an established part of everyday language (Benczes & Kövecses 2010, p. 34). Charteris-Black (2004) defines conventional

metaphor as follows: “A conventional metaphor is, . . . a phrase for which a particular reading has become socially established – thereby constraining other readings and requiring less cognitive processing” (p. 17). It is not possible to draw a clear boundary between conventionalized and unconventionalized metaphors, but “often the difference is a matter of degree” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 55). Conventionality is a property of both conceptual metaphors and their linguistic manifestations (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 34). Conventionality of conceptual metaphors refers to the degree to which certain ways of *understanding* abstract domains are established in thought (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 34). For example, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, i.e. understanding arguments in terms of war, is an example of a highly conventional conceptual metaphor. Conventionality of linguistic metaphorical expressions, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which certain ways of *talking about* abstract domains are established in language use (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 34). For example, arguments are conventionally talked about metaphorically using war-related terms.

Everyday reasoning depends greatly on unconscious use of conventionalized metaphors, which makes it difficult to resist their power and creates a predisposition towards accepting them without a challenge (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 63). Conventional metaphors can therefore have “persuasive power over us” when used by others (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 63). For example, Goatly (2007, p. 40) argues that the conventional metaphor IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL can influence our perception of what is valuable. The metaphor IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL attaches importance to entities by conceiving them as being located at the centre (e.g. “*Investment was central to our economic success*”; “*consumerism is the heart of the US economic system*”) (Goatly, 2007, p. 40). Conversely, things that are considered less valuable are “**peripheral, marginal or fringe**” (Goatly, 2007, p. 40). Goatly (2007, p. 40) argues that the ideological effects of this metaphor can lead to real life consequences. As for example, he argues that describing towns as “urban **centres**” (Goatly, 2007, p. 40) promotes the view that towns are more important than the countryside and lead people to

move to cities (Goatly, 2007, p. 40–41).

2.5 Orientational Metaphors

Orientational metaphors conceptualize concepts in terms of spatial orientation such as “up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral” orientations (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 14). Orientational metaphors give coherence to “a set of target concepts” by conceptualizing them uniformly (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 40). For example, all of the following concepts are conceptualized having an “upward orientation” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 40): “MORE IS UP” (“His draft number is *high*”); “HIGH STATUS IS UP” (“He has a *lofty* position”); “GOOD IS UP” (“He does *high*-quality work”); “VIRTUE IS UP” (“She is *upright*”) (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, pp. 15–17). Their opposites are all conceptualized having a downward orientation (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 40): “LESS IS DOWN” (“His income *fell* last year”); “LOW STATUS IS DOWN” (“He's at the *bottom* of the social hierarchy.”); “BAD IS DOWN” (“Things are at an all-time *low*”); “DEPRAVITY IS DOWN” (“I wouldn't *stoop* to that”) (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 15–17). “Upward orientation” is usually associated with “positive evaluation,” while downward orientation is associated with negative evaluation (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 40). The same “positive-negative evaluation” is also present in many other orientational metaphors such as *whole/not whole, center/periphery, in/out, front/back*, etc. (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 40).

2.6 Ontological Metaphors

Ontological metaphors facilitate our understanding of abstract concepts by conceptualizing them as “objects, substances, and containers” (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 38). For example, the concept of rising prices is conceptualized as a discrete entity through the noun *inflation*, which makes it possible to “refer to it, quantify it, identify a particular aspect of it, see it as a cause” and “act with respect to it” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 26):

INFLATION IS AN ENTITY

Inflation is lowering our standard of living.

If there is *much more inflation*, we'll never survive.

We need to *combat inflation*.

Inflation is backing us into a corner.

Inflation is taking its toll

Buying land is the best way of *dealing with inflation*

Inflation makes me sick.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 26)

This type of ontological metaphors are needed in order to make sense of our experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 25–26). It is possible to elaborate ontological metaphors to view abstract concepts as particular types of entities or substances (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 27). The mind, for example can be viewed as a particular type of entity through the conceptual metaphors THE MIND IS A MACHINE (e.g. “My mind just isn't *operating* today”) and THE MIND IS A BRITTLE OBJECT (e.g. “His mind *snapped*.”) (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 27–28). The two conceptualizations of the mind are elaborations of “the ontological metaphor THE MIND IS AN ENTITY” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 27–28).

Personification is a type of ontological metaphor which conceptualizes an abstract entity as a person (Lakoff & Johnson. 2003, pp. 33). In personification, “nonhuman entities” are viewed as having “human motivations, characteristics” and engaging in “human activities” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 33):

His *theory explained* to me the behavior of chickens raised in factories.

This *fact argues* against the standard theories.

Life has cheated me.

Inflation is eating up our profits.

(Lakoff & Johson, 2003, p. 33)

2.7 Criticism of Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual metaphor theory has been subject to much debate and evidence has been presented both in support of the theory and against it (Gibbs, 2010, p. 3). This section gives an overview of the main criticisms that have been presented against the theoretical positions of conceptual metaphor theory.

Findings of contemporary research suggest that metaphor, as a conceptual phenomenon, may not be as common as proposed by the theory (Steen, 2013, p. 28). The view that there would be “unitary and consistent mappings between concepts and direct experiences” has been contested on the basis that metaphorical mappings often appear to be ambiguous and individual experiences can also influence how mappings are interpreted (Ritchie, 2013, p. 82). Mappings can also change due to cultural influences (Ritchie, 2013, p. 82). It has also been argued that metaphors would no longer be processed metaphorically after the metaphorical meaning has become conventionalized (Steen, 2013, p. 31).

Another central argument put forward by the theory, that metaphors are acquired through experiential correlations, has been called into question (Ritchie, 2013, p. 83). Landauer & Dumais (1997, as cited in Ritchie, 2013) note that conceptual metaphor theory does not take into account that vocabulary is learned through reading and that “language comprehension” is often dependent on “relationships among words” (p. 83). Ritchie (2013, p. 83) points out that metaphorical concepts that cannot be experienced directly (e.g. “my desk is a black hole.”) would appear to have their basis in word relations, not in experiential correlations. Even when a particular metaphor can be experienced personally, they are often first encountered through other sources such as literature and media rather than through experience (Ritchie, 2013, p. 83).

The methods that the theory has employed to provide evidence in support of the theory have been challenged. Deignan (2010, p. 55) raises methodological issues concerning the use of intuition-based language examples as linguistic evidence for the theory noting that corpus linguistic

studies have called into question “[t]he reliability and validity” of intuition-based evidence.

Pragglejaz Group (2007, p. 1) argue that it is not possible to make generalizations about metaphors using isolated constructed examples as evidence and argue that generalizations about metaphors can only be made by studying them in real contexts. Goatly (2007, p. 20) notes that conceptual metaphor literature does not always provide “clear criteria” for identifying significant conceptual metaphors.

A major issue for the theory has been the question of how to define a domain (Deignan, 2010, p. 54). Steen (2007, as cited in Deignan, 2010, p. 54) notes that no satisfactory definition for a domain has so far been offered.

Steen (2013, p. 28) advocates a shift away from the conception that metaphor is primarily a cognitive phenomenon because it also serves an important function in language and communication (2013, p. 28). In real contexts, metaphor manifests itself “in complex, often contradictory patterns,” which makes it problematic to make straightforward generalizations “about both the ubiquity and structure of metaphor” (Gibbs, 2010, p. 6). Charteris-Black (2004, p. 2) emphasizes the importance of the pragmatic function of metaphor in communicative contexts and points out the lack of consideration given to this in the cognitive approach.

3 Material and Method

The material selected for analysis is Neste Annual Report 2018. Ihlen & Roper (2014) note that corporate non-financial reports can be regarded as the most important “controlled medium for representing the corporate views on sustainability and sustainable development” (pp. 44–45). Consequently, environmental reports can provide valuable information on “corporate attitudes and positions toward environmental issues” (Jaworska, 2018, p. 195). Neste's report follows the reporting standards provided by the Global Reporting Initiative (Neste, 2018, p. 60), which is the most commonly followed standard worldwide (88% in 2017) (KPMG, 2017). GRI (2022) describes the purpose of the GRI Standards as follows:

The GRI Standards enable an organization to publicly disclose its most significant impacts on

the economy, environment, and people, . . . and how the organization manages these impacts. This enhances transparency on the organization's impacts and increases organizational accountability. (p. 7)

The GRI standards place certain restrictions on the contents of the report but companies are still allowed freedom to decide what information is included in the report, how detailed that information is, and the manner in which the information is presented (Jaworska, 2018, p. 195). This presents an opportunity for companies to construct reality surrounding their environmental image (Campbell, 2000, as cited in Pollach, 2018, p. 248).

Neste Annual Report 2018 is comprised of five main sections Strategy (9 pages), Sustainability (52 pages), Governance (34 pages), Review by the Board of Directors (19 pages) and Financial statements (84 pages), and two short segments at the beginning of the report titled "Year 2018 in brief" (1 page) and "CEO's review" (3 pages). The report was searched for the terms *environment**, *sustainab**, *climate* and *planet* in order to gain an understanding of the prominence of environmental themes in different parts of the report. With respect to the term *environment**, only instances that denoted the natural environment were counted. The term *planet* was included because it is used in the report's main environmental theme, which states that Neste's purpose is to create a healthier planet for future generations. The last two pages of the Sustainability section and the last 6 pages of the Financial Statements section, which contain "Independent Practitioner's Assurance Report" and Auditor's Report, were not included in the search. This is because they were written by third-party entities and do not represent Neste's own communication. Searches yielded the following results. The term *environment** occurred 0 times in the two short segments, 0 times in the Strategy section, 71 times in the Sustainability section, 5 times in the Governance section, 19 times in the Review by the Board of Directors section and 13 times in the Financial Statements section. Corresponding figures for the term *sustainab** were 11, 13, 142, 12, 36, and 3, for the term *climate* 6, 3, 52, 5, 3 and 1 and for the term *planet* 5, 2, 5, 0, 1, 0. These results suggest that

environmental topics are most prominently addressed in the two short segments and in the Strategy and Sustainability sections. In order to keep the data at a manageable size, a decision was made to restrict the analysis to the two short segments at the beginning of the report and the Strategy and Sustainability sections. Restricting the data this way allowed for concentrating on the most relevant contents of the report but prevented from gaining a comprehensive picture of the role of metaphor in the construction of Neste's environmental image in the report. The decision to restrict the analysis to these parts of the report was already done before the searches were made. At the time the searches were made, the study was well underway. The searches only confirmed that the most relevant parts of the report had been selected for analysis. The parts selected for analysis cover the first 67 pages of the 209-page-long report. When "the report" is mentioned in this study, only its first 67 pages are referred to, not the whole report.

The analytical procedure loosely followed the steps of metaphor analysis detailed in Kimmel (2012) listed below:

- (1) Delimiting the target area of interest according to the research question; deciding whether all or only some metaphors are coded.
- (2) Identifying metaphor units in discourse (which includes deciding on borderline cases and deciding on one's cut-off principles); a parallel task is deciding on the maximum text span for metaphor units.
- (3) Grouping metaphors into sets of conceptually similar tokens; finding a formula for them; reconstructing metaphor coherence.
- (4) Analyzing the thematic relevance of each set and its discourse functions (evaluation, highlighting, inferences, etc.) (p. 5)

The target area of metaphor analysis was limited to metaphorically used lexical items which were assessed to be contextually relevant to Neste's environmental image. The next step involved identifying metaphorically used lexical items in the target area defined this way. Identification of

metaphorically used lexical items was carried out using a method that combined the use of intuition and the use of dictionaries. Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) served as a reference for recognizing metaphorically used lexical units in the report but it was not applied as a method in the identification step. Metaphor Identification Procedure aims at reliably establishing whether or not any given lexical unit is used metaphorically in the context (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 2). The procedure involves establishing the contextual and the basic meaning of a lexical unit and deciding if “the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it” (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3). If the contextual meaning of a lexical unit “contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it,” the lexical unit is identified as metaphorical (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3). Online dictionaries, especially the *Oxford English Dictionary* were consulted to help determine the basic senses of words. Consulting dictionaries reduces the need to rely on intuition as they provide “an independent source for checking contextual and basic meanings” (Krennmayr, 2011, p. 36). As mentioned above, the identification step was applied only to such potentially metaphorically used lexical items that were assessed to be contextually relevant to Neste's environmental image. The decision not to identify all metaphors can negatively affect the validity of the results because “it is usually not possible to know before carrying out the analysis which metaphors might contribute to emergent themes across discourse events” (Cameron & Maslen, 2010, p. 98). This issue was addressed by applying the identification step to most of the text at least three times. Subsequent applications of the step helped gaining a better overall understanding of the report's metaphorical discourse and identifying relevant metaphorically used lexical items that were first overlooked.

Kimmel (2012) lists ontological metaphors and personifications as metaphors “one may . . . decide to exclude” (p. 6) from analysis. Ontological metaphors and personifications were not systematically identified in the report. Ontological metaphors are needed “for even attempting to deal rationally with our experiences” and they are highly frequent in language (Lakoff & Johnson,

2003, p. 26). Their systematic identification would have presented a considerable workload.

However, certain ontological metaphors and personifications were stood out as important to Neste's environmental image and were therefore included in the analysis. Ontological metaphors included in the analysis were the conceptualizations of the planet and sustainable solutions as objects that Neste creates from scratch. Personifications that were investigated more closely were those that ascribed to Neste human motives and mindsets (e.g. "Neste stands clear with its aspiration") (Neste, 2018, p. 6), the DNA metaphor, which conceptualizes sustainability as Neste's permanent trait, and personifications of the planet climate.

Metaphor Identification Procedure considers metaphorical language at the level of lexical units (Krennmayr, 2011, p. 32). A lexical unit frequently consists of one word but sometimes it can involve more than one word (Krennmayr, 2011, p. 32). For example, Pragglejaz Group (2007, p. 26) analyse polywords and phrasal verbs as single lexical units. Most of the words that were identified as metaphorical in the report were one-word units. No clear criteria was used to determine the size of multiword units. Certain expressions consisting of more than one word were treated as single units because the words were "clearly connected" and they referred to a particular source domain element as a unit (see Krennmayr, 2011, p.32). For example, the metaphorically used expression *move forward* was treated as a single unit because the two words are clearly connected and they realize the JOURNEY domain element 'forward movement' as a unit. Similarly, the JOURNEY domain expression *moving in the right direction* was treated as a single unit because it realizes the JOURNEY domain element 'motion towards a destination' as a unit. The expression *explore ways*, by contrast, was not regarded as one unit because the two words belong to different source domains (EXPLORATION and JOURNEY).

In the next step (Kimmel's step 3), metaphorically used lexical items were grouped according to their source domains. For example, metaphorically used expressions *combat*, *front* and *climate heroes* were placed in the source domain group termed 'war'. Source domain groups formed this way

were examined in order to find systematicity between source domain expressions and topics they referred to (see Cameron et al., 2010, pp. 126–127). As an instance, the JOURNEY domain expressions were used to systematically depict purposeful environmental activities as movement forward and movement towards a destination. Source domain expressions were further organized according to specific correspondences (if more than one correspondence was found) they formed between source and target domain elements. For example, the JOURNEY domain element 'destination' consistently corresponded to the target domain element 'purpose' and the source domain element 'forward movement' consistently corresponded to the target domain element 'progress made'. Conceptual metaphors were posited based on the systematic correspondences that could be established between source and target domains. Based on previous research on the journey metaphor, systematic correspondences between the domains of JOURNEY and PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY were analysed as realizations of the conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY. Deignan (2010, pp. 55–56) notes that linguistic metaphors are not always realizations of conceptual metaphors and warns against identifying them as such without providing sufficient evidence. In the present study, the identified metaphorical conceptualizations are mainly referred to as conceptual metaphors for ease of reference, but this does not mean that they would all be actual conceptual metaphors. Altogether, 15 conceptual metaphors were selected for closer examination. The selection was mainly based on the analyst's subjective assessment of their relevance to Neste's environmental image, but some of the conceptualizations that were excluded from the analysis could also have been included based on their relevance. Metaphorical conceptualizations excluded from the analysis were not analysed and quantified as systematically as the conceptualizations selected for analysis. Metaphorical conceptualizations that were excluded from the analysis are discussed in section 4.9.

In the fourth step, conceptual metaphors were analysed using conceptual metaphor theory as an analytical tool. The contribution of metaphorical meanings and representations to Neste's

environmental image was considered in the particular contexts in which metaphors were used in the report and in the wider context of corporate environmental communication.

4 Results and Discussion

This chapter presents an analysis of selected conceptual metaphors in Neste Annual Report 2018 and discusses their contribution to Neste's environmental image. The chapter is organized as follows. Metaphors discussed in sections 4.1–4.4 are all structural metaphors. Section 4.6 contains an analysis of ontological metaphors and personifications. Section 4.7 discusses the use of force-related metaphorical expressions. Section 4.8 discusses the orientational metaphors GOOD IS UP and LESS IS DOWN. Lastly, section 4.9 briefly describes conceptual metaphors that were excluded from the main analysis.

4.1 PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY

The JOURNEY domain expressions systematically conceptualize progress in various sustainability related activities as movement forward and movement towards a destination. In activities which have a specific goal, progress is conceptualized as movement towards a destination. In activities which aim for progress but do not have a specific end goal, progress is conceptualized as forward movement. In this section, the JOURNEY domain expressions are analysed as realizations of the conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY. The conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY and all of its submappings are based on a general level metaphor called the event structure metaphor, which is presented in Lakoff & Johnson (1999, pp. 178–234). The conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY is the most richly utilized structural metaphor in the report, both in terms of number of metaphorical expressions and in terms of number of distinct source to target mappings that realize the conceptual metaphor. The mappings of this metaphor are listed below together with examples from the report.

Long-Term Purposeful Activity Is A Journey

Progress Neste makes in its long-term environmental goals (e.g. “our *journey* towards a

sustainable future”) is characterized as a *journey* 4 times in the report. Neste's *journeys* are discussed in section 4.1.1.

Purposeful Action Is Self-Propelled Motion To A Destination

Destination-oriented movement, which is most frequently indicated by the preposition *towards*, is used to characterize Neste's progress in its environmental goals 8 times (e.g. “*Advancing towards reaching our 2020 target*”). This conceptualization is discussed in further detail in section 4.1.2.

Making Progress Is Forward Movement

Forward movement is used to characterize Neste's progress in its environmental goals 9 times. 7 of them describe Neste's progress in goals that have an explicit purpose to contribute to sustainable development.

(1) The year 2018 took us *further* on our journey of creating a healthier planet for our children.

(2) We are very pleased to share the *progress* we have made in 2018.

Forward movement is used once to refer to progress Neste's customer has made in its goal by using Neste's product:

(3) •Airport operator Finavia in Finland took a *step forward* in its target to make its airports carbon neutral by 2020, by expanding its current use of Neste MY Renewable Diesel

In 3 instances, forward movement refers to progress Neste makes or aims to make in improving the sustainability of its refineries:

(4) to *further* reduce greenhouse gas emissions at our refineries of renewable products

Amount of Progress Is Distance Moved

In 4 instances, Neste's level of advancement in sustainability-related fields is conceptualized as distance moved along a path (e.g. “*Forerunners* in bio-based plastics”; “*lead the way* for renewable products”). The expressions *forerunners* and *lead the way* also conceptualize Neste as a guide in bio-based plastics and renewable products, respectively. The source domain element 'guide'

is an “*optional*” element of the journey metaphor (Charteris-Black, 2006, p. 46) and it is not part of the event structure metaphor. The mapping 'amount of progress is distance moved' and Neste's conceptualization as a guide are discussed in section 4.1.3.

Speed of Progress Is Speed of Movement

Expressions relating to speed of movement are used 3 times as part of the journey metaphor to conceptualize the time it takes to accomplish an environmental as the time it takes to reach a destination. The mapping Speed of Progress is Speed of Movement is not part of the event structure metaphor in (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In (5), the phrasal verb *speed up* is used to indicate that an approach developed by Neste will expedite the process of achieving “improved traceability” in palm oil plantations. In (6), the verb *accelerate* indicates that Neste will expedite the process of transforming itself into a sustainable company.

(5) A commonly shared approach is a key to enabling and *speeding up* coherent efforts towards improved traceability

(6) We will *accelerate* our journey towards a sustainable future, and invite everyone on board.

Lack of Progress Is Lack of Movement

In 2 instances lack of progress is conceptualized as lack of movement towards a destination (“to *set the path* for a more sustainable future?”; “*finding quick ways* to move towards low-carbon economy”). This mapping is discussed in section 4.1.2.

Achieving a Purpose Is Reaching a Destination

Achieving a purpose is conceptualized as reaching a destination 7 times. 2 of them concern Neste's projects that have a purpose to help society become more sustainable:

(7) We *reached* many *milestones* in 2018

(8) *Target to reach* 14 Mt GHG reduction by 2023.

Once, Neste helps Finland *reach* the *targets* of Plastics Roadmap project:

(9) that our efforts particularly in the area of chemical recycling of plastic waste are aligned to support *reaching* the *targets*.

In 3 instances, Neste's objective is to increase the sustainability of its own operations. Going beyond a requirement in (10) is analysed here as a destination that Neste aims to reach:

(10) We committed to *go beyond* this requirement by setting a public target in 2017 to work towards mapping our palm fatty acid distillate (PFAD) supply chain to oil palm plantations by 2020.

(11) Advancing towards *reaching* our 2020 *target* has required us to map large parts of previously unmapped food industry's palm oil supply chains.

Purposes Are Destinations

Objectives of Neste's environmental activities are conceptualized as a physical destinations 6 times. A destination is expressed by the nouns *milestones*, *goal* and *target*. The noun *target* conceptualizes Neste's objectives in two distinct ways in the report: as a target that is *aimed* at and as a target to *reach*. Only the latter use was counted as a metaphorical 'destination'.

Means Are Paths

In 16 instances, the concept of path is used to conceptualize a means of achieving a purpose. 14 of them is realized by the noun *way(s)*, which is a conventional way of expressing the means of achieving something (Lakoff, 1993, p. 220):

(12) Neste explores *ways* to introduce liquefied waste plastic as a future raw material for fossil refining.

Other expressions that have this function in the report are *path* and *avenues*, both of which occur once.

Roadmap

The expression *roadmap* is used in 2 instances. One of them conceptualizes Neste's environmental action plan as "Neste's environmental *roadmap*." It is accompanied by a graphical illustration, which

conceptualizes Neste's achievements in year 2018 and future environmental goals as points on a roadmap. This metaphor is not part of the event structure metaphor.

4.1.1 Purposeful Activity Is A Journey

In the event structure metaphor, “long-term, purposeful activities” are conceptualized as *journeys* (Lakoff, 1993, p.220; see also Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp. 193–194). Journeys last for extended duration and they “may or may not have” a final destination (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp.193–194). The purpose of a journey is achieved when the destination is reached (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp. 194). According to Milne et al. (2006, p. 810), the journey metaphor is effective in organizational communication because of its capacity communicate change. The term *journey* is used 3 times to conceptualize the change Neste has experienced or is currently experiencing as a company (examples 13, 14 and 15).

In (13), the term *journey* refers to a process which has transformed Neste from an oil refiner into a global force in renewable products:

(13) Neste celebrated its *journey from* a Finnish oil refiner *to* one of the global leaders in renewable products

This is the only journey that is presented as having already been completed and achieved its purpose. The completed journey away from the oil refining industry to a more sustainable trade in renewable energy communicates that Neste has distanced itself from its past as an oil refiner and draws attention to Neste's current role as a provider and developer of renewable solutions. Oil refining was still a major part of Neste's business in 2018, but presenting Neste's journey away from being an oil refiner as completed obscures this. Neste's completed journey away from being an oil refiner to a global leader in renewable products provides a frame of reference for the role Neste is given in the report as a company. The report builds Neste's corporate identity around its role as a provider and developer of sustainable solutions, while Neste's trade in traditional oil products plays a minor role in the narrative portions of the report.

In (14), Neste is depicted making a journey towards a sustainable future:

(14) We will accelerate our *journey* towards a sustainable future, and invite everyone on board.

It is not clear if “a sustainable future” refers to the future of Neste as a company or to the global future. Elsewhere in the report a sustainable future is understood as a global goal that can only be achieved through a collective effort of “citizens, companies and nations” (Neste, 2018, p. 4). Under this interpretation, Neste could be construed in (14) as a contributor towards a sustainable future as part of a collective effort. However, Neste is depicted controlling the speed of the journey in this example, which would imply that “a sustainable future” is Neste's own future as a company and not the global future. Neste could have control only over its own future, not over the global future. Nonetheless, the lack of an explicit reference to Neste's own future makes the journey appear less like a project aimed at addressing the company's own sustainability challenges and more like a contribution to sustainable development in general.

In (15), Neste's journey of technological advancement is contextually related to Neste's improved capacity to provide sustainable solutions to its customers.

(15) For the past decades Neste has been on an innovative technological *journey*

As opposed to the journeys in (13 – 15), the journey in (16) does not concern Neste's own transformation as a company but how Neste transforms the world.

(16) The year 2018 took us further on our *journey* of creating a healthier planet for our children.

The journey in (16) is an ongoing journey, which has started at an unspecified time in the past. There is no definite end point to the journey because the goal of a healthier planet allows it to continue indefinitely into the future (see also Milne et al., 2006, pp. 820, 822). This gives Neste's positive global influence a sense of continuity (see also Yu, 2020, p. 251; Milne et al., 2006, p. 815).

4.1.2 Purposeful Action Is Self-Propelled Motion to a Destination

In 11 instances, progress in achieving a sustainability goal is conceptualized as movement towards a destination. These examples realize the mapping “Purposeful Action Is Self-Propelled Motion To A Destination” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp. 191) in the conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY. Destination-oriented movement communicates that progress is being achieved relative to the end goal of an activity, which highlights an activity as goal-oriented (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 44). Movement towards a destination takes place along a path which has a beginning, it follows a path and leads to a destination (Lakoff, 1987, p. 275). Unless there is evidence of something impeding the movement, the default interpretation of this schema is that movement towards a destination progresses unimpeded. Describing progress as movement towards a destination thus conveys the impression that steady progress is being made in achieving the goal.

In 5 instances, destination-oriented movement depicts Neste making progress in specific, clearly defined local environmental goals. 3 of them concern activities that Neste has undertaken in order to help society in its sustainability challenges:

(17) to demonstrate our commitment to work *towards* processing more than one million tons of plastics waste annually from 2030 onwards.

(18) In addition to working *towards* increasing bio-content in chemicals and plastics

In (17), Neste helps “chemical and plastics industries” “to reduce crude oil dependence” (Neste, 2018, p. 34). In (18), Neste helps society by addressing “plastics waste challenge” (Neste, 2018, p. 26). In 2 instances, destination-oriented movement depicts Neste's progress in addressing challenges that concern the transparency of its own operations:

(19) by setting a public target in 2017 to work *towards* mapping our palm fatty acid distillate (PFAD) supply chain to oil palm plantations by 2020.

(20) *Advancing towards* reaching our 2020 target has required us to map large parts of previously unmapped food industry's palm oil supply chains.

In 2 instances, destination-oriented movement characterizes the progress Neste's customers achieve in their environmental objectives by utilizing Neste's solutions:

(21) enabling the smart use of energy and facilitating customers' transformation *towards* circular economy.

(22) Airport operator Finavia in Finland took *a step forward* in its *target* to make its airports carbon neutral by 2020, by expanding its current use of Neste MY Renewable Diesel

In 1 instance, destination-oriented movement depicts the process of Neste's transformation into a sustainable company as steady movement towards a destination (see p. 31 for an alternative interpretation):

(14) We will accelerate our *journey* towards a sustainable future, and invite everyone on board.

Neste's progress in this goal is conceptualized as Neste being a driver of some means of transportation, capable of accelerating the speed at which the journey progresses. This conceptualization conveys the idea that Neste has effective control over its journey to become a sustainable company. Neste's invitation for others to come on board indicates that Neste is ready to assume the responsibility of taking also to the destination, which suggests that Neste has high confidence in its ability to bring the journey to a successful conclusion. Livesey (2002) questions the legitimacy of evaluating "corporate enactments of sustainability in terms of a steady or one-way progression toward an ideal endpoint" because sustainable development of an organization is "a space of dissension where contrary influences and impulses exists side by side, both inside and outside the organization" (p. 342).

In 2 instances, destination-oriented movement depicts Neste's progress in environmental goals that aim for global improvement in sustainable development. In (23), Neste's progress in creating a healthier planet is conceptualized as steady movement towards a destination in a similar fashion as in Neste's more specific goals discussed above:

(23) We are in a good position to continue working *towards* creating a healthier planet for our children.

Neste can directly influence the outcome of the projects listed in examples (17 – 20), but this does not hold true for goals that aim for global improvement. Describing Neste making steady progress in creating a healthier planet gives a misleading picture of Neste's impact because whether or not the planet becomes “healthier” is determined by factors which Neste has no control over. To put this into perspective, consider Neste's global impact through emission reductions in 2018. Neste states that it achieved a 7,9 million ton reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 through its renewable products (Neste, 2018, p. 18). At the same time total greenhouse gas emissions increased by 1,12 billion tonnes from year 2017 (Ritchie & Roser, 2020).

In (24), destination-oriented movement indicates that Neste is steadily contributing to climate change mitigation by building sustainable solutions.

(24) Building sustainable solutions to actively contribute *towards* mitigating climate change can have far reaching impacts on reducing inequalities and poverty in societies.

The report refers to a document by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C”, dated october 2018) and states that “climate change was progressing” despite efforts to the contrary (Neste, 2018, p. 30). This information contradicts the notion that Neste would be steadily contributing to climate change mitigation.

The journey metaphor is used 2 times to conceptualize lack of progress in sustainability goals as lack of movement towards a destination. In (25) and (26), the prospect of achieving low carbon economy and a more sustainable future is presented as uncertain by conceiving the global community of having difficulties to move towards these goals:

(25) Companies, Neste included, have an important role to play in . . . finding quick ways to *move towards* low-carbon economy.

(26) are we ready as citizens, companies and nations to act strongly enough . . . to *set the*

path for a more sustainable future?

The need to find quick ways towards low-carbon economy in (25) indicates current lack of adequate means of reducing carbon emissions efficiently enough. In (26), lack of progress towards a more sustainable future is indicated metaphorically by the need to *set the path*. Without a path, progress towards a destination is prevented.

4.1.3 Amount Of Progress Is Distance Moved

The expression *lead the way* is used metaphorically 2 times in the report. It maps the source domain elements 'forward movement' and 'distance travelled' onto the target domain elements 'making progress' and 'progress made', respectively, in the conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY. In (27), Neste is depicted leading the way for renewable products:

(27) Neste is in the business of helping transport and cities, aviation, polymers and chemicals customers make their business more sustainable and will continue to *lead the way* for renewable products.

In this example, Neste is conceptualized as a guide that travels along a path ahead of others. This suggests that Neste engages in pioneering work in the field of renewable products and has reached a more advanced stage compared to other actors in the field. Neste's role as a guide that leads the way for renewable products suggests that Neste shares from its expertise and experience in renewable products with other actors, who will then apply the gained knowledge in their own businesses. This means that Neste's positive influence as a provider and developer of renewable products extends far beyond what its own renewable products and services alone could achieve. Portraying Neste as a guide that leads the way for renewable products thus provides a broader perspective on Neste's positive influence in the field of renewable products.

In (28), Neste's clients that have adopted Neste's MY Renewable Diesel as their preferred solution for achieving their emission reduction targets are depicted *leading the way*.

(28) The following Californian cities and local actors, for example, were *leading the way*:

In this example, the expression *lead the way* conceptualizes entities that use Neste's My Renewable Diesel as guides that show the way for others. In this context, the expression *lead the way* entails that the choice by Californian cities and local actors to use Neste's My Renewable Diesel sets an example that prompts also other actors to start using the product. This entailment projects a future increase in the use of Neste's My Renewable Diesel and a bigger market share in the renewable diesel market.

The noun *forerunner* is used metaphorically 5 times in the report. It maps the same source domain elements onto the target domain JOURNEY as the expression *lead the way*: 'forward movement' and 'distance travelled' onto the target elements 'making progress' and 'progress made'. In 3 instances, the noun *forerunner* communicates that Neste is more advanced in business activities associated with sustainable development compared to other companies:

(29) *Forerunners* in bio-based plastics

(30) Creating new requires commitment, courage and persistence, as *forerunners* face a wide range of technical and other challenges.

(31) Together with several *forerunner* companies, such as Clariant and IKEA, we made progress in the areas of bio-based chemicals and plastics.

The noun *forerunner* has a basic sense “one who runs before, esp. one sent to prepare the way and herald a great man's approach, a harbinger; also, a guide” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). The basic sense of *forerunner* has similar contextual implications as the expression *lead the way* discussed above. They both conceive of Neste's progress in activities promoting sustainable development as a distance Neste has covered and they both entail that others will utilize Neste's expertise in their own businesses. In (32), brands that would choose Neste's chemical solutions are characterized as *forerunners*.

(32) Neste's aim is to become a preferred partner as a provider of sustainable chemicals solutions for *forerunner* brands.

In this example, the choice made by brands to start using Neste's sustainable chemical solutions is associated with their status as *forerunner* brands. The use of the term *forerunner* in this context implies that these brands would be among the first to start using Neste's sustainable chemical solutions and that using them would be an environmentally proactive choice.

4.2 RESEARCHING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS IS EXPLORING

The term *explore* is used in the report 12 times to describe various types of investigative endeavours to find more sustainable solutions. In the present section, these investigative efforts are collectively referred to as research. The term is used 7 times to characterize Neste's efforts to produce solutions for the benefit of society (33 – 35), 3 times to characterize Neste's efforts to help its clients become more sustainable (36 – 37) and 2 times to characterize Neste's efforts to reduce the carbon footprint/green house gas emissions of its own renewable refineries (38):

(33) Neste *explores ways* to introduce liquefied waste plastic as a future raw material for fossil refining.

(34) *Exploring* waste plastics to replace crude oil usage

(35) we started *exploring* opportunities to reduce society's crude oil dependency also with other sustainable alternatives.

(36) to *explore* opportunities to increase the supply and availability of sustainable aviation fuel for airline customers at airports across Air BP's global network.

(37) Together with several partners, we started *exploring* solutions to turn Lidö island in the Swedish archipelago entirely fossil free in one year.

(38) We continued *exploring* methods to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions at our refineries of renewable products

Contextual analysis of the verb *explore* shows that it is most commonly used to describe Neste's investigative efforts to address sustainability challenges facing society. Resolving a sustainability issue is conceptualized in the report as *finding* a solution two times:

(39) to *find* alternatives for reducing emissions cost-effectively.

(40) Companies, Neste included, have an important role to play in tackling the climate challenge and *finding* quick ways to move towards low-carbon economy.

The verb *find* has a basic meaning which denotes discovering something concrete in the physical realm. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as follows: “[t]o discover the whereabouts of (something or someone hidden or not previously observed), sometimes with the implication of picking up or carrying off” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). In the above examples, the verb *find* is used metaphorically because it refers to an abstract notion of 'achieving a solution to a sustainability issue'.

The verb *explore* and the verb *find* correspond metaphorically to two different aspects of researching sustainable solutions. The verb *explore* corresponds to the act of researching a sustainable solutions, and the verb *find* corresponds to the act of achieving a sustainable solution. Based on these correspondences between the source domain of EXPLORATION and the target domain of RESEARCH, the two expressions are analysed here as manifestations of the underlying conceptual metaphor RESEARCH IS EXPLORATION. In the report, this metaphor is realized by the following two mappings:

Exploring	→	Researching a solution
Finding a physical object	→	Achieving a solution

Neste's role in *finding* sustainable solutions in the report is limited to example (45). The following discussion focuses on the more prominently used mapping that involves the verb *explore* and considers the implications of its use for Neste's environmental image.

The verb *explore* has a basic physical sense: “[t]o travel to or around (an uncharted or unknown area or region) for the purposes of discovery and gathering information; (later also) to go to or around (an unfamiliar place) in order to learn about it or get to know it” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). The verb *explore* thus conceptualizes research process into sustainable solutions as an

exploration of an unfamiliar place done for the purpose of discovery and entails the possibility of finding something new. This entails that Neste's research may produce innovative solutions or new ways of applying existing solutions. The definition of the verb *explore* also indicates active movement around. Active movement associated with the verb *explore* suggests that Neste is actively engaged in research into innovative sustainable solutions. Understanding research as exploration inspires greater confidence in the productivity of research compared with more passive conceptualizations of research. The concept of *looking* is an example of a more passive conceptualization of research and it is used in the report 2 times to describe Neste investigating sustainable solutions.

(41) We are currently *looking* into fuel solutions to serve the shipping industry in the future 0.5% global market.

Describing Neste's investigative work as *looking* in (41) creates a sense that Neste's role in producing sustainable solutions for the shipping industry is limited to consideration between solutions that already exist and does not involve an active role in their development. The concept of looking also does not convey the same sense of active involvement in research as the concept of exploration does. Describing research process as *looking* does not necessarily mean that no active role is involved, and describing it as exploration does not necessarily mean that an active role is involved. They are both conventionalized metaphorical expressions that are variously used in reference to both active and passive processes. The above analysis shows that the choice of one expression over the other can have rhetorical implications in the context of communicating corporate research activities.

The recurrent use of the verb *explore* in the report shows a preference for conceptualizing Neste's investigative efforts as active rather than passive processes. Its contextual use conveys a message that Neste is proactively researching sustainable solutions for the benefit of society and that Neste has an active role in their development.

4.3 THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IS A MILITARY CONFLICT

Climate action is conventionally conceptualized as war against climate change. This section

discusses how this conceptualization is used in the report and how it contributes to Neste's environmental image. The verb *combat* is the most frequently used metaphorical expression from the domain of WAR in the report, with 12 occurrences. and it is most commonly used in reference to climate action. The verb *combat* is used in collocation with the phrase *climate change* 10 times, 1 time with the phrase *climate risks* and 1 time with *deforestation*. Other action verbs that collocate with *climate change* in the report are *mitigate* with 3 occurrences and *tackle* with 1 occurrence. This shows a clear preference for conceptualizing climate action as though it was military action in the report. Besides the verb *combat*, other war-related metaphorical expressions used in the report's climate communication are *climate heroes* (2 occurrences) and *front* (1 occurrence). The contextual use of these expressions suggests that the struggle against climate change is conceptualized in the report as a military conflict, which, as a conceptual metaphor, can be expressed as THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IS A MILITARY CONFLICT. It consists of the following mappings in the report:

offensive military action	→	climate action (<i>combat</i>)
soldiers	→	individuals that take climate action (<i>climate heroes</i>)
a war front	→	“a particular area of activity” in climate change mitigation (<i>front</i>) (Goatly, 2007, p. 73)

Expressions *protect* (7 instances), *protection* (4 instances) and *safeguard* (2 instances) are used in the report to describe preventive action against miscellaneous environmental threats. They can be considered as defence metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 69) that conceptualize environmental threats as enemies against which the environment (biodiversity, the environment, forests, soil and groundwater) needs to be protected (see also Yu, 2020, p. 251; Sun, 2018). There is only one example in the report in which a defence metaphor appears in the context of climate change discussion. Defence metaphors are therefore excluded from the following analysis of the conceptual metaphor THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IS A MILITARY CONFLICT.

Characterizing climate action as combat against climate change communicates that Neste has a “proactive stance toward climate change mitigation” (Jaworska, 2018, p. 210), that it takes seriously the threat posed by climate change and devotes considerable effort and resources into addressing the threat. Two distinct contextual uses for the phrase *combat climate change* can be observed in the report. In the first use, specific corporate activities are conceptualized as means of combating climate change. This use of the phrase *combat climate change* has 6 occurrences and the phrase *combat climate risks* 1 occurrence. In 4 instances, Neste is described as an entity that engages in specific activities in order to combat climate change. In the following examples, an investment, development of sustainable solutions, maintaining a broad raw material base and efforts to prevent deforestation are all presented as measures that Neste takes to combat climate change:

(42) “The investment in Singapore is the single biggest investment in the company’s history, and a major contribution to *combat climate change*.”

(43) *Combating climate change by developing sustainable solutions*

(44) we continued to emphasize the necessity to maintain a broad raw material base for biofuels production to effectively *combat climate change*.

(45) Multiple efforts to prevent deforestation to *combat climate change*

Framing business-related activities as combat against climate change draws attention to their role as climate measures, while backgrounding any potential function they may have as part of a profit-oriented commercial enterprise.

The other context in which the phrase *combat climate change* is used portrays combating climate change as a defining attribute of Neste's business. In this function, the phrase *combat climate change* occurs 2 times.

(46) *Combating climate change is our business*

(47) The jury valued the way Neste’s sustainability report emphasizes how *combating climate change* is at the *core* of Neste’s business

The message conveyed in these examples is that combating climate change is not merely one of the activities Neste is involved in but a feature that defines all aspects of Neste's business.

In (48), “a particular area of activity” in climate change mitigation is conceptualized as a *front* (Goatly, 2007, p. 73):

(48) Time should not be wasted in debating about the one and only best solution to combat climate change but to start moving in the right direction on multiple *fronts*.

In this example, the wider community is depicted as lacking in progress in multiple areas of climate change mitigation. This contrasts with Neste's proactive approach to combat climate change in different ways (examples 42 – 45).

The metaphorically used expression *climate hero* has 2 occurrences in the report. It conceptualizes individuals who make environmentally conscious choices as soldiers fighting climate change:

(49) Be a *climate hero*

(50) Here our customers, by choosing our low-emission alternatives instead of higher-emission fossil products, are the real *climate heroes*

“Be a climate hero” (example 49) is the title of a short segment in which adopting more sustainable lifestyles and ways of doing business are described as actions that combat climate change. The term *climate hero* can therefore be considered as an adaptation of the war domain term *war hero* to climate change discourse. In (50), Neste's customers that use Neste's low-emission alternatives are referred to as *climate heroes*. This conceptualizes the use of Neste's low-emission alternatives as a valiant act of war and implies that it is possible to achieve a significant positive climate impact by using them.

The war metaphor is utilized in the report one-dimensionally so that only action against climate change is part of the metaphorical mapping, while the role of the enemy, climate change, is reduced to a passive receiver of combat action directed against it. War-related expressions that

would lend climate change any agency or otherwise offer a broader perspective on the situation are absent from the representation. The one-dimensional utilization of the war metaphor hides the scope of the challenge posed by climate change. Consequently, it also hides the fact that individual measures to “combat” climate change can only have a marginal impact on the overall situation. This has a favourable influence on the impression of effectiveness of Neste's “combat” action against climate change. Metaphorical descriptions of climate change and its consequences for the natural environment are scant overall in the report. Climate change is given agency through metaphor 4 times. In (51), the effect of climate change on the individual is conceptualized as a *big impact*. In (52), the climate change challenge is described as *staggering*. In (53), climate change has *progressed* despite efforts to the contrary. In (54), the consequences of climate change are characterized in terms of a natural disaster.

(51) Climate change has a *big impact* on us as individuals.

(52) The climate *challenge* is indeed *staggering*.

(53) yet climate change was *progressing*

(54) to avoid the most *disastrous* consequences

4.4 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IS RACE PERFORMANCE

Expressions from the domain of RACE are used in the report to communicate corporate performance in various business activities related to sustainable development. They realize the conceptual metaphor CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IS RACE PERFORMANCE. This metaphor can be considered to be a specific instance of the more general conceptual metaphor COMPETITION IS RACE (Goatly, 2007, p. 52). Most of the expressions that realize the metaphor CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IS RACE PERFORMANCE denote a leading position in a race (e.g. *leader*, *leading position*, *leadership*) and in most cases their function is to positively evaluate Neste's relative performance against other companies in activities that promote sustainable development:

(55) Neste was highlighted as a global *leader* on corporate climate action by environmental

impact non-profit Climate Disclosure Project (CDP)

(56) Neste's deforestation risk management performance was evaluated . . . as belonging, again, to the *leading performers' Leadership-class*

Actors besides Neste are characterized as race leaders 2 times in activities related to sustainable development.

(57) Nordic countries, particularly Finland, Sweden, and Norway remain in a *leadership position* globally with their high ambition level to reduce climate emissions and increase circularity of materials

The only other expression which is part of this conceptualization is *track record*, which in (58) corresponds metaphorically to Neste's past performances (see Goatly, 2007, p. 54) as a provider and developer of sustainable solutions:

(58) Neste has a solid *track record* of delivering the change, by developing renewable, low-emission and circular solutions in transport and cities, aviation, polymers and chemicals.

The following two mappings realize the conceptual metaphor CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IS RACE PERFORMANCE:

a race position → relative corporate performance

past race performances → past performances in a corporate activity

Neste is portrayed once as a race leader in a business activity related to oil products (e.g. "Leading position in the Baltic Sea wholesale markets . . . in Group III base oils"). Neste is portrayed as a race leader in business activities related to sustainable development 9 times. 5 of them concern Neste's performance in the global renewable products market:

(59) We are one of the global *leaders* in renewable products produced from waste and residues and *strengthen our position* with new achievements

(60) Neste is one of the global *leaders* in renewable products and in the circular economy.

(61) Neste *strengthens* its global *leading position* in renewable products

(62) The investment in Singapore *strengthens* our global *leading position* in renewable products

The concept of race is not a neutral means of communicating corporate performance. Race is a dynamic event in which contenders actively strive to outperform each other. This entails that even as a leader in the global renewable products market, Neste needs to actively continue developing its renewable production in order to maintain its position in the lead. Describing Neste as a race leader does not therefore merely communicate that Neste is performing well relative to other companies, but also that Neste has achieved and maintained the position in the lead in a competitive environment in which success requires sustained high level performance and active pursuit of improvement. The characterization of Neste as a race leader conveys a more positive evaluation of Neste's performance compared to expressions such as *be the first, rank first, top performer, etc.*, which all lack the positive connotations that the concept of race leader carries of performance.

Each time Neste's performance in the global renewable products market is indicated by the expressions *leading position* (3 times), it is premodified by the verb *strengthen* (examples 59, 61 and 62). The verb *strengthen* conceptualizes Neste's leading position as a physical object that Neste fortifies in order to make it less susceptible to outside forces. In an ongoing race, positions are unstable and constantly subject to change. The verb *strengthen* serves to counterbalance the notion of instability associated with a race position and make it appear more secure.

A fundamental factor that motivates someone to participate in a race is the prospect of achieving success in it. Success in a race is measured by a contender's relative performance against other race contenders. Conceptualizing Neste as a race leader in renewable products therefore gives rise to the entailment that Neste's work in renewable business is driven by an ambition to outperform its competition in the field of renewable products. The notion that Neste *strengthens* its leading position also supports the idea that Neste's work in the field of renewable products is motivated by competitive success. The fact that Neste takes measures to *strengthen* its leading

position indicates that outperforming its competition is an end in itself for Neste. It is natural for a company to be motivated by competitive success. However, the motive of competitive success in activities related to sustainable development conflicts with the sentiment expressed in the report's main theme of Neste's purpose to create a healthier planet for future generations. The sentiment conveyed in the report's main theme is that Neste's business is driven by the environmental cause, whereas the race metaphor entails that Neste prioritizes competitive success over the environment. Within the race frame, Neste losing its market leading position would be a negatively evaluated event from Neste's perspective, even if the change in corporate performance rankings had a positive influence on sustainable development. The self-interested motive that the race metaphor entails should not be taken to imply anything about Neste's real life motives, however. Characterizing corporations as leaders in their fields is a conventional way of communicating corporate performance in business-related discourses. What the race metaphor entails about Neste's motives should therefore be kept strictly in the realm of metaphorical entailments.

4.5 TAKING ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENT FORWARD

This section discusses a conceptual metaphor used in the report that conceives proactive environmental action as self-propelled movement forward. Self-propelled movement forward can be regarded as a specific instance of the event-structure metaphor mapping “Actions Are Self-propelled Movements” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp. 187). Proactive environmental action is conceptualized as self-propelled movement forward 5 times in the report. In 2 instances, self-propelled movement forward is used as part of a recommendation to start using circular solutions more widely:

(63) The time is right to *move forward* with circular solutions

(64) The time is right to *go forward* with circular solutions such as substituting crude oil with liquefied waste plastic in the production of oil products.

In (65), those “willing bravely to move forward” are credited with making the planet healthier. By implication, those not willing to move forward are considered an impediment to progress towards a

healthier planet:

(65) Creating a healthier planet for our children is a joint effort of individuals, research institutions and organizations willing to bravely *move forward*

“The only way is forward” in (66) conveys a message that inaction is not an option:

(66) The only way is *forward*.

In (67) and (68), lack of forward movement evaluates the global community as too slow in adopting sustainable solutions.

(67) The global community has an urgent need to *move forward* with more sustainable solutions.

(68) Time should not be wasted in debating about the one and only best solution to combat climate change but to start *moving in the right direction* on multiple fronts.

In (67), lack of forward movement by the global community is indicated by the suggestion that it has “an urgent need to move forward”. In (68), lack of forward movement and therefore lack of environmental action is signalled by an exhortation to “start moving in the right direction”. The need for environmental action is treated as a matter of urgency in these examples, which reinforces the negative evaluation that metaphorical lack of forward movement carries of inaction.

The evaluative contrast between forward movement and lack thereof, established in the above examples, creates an evaluative pattern, which classifies actors (countries, organizations, individuals, etc.) into two groups according to the way they orient their actions towards sustainability. Those lacking in forward movement are considered an impediment to progress, while those moving forward are considered part of the solution. A central aspect of the evaluative pattern is that taking environmental action is presented as a matter of choice. The suggestion that the time is right to move forward (examples 63 – 64), that there is an urgent need to move forward (67), the exhortation to start moving in the right direction (68), and the statement that those willing to move forward are the ones creating a healthier planet (65) all present taking environmental action as an

implicit choice between moving forward and staying still.

Presenting the choice to act as the choice to move forward makes the choice seem a straightforward and effortless matter, hiding any challenges involved in adopting more sustainable ways of doing business. The effortlessness associated with forward movement can be traced back to our experiences of physically moving ourselves from one place to another. Initiating movement of the self away from a location normally only requires a decision to do so and does not involve much physical exertion. Since environmental action is treated as a matter of urgency and easy to carry out in these examples, the implication is that the only responsible choice is to act without delay.

Neste is explicitly referred to as a forward mover once in the report:

(69) In a good position to *move forward*

“In a good position to move forward” (69) is the title of a short segment in the report that details different ways in which Neste has contributed to sustainable development in 2018. The title therefore evaluates Neste as a forward mover in various activities associated with sustainable development and suggests that Neste will continue as a forward mover in these activities. Although (69) is the only example in which Neste is referred to as a forward mover in environmental action, Neste is implicitly classified as a forward mover with regard to each example discussed above in which proactive environmental action is conceptualized as forward movement and lack thereof as lack of forward movement. Neste's classification as a forward mover in these examples is based on the information found elsewhere in the report. In (63) and (64), moving forward with circular solutions is evaluated as environmentally proactive behaviour. Neste is profiled in the report as a provider and developer of circular solutions and being actively involved in efforts to substitute traditional energy solutions with more environmentally sustainable alternatives. Neste is therefore a forward mover in circular solutions and the recommendation in these examples to start moving forward with circular solutions evokes the notion that Neste is already doing so. In (67), lack of forward movement evaluates the global community negatively for its slowness to adopt more

sustainable solutions. As a provider and developer of a wide variety of sustainable solutions, Neste is a forward mover in sustainable solutions and therefore compares favourably to the passivity ascribed to the global community. In (68) a recommendation is given “to start moving in the right direction on multiple fronts to combat climate change”. The report details various measures that Neste has taken specifically to address climate change. These include an investment in renewable production capacity in Singapore, providing its customers with renewable solutions, and developing sustainable solutions. Neste is therefore actively “moving in the right direction on multiple fronts” to combat climate change and compares favourably to the lack of forward movement ascribed to the global community in this regard. In (65), those that are bravely moving forward are credited with making the planet healthier. Neste is counted among the brave forward movers because creating a healthier planet is something that Neste is actively accomplishing according to the report. Therefore, every time a proactive environmental activity is characterized as self-propelled movement forward, also Neste is evaluated as a forward mover in that particular activity, and every time an expression denoting lack of forward movement characterizes lack of action in specific environmental activity, Neste as a forward mover in that specific activity stands out favourably in comparison.

4.6 Ontological Metaphors

4.6.1 THE PLANET IS AN OBJECT

The concept of creation is an integral part of the report's main theme in which an abstract concept of “a healthier planet” is conceptualized as an object that Neste is in the process of creating from scratch:

(70) We have a clearly articulated purpose of *creating a healthier planet* for our children and for the next generations.

(71) We can create a healthier planet for our children by working together

The verb *create* has the following basic meaning: “[t]o make, form, set up, or bring into existence (something which has not existed before)” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). An act of creation changes

existing conditions by producing something new that did not exist before. Describing Neste's environmental work as an act of creation gives the impression of a more profound positive impact than what Neste's environmental measures can achieve in reality. Neste's environmental measures do not replace existing environmental conditions with new healthier conditions, but they can only modify existing conditions, for example through emission reductions. The concept of creation also assigns to Neste greater agency to achieve change compared with more realistic understandings of environmental measures. One who creates something new is the sole author of the new object and determines what the finished product will be like, while in reality, Neste's environmental measures can only modify existing conditions. Considering that Neste achieved a 7,9 million ton reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through its renewable products in 2018 (Neste, 2018, p. 18), while at the same time the total greenhouse gas emissions increased by 1,12 billion tonnes (Ritchie & Roser, 2020), the modification that Neste was able to achieve through emission reduction from a global perspective was no more than to marginally slow down the rate of increase in global emissions. There is therefore a conflict between Neste's stated purpose to create a healthier planet and Neste's capacity to achieve that purpose. The conflict concerns both the goal of a healthier planet and the manner of achieving it through creation.

4.6.2 SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS ARE OBJECTS

Sustainable solutions that Neste provides for its customers are conceptualized as objects that Neste creates from scratch. There are 5 examples of Neste creating responsible choices, 4 of which occur in the report's main theme (example 72). There are also 2 examples of Neste creating sustainable solutions (example 73) and 1 example of Neste building them (example 74):

(72) *Creating* responsible choices every day to create a healthier planet for our children.

(73) Neste *creates* sustainable solutions for transportation, aviation, and marine uses, as well as chemical and plastics industries

(74) *Building* sustainable solutions to actively contribute towards mitigating climate change

Conceptualizing responsible choices and sustainable solutions as objects that Neste creates from scratch highlights Neste as their originator and developer, while hiding the reality that new solutions are always based on existing innovation and technology.

4.6.3 THE PLANET IS A LIVING BEING / CLIMATE IS A SENTIENT BEING

The planet is personified in the report 10 times and climate once. These personifications realize the conceptual metaphor THE PLANET IS A LIVING BEING. Most of the personifications of the planet can be found in the report's recurring theme of Neste's purpose to create "a healthier planet" for future generations. In (75), the planet is attributed with the capacity to suffer from environmental degradation in ways that humans and animals suffer from bad physical health.

(75) Creating a *healthier* planet for our children

In (76), the planet is conceptualized as a physical body that needs proper care to stay in shape.

(76) This is the only planet we have, and we all are responsible for *keeping it in shape*.

Climate is personified once in the report:

(77) what part could you play in bringing about a *climate-friendlier* way of living and doing business?

In (77), the planet is viewed as having the capacity to respond psychologically to the way it is treated. This personification can be considered an instance of the conceptual metaphor CLIMATE IS A SENTIENT BEING. Expressing concern over the state of the environment by means of personification projects a caring and protective attitude towards the environment. The implication of these personifications is that the same caring and protective attitude towards the environment would also be manifest in the way Neste conducts its business.

4.6.4 A COMPANY IS A PERSON / A COMPANY IS A LIVING ORGANISM

In 5 instances, Neste is conceptualized as a person that is driven by human motives. They realize the conceptual metaphor A COMPANY IS A PERSON (see Benzces & Kövecses 2010, p. 150). In (78) Neste is conceptualized as being driven by an aspiration to help its customers become more

sustainable and in (79) by commitment to climate action:

(78) *“Neste will stand clear with its aspiration, helping customers with renewable solutions to make their business more sustainable.”*

(79) *Neste is committed to combating climate change and driving circular economy.*

Examples (78) and (79) are given special prominence in the report. Both sentences appear once in the main body of the text and once in a larger font separated from the rest of the text. In (80), Neste is conceptualized as having an attitude that opposes environmentally detrimental actions:

(80) *Neste has a clear stand against any actions that would cause deforestation.*

In (81), Neste has a vision and a purpose that foreground the environmental cause as a motivating factor behind its commercial operations:

(81) *Neste’s vision is to create responsible choices every day with a purpose to create a healthier planet for our children.*

Aspiration, commitment, a stand against, vision and purpose are motives and mindsets that can only belong to people representing Neste, not to the corporate entity Neste itself. Through personification, motives and mindsets that could only belong to people representing Neste in these examples “are attributed to the single agent,” which is Neste (Krennmayr, 2011, p. 169).

Personification conceals the fact that Neste is comprised of individuals whose motives might not uniformly align with the altruistic motives ascribed to the company. It would be implausible to explicitly state that all the people representing Neste collectively shared the same aspiration to help their customers become more sustainable, the same commitment to combat climate change, the same “stand against . . . actions that would cause deforestation” (Neste, 2018, p. 43) and the same “vision . . . to create responsible choices every day” in order to “create a healthier planet” for posterity (Neste, 2018, p. 19). In (82), personification is not used, but instead all Neste employees are expressly stated to share the same passionate mindset for Neste's “purpose of creating a healthier planet” (Neste, 2018, p. 6):

(82) All our employees are passionate about our purpose of creating a healthier planet for our children.

The notion that all the employees of Neste would all share the same passionate mindset towards “creating a healthier planet” is not plausible. In examples (78 – 81), altruistic motives are ascribed only to one “person,” which makes it more convincing to use personification to associate a company with virtuous motives. A company is not a person, but because companies are conventionally personified in corporate discourses, discussing them in human terms does not stand out as exceptional.

In (83) and (84), Neste is conceptualized as a biological organism that has innovation, sustainability and technology as part of its DNA.

(83) Innovation is *in* our *DNA* as much as is sustainability.

(84) Innovations and technology are an essential *part of* Neste’s *DNA*.

These examples realize the conceptual metaphor A COMPANY IS A LIVING ORGANISM. Traits programmed into the DNA are immutable, and therefore also innovation, sustainability and technology are viewed as permanent traits of Neste in these examples. Sustainability being Neste's inherent trait entails that Neste's level of commitment to sustainability will not be influenced by external factors such as public expectations or the prospect of economic gain. Rather, Neste can be relied on to conduct its business responsibly towards the environment independently of any external incentives.

4.7 Force Metaphors

Section 4.7.1 discusses metaphorical expressions used in the report that conceptualize Neste's environmental measures as physical actions that require the use of physical force. There are many types of forces and they can affect objects in many different ways (Benczes & Kövecses, 2010, p. 22).

Force related expressions discussed in section 4.7.1 are *tackle*, *support*, *drive*, *accelerate* and *turn*.

The noun *effort* is also discussed in this section even though it is not strictly speaking a force related

expression. Other force related metaphorical expressions used in the report are the noun/verb *impact* and the noun *force*. They are addressed in section 4.7.2. The noun/verb *impact* conceptualizes environmental effects as physical impacts and the noun *force* conceptualizes Neste's organizational capacity to achieve positive change as physical force.

4.7.1 ABSTRACT ACTION IS ACTION USING PHYSICAL FORCE

Tackle

The verb *tackle* is used metaphorically 4 times in the report to describe action taken to address environmental challenges. In 2 instances, a method developed by Neste is described as an efficient means to *tackle* global plastic waste challenge.

(85) We were active in introducing and promoting chemical recycling of plastic waste as an efficient way to increase plastics recycling rate and *tackle* global plastic waste challenge.

The verb *tackle* is used once to describe action that addresses climate change:

(86) Companies, Neste included, have an important role to play in *tackling* the climate challenge

The verb *tackle* has a physical sense “[t]o grip, lay hold of, take in hand, deal with; to fasten upon, attack, encounter (a person or animal) physically” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). In the above examples, environmental challenges are conceptualized as objects that can be influenced by physically *tackling* them. Understanding an environmental measure as a means of *tackling* an environmental problem suggests that the problem is addressed in a decisive manner and using measures that have a concrete and immediate impact on the problem (see also Jaworska, 2018, p. 207). The verb *tackle* therefore positively evaluates the potential of Neste's method of chemical recycling of plastic waste to address the global plastic waste challenge in (86).

Support

In 13 instances, the verb *support* is used to characterize the help that Neste provides for other actors in their environmental projects and goals:

(87) We *support* both global and local efforts to reduce climate emissions.

(88) Neste updated its climate partnership pledge with City of Helsinki, *supporting* the capital of Finland's efforts to become carbon neutral by 2035.

(89) Neste partnered with the Elfwegentocht event in the Netherlands to *support* the Fossil-free Friesland project

In one instance, Neste is described *supporting* its own greenhouse gas reduction goal:

(90) Additional production capacity for renewable products to *support* achieving the 14 Mt GHG reduction by 2023

The verb *support* has a physical sense “[t]o bear all or part of the weight of (something separate); to hold or prop up; to keep from falling or sinking” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Conceiving of Neste's help as an act of support entails that others are dependent on Neste's continuous help in order to make progress in their goals and that Neste provides such continuous help as long as its help is needed. The verb *support* attaches more value to Neste's help compared to other conventional expressions such as *assist*, *aid* and *help* because the metaphorical sense of the verb *support* highlights Neste's help as essential.

Drive

In 4 instances, Neste is described having a positive influence by *driving* phenomena that contribute to sustainable development:

(91) Neste is committed to . . . *driving* circular economy.

(92) To *drive* improved transparency in the palm oil industry as a whole

(93) to collaboratively *drive* innovation in addressing region-specific sustainability issues

The verb *drive* has a basic sense “[t]o send (something) forcibly in a particular direction; to cause (something) to move by applying physical force” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). In the above examples, circular economy, improved transparency and innovation are conceptualized as physical entities that Neste forces in the desired direction by driving them. This conceptualization gives Neste

much agency to achieve positive change.

Accelerate

Expressions that indicate 'increase in the speed of movement' are used 5 times to describe Neste increasing the efficiency of processes that contribute to sustainable development. 3 of them describe Neste accelerating circular economy (example 96) and 2 of them describe Neste expediting the adoption “of methane avoidance methods within the palm oil industry” (example 97) (Neste, 2018, p. 36). They realize the metaphor INTENSE ACTION IS SPEED (Goatly, 2007, p. 52; see also Lakoff & Johnson 1999, p. 188).

(94) Chemical recycling of plastics . . . *accelerates* circular economy

(95) We continued to aim for *accelerated* implementation of methane avoidance methods within the palm oil industry

Turn

In (96) and (97), Neste's future goals of repurposing plastic waste and achieving a sustainable transformation in Lidö island are conceptualized as entities that Neste can easily manipulate by turning them. This suggests that when the solutions are found, they will effectively achieve their purpose. Lakoff & Johnson (1999, p. 207) discuss metaphors like these as a combination of the metaphor CHANGING IS TURNING and the metaphor Causation Is Forced Motion, resulting in “forced turning” (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, p. 207).

(96) We started exploring ways to *turn* plastic waste *into* high-quality raw material for fuels, chemicals and new plastics.

(97) Together with several partners, we started exploring solutions to *turn* Lidö island in the Swedish archipelago entirely fossil free in one year.

Effort

The noun *effort* is used 12 times in the report to characterize Neste's work in advancing various sustainability-related goals. 9 of them characterize Neste's work to address sustainability challenges

facing society:

(98) Read more about our *efforts* to contribute to circular economy via chemical recycling of plastics

(99) In addition to our *efforts* to replace conventional fossil resources with renewables

(100) Multiple *efforts* to prevent deforestation to combat climate change

(101) we continued *efforts* to enable reduction of CO2 emissions in aviation.

In 2 instances, the noun *effort* characterizes Neste's work to address sustainability challenges connected to its own operations:

(102) *Efforts* to improve production efficiency in oil refining

(103) In 2018, we continued our PFAD supply chain mapping *efforts*

In the above examples, the noun *effort* conceptualizes Neste's environmental work as strenuous physical activity. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *effort* as follows: “[a] strenuous putting forth of power, physical or mental; a laborious attempt; a struggle” (Oxford University Press, n.d.).

Understanding Neste's engagements addressing sustainability challenges as physical effort suggests that Neste engages in these activities with dedication and strives to make a difference.

4.7.2 Other Force Related Metaphors

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE CHANGE IS FORCE

Neste's organizational capacity to achieve change is conceptualized as a *force* in 5 instances. 4 of them refers to Neste's capacity to provide sustainable solutions:

(104) We joined *forces* in developing and making new sustainable material solutions accessible to a variety of industries

(105) Neste and Alaska Airlines joined *forces* to fly more sustainably and expand the use of sustainable aviation fuels

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ARE IMPACTS

Both positive and negative effects that corporate activities have on the environment are

conventionally expressed as *impacts*. The noun *impact* has a concrete meaning: “[t]he act of impinging; the striking of one body against another; collision” (Oxford University Press, n.d.). The basic meaning of the noun *impact* denotes a sudden and forceful event whose effects can be observed immediately. Corporate environmental effects are not normally caused by sudden events but they accumulate gradually over time. The term *impact* compresses environmental effects that have accumulated gradually over time into a sudden and forceful event. This draws attention to and emphasizes the change that an activity has caused to the environment. In the context of communicating positive environmental effects, the term *impact* emphasizes the positive change caused by an activity. In the context of communicating negative environmental effects, the term *impact* emphasizes the negative change caused by an activity.

The positive influence Neste has on the environment is conceptualized as *impact* 5 times and the positive influence Neste will potentially have in the future is conceptualized as *impact* 3 times:

(106) Neste’s climate role and positive *impact*

(107) As we aim for making an even more significant positive climate *impact*

(108) Neste MY Renewable Diesel, . . . , continued making a significant climate *impact*.

(109) Wide-scale implementation of the method could provide large climate *impact*

The positive connotations that the noun *impact* has in the context of communicating positive environmental effects are further emphasized by positive adjective modifiers such as *significant*, *positive* and *large*. They are used to emphasize the positive *impact* Neste's activities have on the environment in 6 out of the 8 instances. Neste's adverse influence on the environment is conceptualized as *impact* 5 times:

(110) Local environmental *impact*

(111) Proactive measures to reduce environmental *impact*

(112) The options to reduce the emission of volatile organic compounds (VOC) to air at our production facilities for renewable products are being evaluated based on their technical

feasibility and potential to shift *impacts* to other environmental areas (e.g. energy, waste).

(113) We had only two minor permit violations with very minor environmental *impacts*

(114) The area *impacted* by air emissions has diminished over the past 20 years

In contrast to descriptions of Neste's positive *impacts*, negative impacts tend to be de-emphasized in a sense that they are being reduced (examples 111 and 114) or described as inconsequential (example 113). Negative impacts are also never emphasized by negative adjective premodifiers such as *negative*, which contrasts with how positive impacts are communicated.

4.8 GOOD IS UP / LESS IS DOWN

Terms related to upward orientation are used in the report to characterize the quality of products and solutions, performance level and emission levels. They realize the orientational metaphor GOOD IS UP (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 16). Neste's products and solutions are evaluated as being of *high* quality 11 times. 6 of them concern Neste's products and solutions that are positively associated with sustainability:

(115) Offers sustainable solutions that are based on *high*-quality oil products and related services.

(116) We continue focusing on our customers' needs for reliable and *high*-quality, technology solutions to achieve their sustainability aspirations.

(117) •*High*-quality renewable products suitable for greenhouse gas reduction solutions for engines

(118) Neste MY Renewable Diesel, a *high* quality drop-in fuel for all diesel-powered passenger cars and heavy transport

In 3 instances, Neste's oil products are positively evaluated as being of *high*-quality. Example (115) above is also counted as an example of this:

(119) we continue to produce *high*-quality oil products from crude oil and condensates

(120) Extensive selection of *high*-quality solutions combining fossil and renewable products

Neste's performance level is positively evaluated in terms of upward orientation 4 times.

(121) we will apply certain emissions limits and control systems also from the European legislation to ensure *high-level* of environmental performance.

(122) Only 126 companies globally were awarded with the 'A List' placement, Neste being the only energy company to *reach* this *level*.

Neste and other actors' level of ambition to contribute to sustainable development is described using terms related to upward orientation.

(123) We have revisited our strategy in February 2019 and *set the bar high* for the next decade.

(124) Nordic countries, . . . remain in a leadership position globally with their *high* ambition *level* to reduce climate emissions and increase circularity of materials

(125) We . . . are glad to see these countries and states *elevating* their ambition *level* to tackle climate emissions from transport.

(126) Increasing *level* of ambition

The prefix '*low-/'lower-*' is used 13 times to characterize emission levels from Neste's products. They are instances of the orientational metaphor LESS IS DOWN (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 15–16).

(127) by choosing our *low*-emission alternatives instead of *higher*-emission fossil products

(128) With our renewable and circular *low*-emission solutions, we contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement

(129) We already offer *low*-sulphur marine fuels

(130) *Low*-carbon solutions

(131) It can also be used as a *low*-carbon drop-in fuel in LPG cars

The prefix '*low-/'lower-*' creates the impression that a product does not produce many emissions. It therefore evaluates a product's emission level positively while the prefix '*high-/'higher-*' evaluates a product's emission level negatively. There are no examples in the report that would evaluate Neste's

products negatively as *high/higher* emission products. In 5 instances, emission levels from Neste's own industrial processes are positively evaluated by the terms *low* and *lower*. They are also realizations of the orientational metaphor LESS IS DOWN. There are no examples that would evaluate emission levels from Neste's own industrial processes as being *high* or *higher*.

(132) the amount of oil that ends up in the sea . . . will be reduced even further from the current very *low level*

(133) Oil in waste water discharges at Naantali refinery have also remained at a very *low level*

(134) the overall NOx emissions are *low* in the production of our renewable products.

(135) while yellow color corresponds to relatively *lower* pollution *levels* around Kilpilahti industrial area (including Neste refinery).

4.9 Metaphorical Conceptualizations Excluded From the Main Analysis

This section contains a brief discussion of most of the metaphorical conceptualizations that were excluded from the analysis.

Many targets were conceptualized as a large or growing area. These included Neste's product selection, Neste's raw material selection and the availability of Neste My Renewable Diesel (e.g. "a *wide* variety of renewables"; "Extensive selection of high-quality solutions"; "Expanding Neste MY renewable diesel distribution").

Various targets were described in terms of size, for example Neste as a company (e.g. "Neste is the world's *largest* producer of renewable diesel"), emission levels (e.g. "Neste MY Renewable Diesel enables up to 90% *smaller* greenhouse gas emissions") and the degree of Neste's positive environmental impact (e.g. "could provide *large* climate impact").

Neste's ability to adapt to its customers needs and the adaptability of Neste's raw materials and solutions were characterized in terms of flexibility (e.g. "We are known for our reliability and *flexibility* when it comes to the supply of fuel solutions"; "Our extensive renewable raw material

portfolio and global supply provide us *flexibility*, as they allow us to respond to the differing needs of various markets and customers”; “*Flexible* and reliable customer solutions”).

Neste's cooperation with its partners and other entities was depicted as physical proximity (e.g. “We work in *close* cooperation with our strategic customers and partners”; “We *joined* forces in developing and making new sustainable material solutions”).

Expressions relating to seeing (*transparent, traceable, traceability, visibility, disclose*) were frequently used metaphorically to communicate that Neste does not withhold information regarding its supply chains, especially its palm oil supply chain (e.g. “Improving PFAD supply chain *transparency*”; “fully *traceable* palm oil remains in our raw material portfolio”; “Neste continues to be the only energy sector company that *transparently discloses* its forest footprint”). For further discussion on the transparency metaphor, see Livesey & Kearings (2002, p. 248).

Reductions in emissions and energy consumption were characterized as energy and emissions *savings* (e.g. “The climate *savings* that our renewable products offer”; “now aiming for a total of 14 Mt of greenhouse gas emissions *saved*”).

Metaphorical expressions *transformation* and *transformative* were used to characterize Neste's change as a company (e.g. “in our business *transformation*”) and positive change Neste has achieved or aim to achieve in projects promoting sustainable development (e.g. “to achieve *transformative* sustainability change in Indonesia”).

The term *management* and *manage* were used to characterize Neste's environmental work in terms of control Neste exercises over phenomena related to the environment (e.g. “Neste’s deforestation risk management performance”; “•Managing sustainability”; “proactive environmental management”) (see Yu, 2020, 250–251).

Based on the analyst's subjective assessment of their relevance to Neste's environmental image, conceptualizations relating to large/growing area and transparency could have been included in the analysis.

5. Discussion

The present study explored the use of conceptual metaphors in Neste Annual Report 2018 in order to learn how they contribute to Neste's environmental image in the context of corporate environmental communication. The following two research questions were formulated in order to achieve this aim.

1. What conceptual metaphors used in the report have a bearing on Neste's environmental image?
2. How do they contribute to Neste's environmental image in the context of corporate environmental communication?

The answer to the first research question was obtained by first identifying metaphorically used lexical items that were contextually relevant to Neste's environmental image. Conceptual metaphors were then formulated on the basis of systematic connections that could be established between metaphorical expressions and topics they referred to. 16 conceptual metaphors were selected for closer analysis. The main criterion for selecting a particular conceptual metaphor for closer analysis was its perceived relevance to Neste's environmental image. They are listed and briefly described below. Conceptual metaphors that were not included in the main analysis are discussed in section 4.9.

The metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY conceptualized Neste's progress in various sustainability-related activities as movement along a path forward and movement towards a destination. Three of its submappings were analysed more closely: PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY, PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION TOWARDS A DESTINATION and AMOUNT OF PROGRESS IS DISTANCE MOVED. The first mapping conceptualized Neste's environmental activities as journeys. The second mapping conceptualized Neste's progress in its environmental goals as uninterrupted movement towards a destination. The third mapping, which consisted of the expressions *lead the way* and *forerunner*, conceptualized Neste's advancement in

renewable products and bio-based plastics as distance travelled along a path. They also conceptualized Neste as a guide in renewable products and bio-based plastics. The contextual use of the conceptual metaphor RESEARCHING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS IS EXPLORING conveyed a sense that Neste actively seeks to address and resolve society's sustainability challenges. The conceptual metaphor THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IS A MILITARY CONFLICT focused on depicting Neste's climate action as offensive military action. The conceptual metaphor CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IS RACE PERFORMANCE conceptualized Neste's performance in sustainability-related activities as a performance of a race leader. The metaphor TAKING ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENT FORWARD was used as part of a pattern that conceptualized environmental action as a matter of urgency and as a matter of choice between moving forward and staying still.

The following ontological metaphors were assessed to be relevant to Neste's environmental image. The ontological metaphor THE PLANET IS AN OBJECT conceptualized Neste's environmental action as an act of creation. The metaphor SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS ARE OBJECTS conceptualized Neste's sustainable solutions as objects that Neste creates from scratch. The metaphor THE PLANET IS A LIVING BEING was used to compare the condition of the planet with the health of a living being. The metaphor CLIMATE IS A SENTIENT BEING attributed to climate the capacity to respond psychologically to the way it is treated. The metaphor A COMPANY IS A PERSON portrayed Neste being motivated by an unselfish desire to contribute to sustainable development. The metaphor A COMPANY IS A LIVING ORGANISM (the DNA metaphor) conceived sustainability as an intrinsic property of Neste.

Neste's environmental measures were conceptualized through various metaphorical expressions denoting actions that require the use of physical force. These were *tackle*, *support*, *drive*, *accelerate* and *turn* and they were analysed as instances of the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT ACTION IS ACTION USING PHYSICAL FORCE. Various environmental measures were conceptualized as actions that require the use of physical force. The metaphor ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE

CHANGE IS A FORCE conceptualized Neste's capacity to achieve positive change as a force. The metaphor ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ARE IMPACTS conceived both Neste's positive and negative influence on the environment as physical impacts. The conceptual metaphor GOOD IS UP (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 16) positively evaluated the quality of Neste's sustainable solutions, Neste's environmental performance and Neste's ambition level to contribute to sustainable development. Emission levels of Neste's products and industrial processes were positively evaluated by the prefix 'low-'/lower'. They are instances of the orientational metaphor LESS IS DOWN (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 15–16).

The second research question asked how the conceptual metaphors listed above contributed to Neste's environmental image in the context of corporate environmental communication. Conceptual metaphors contributed to Neste's environmental image in broadly two different respects: by highlighting Neste's positive environmental impact and by portraying Neste as an environmentally responsible company. Neste's positive environmental impact was highlighted through metaphors that depicted Neste effectively making progress both in its local and global environmental goals (the journey metaphor mappings PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION TOWARDS A DESTINATION and THE AMOUNT OF PROGRESS IS DISTANCE MOVED, THE PLANET IS AN OBJECT metaphor, force related metaphorical expressions *drive, accelerate, turn*), and by depicting Neste as an innovator in the development of sustainable solutions (Neste's metaphorical role as a guide in renewable products and bio-based plastics, the metaphor RESEARCHING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS IS EXPLORING and the race metaphor, which conceptualized Neste as a leader in the global renewable products market). The image of Neste as an environmentally responsible company was communicated by depicting Neste as proactive (Neste's metaphorical role as a guide, Neste's environmental action as self-propelled movement forward, Neste's research activities as exploration, Neste's climate action as combat against climate change) and hard-working (the concept of exploration, the race metaphor, the metaphorical expressions *effort* and *support*) in its contribution

to sustainable development and by depicting Neste as a company that prioritizes the environment in its business activities (personification of the planet, personifications of Neste, the DNA metaphor). The following paragraphs summarize the most salient aspects of each conceptual metaphor with respect to their contribution to Neste's environmental image. The findings are also compared with earlier studies where applicable.

PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY

The conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY highlighted Neste's progress in goals related to environmental sustainability (Benczes & Köveczes, 2010, p. 91). According to Milne et al. (2006, p. 822) corporations utilize the journey metaphor to highlight their “commitment to ‘continuous improvement’” particularly “‘towards sustainability’” (Milne et al., 2006, p. 815). Neste's ongoing journeys “towards a sustainable future” (Neste, 2018, p. 6) and “of creating a healthier planet” (Neste, 2018, p. 3) highlighted Neste as being committed to sustainable development in the long term. Milne et al. (2006) also found that corporate journeys towards sustainability lack “a defined end point” (p. 817). They note that the journey metaphor without “a defined end point” (Milne et al., 2006, p. 817) allows companies to communicate that they are making an effort to become sustainable but without needing to address the question of whether their effort is sufficient (Milne et al., 2006, 822). Neither of Neste's journeys mentioned above has a clearly defined end point. The lack of clearly defined end points allows the journeys to continue indefinitely into the future, which gives a sense of continuity to Neste's contribution to sustainable development (see also Yu, 2020, p. 251).

The journey metaphor mapping PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION TOWARDS A DESTINATION conceptualized Neste's progress in sustainability-related activities as steady movement towards a destination, which gives the impression of progress being effectively made. This conceptualization was applied to both Neste's progress in local sustainability goals and goals that were situated within the broader context of global sustainability.

The journey metaphor was used most frequently to describe Neste addressing sustainability concerns of other actors and society in general rather than sustainability challenges related to its own operations. The contextual use of the journey metaphor therefore contributes to Neste's image as a contributor to sustainable development. This is in line with the function of the journey metaphor in some of the reports analysed by Milne et al. who found that for some companies “the journey is also about how business can contribute towards a sustainable future for stakeholders and society” (Milne et al., 2006, p. 820). Neste's role as a contributor to environmental sustainability was most transparently expressed by Neste's metaphorical “journey of creating a healthier planet” (Neste, 2018, p. 3) for future generations.

Expressions *lead the way* and *forerunner* realized the mapping AMOUNT OF PROGRESS IS DISTANCE MOVED. They conceptualized Neste's progress in the development of renewable products and bio-based plastics as distance travelled along a path. They also conceptualized Neste as a guide in renewable products and bio-based plastics, which draws attention to Neste's positive influence in the broader context of sustainable development.

RESEARCH PROCESS IS EXPLORATION

The verb *explore* was used in the report to characterize Neste's research efforts to develop sustainable solutions for the benefit of society. Understanding Neste's research into sustainable solutions as exploration entails that Neste is actively engaged in research into innovative sustainable solutions.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IS A MILITARY CONFLICT

Neste's climate action was most commonly depicted as combat against climate change. This suggests that Neste takes seriously the threat posed by climate change and that it devotes considerable effort and resources into addressing the threat. The phrase *combat climate change* was used in the report to communicate Neste's climate change mitigation measures in two different ways. Firstly, the phrase was used to communicate that Neste engages in specific business activities in order to combat

climate change. Secondly, *combating climate change* was characterized as the purpose of Neste's business. The frequent use of the verb *combat* to describe Neste's climate action contrasts with how climate action was described in Chinese and American CSR reports (Yu, 2020, p. 253). Chinese and American companies mainly used neutral “expressions such as *address climate change*” and “deal with climate change” (“deal with climate change” is Yu's translation from Chinese) (Yu, 2020, p. 253). Italian companies, by contrast, showed a preference for presenting their climate action as “the fight against climate change” (Yu's translation from Italian), which is in line with how climate action was presented in Neste's report (Yu 2020, pp. 252–253).

The war metaphor has been used as a means of communicating “the urgency to act on climate change” (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017, p. 458) and for prompting action by bringing attention to the threat (Nerlich 2009, p. 583). This contrasts with how the war metaphor functioned in Neste's report. The war metaphor was utilized in the report one-dimensionally so that only action against climate change was part of the metaphorical mapping, while the role of the enemy, climate change, was reduced to that of a passive receiver of combat action directed against it. This highlighted Neste's climate measures as serious but communicated nothing about the threat of climate change nor the urgency of the problem. One-dimensional use of the war metaphor provided a limited perspective on the battle against climate change, which was shown to favourably influence the impression conveyed of the effectiveness of Neste's “combat action” against climate change.

Jaworska (2018) found that while oil companies used the verbs *tackle*, *combat* and *fight* in their climate change discourse, they tended not to use these expressions to refer to any concrete climate action of their own but mainly used them in a more general sense to communicate the importance of climate action. This contrasts with the way the verb *combat* was used in the report to portray Neste as an active climate change fighter. The difference might be explained by the fact that as a provider and developer of renewable and circular solutions, Neste has more credibility as a climate change fighter than the companies discussed in Jaworka's study.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IS RACE PERFORMANCE

The race metaphor favourably evaluated Neste's performance in renewable products and other activities related to sustainable development by comparing Neste's performance in these activities to the performance of a race leader. Describing Neste as a *leader* not only communicates Neste's superior performance relative to other companies, but it also communicates that the first place is achieved in a competitive environment where companies actively strive to outperform one another. Managing to maintain a leading position in a demanding and competitive environment conveys a more positive evaluation of performance compared to static representations of corporate performance. The race metaphor conflicts with the report's portrayal of Neste as a company whose business is driven by the environmental cause because it entails that Neste prioritizes competitive success over the environment. The presence of two conflicting motives for Neste's environmental action may reflect "the inherent conflicts" that exist "between business, society and nature" (Laine, 2010, p. 268). It may also reflect the fact that the race metaphor is a conventionalized means of communicating corporate performance.

SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENT FORWARD IS TAKING ACTION

Contextual analysis of expressions relating to self-propelled movement forward (*move forward, go forward*) revealed that they were used as part of a pattern that presents environmental action as a matter of urgency and a matter of choice. The choice to act on the urgency was presented metaphorically as the choice to move forward and the choice not to act as the choice not to move forward. Neste was evaluated positively as a forward mover in various sustainability-related activities and therefore as a responsible and a proactive company in sustainable development. The global community, by contrast, was portrayed as irresponsible by its lack of initiative to move forward. The contrast between Neste and the global community served to further highlight Neste as an environmentally responsible and proactive company.

THE PLANET IS AN OBJECT / SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS ARE OBJECTS

The report's main theme depicted Neste having a positive global impact by creating a healthier planet. Understanding positive environmental impact as something that is created gives the impression of a profound impact but in a way that does not realistically reflect what Neste's environmental measures can achieve. Neste's environmental measures do not create new environmental conditions that replace the old ones, but they can only modify existing environmental conditions, for example by achieving emission reductions. It was also pointed out that having the goal of a healthier planet was in itself problematic because it is not in Neste's power to determine whether or not the planet becomes "healthier".

The concept of creation was also used in the report's main theme to conceptualize responsible choices and sustainable solutions as objects that Neste creates from scratch. This conceptualization highlights Neste as the originator and developer of the solutions it provides to its customers, while hiding the fact that new solutions are always based on existing innovation and technology.

THE PLANET IS A LIVING BEING / CLIMATE IS A SENTIENT BEING

In the report's main theme, the planet was conceptualized as a living being with sub-optimal health and climate was personified once in the report as being capable of feeling mental pain. Discussing the planet and climate as though they were living beings capable of physical and mental suffering projects a caring attitude towards the environment and implies that the same caring attitude would also manifest itself in the way Neste treats the environment.

A COMPANY IS A PERSON / A COMPANY IS A LIVING ORGANISM

Personifications that ascribed to Neste human motives highlighted Neste as being driven by the aspiration to help its customers and society become more sustainable. These personifications concealed the reality that people representing Neste do not uniformly align with the motives ascribed to the company. It would not be plausible to claim that they all shared the same motives. Personification makes it more convincing to associate a company with virtuous motives because in

personification these motives are ascribed only to one “person”. Livesey & Kearings (2002) found that The Body Shop International and the Royal/Dutch/Shell Group used “rhetorics of passion and caring” in order to highlight reasons for their existence that were not connected to financial performance (p. 244). The sentiment of passion and caring could also be observed in personifications of Neste.

The DNA metaphor conceptualized Neste as a living organism that has sustainability as part of its DNA. The DNA metaphor entails that Neste's stand on sustainability will not be swayed by external factors such as public expectations or the prospect of financial gain, but rather Neste can be relied on to consistently integrate sustainability into its business practices.

Force metaphors

The verbs *tackle*, *support*, *drive*, *accelerate* and *turn* conceptualized environmental challenges and other phenomena related to sustainable development as objects that Neste manipulates by using physical force on them. The verbs were analysed as realizations of the conceptual metaphor ABSTRACT ACTION IS ACTION USING PHYSICAL FORCE. The verbs *tackle*, *drive*, *accelerate* and *turn* highlighted Neste's agency to achieve change and the frequently used verb *support* highlighted Neste's help as indispensable and valuable. Another frequently used metaphorical expression *effort* was used to characterize Neste's work addressing sustainability challenges of other actors and society. The metaphorical sense of the word suggests that Neste strives to help society become more sustainable and works hard for it. Neste's organizational capacity to achieve change was conceptualized as a force, and treated as an instantiation of the conceptual metaphor ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE CHANGE IS FORCE. The conventional metaphorical expression *impact* was used in the report to characterize both the positive and negative effects that Neste's business activities have on the natural environment. Its use was shown to emphasize the positive change in the context of communicating Neste's positive environmental impacts and the negative change in the context of communicating Neste's negative environmental impacts. These

opposite evaluative implications were reflected in the way the term *impact* was used in the report. Unlike descriptions of Neste's positive environmental impacts, Neste's negative environmental impacts were never emphasized by adjective modifiers such as *negative*. Instead, there was a tendency to de-emphasize Neste's negative impacts by describing them as being reduced.

GOOD IS UP / LESS IS DOWN

The orientational metaphor GOOD IS UP was used in the report to positively evaluate the quality of Neste's products, Neste's environmental performance and Neste's ambition level to contribute to sustainable development. Emission levels from Neste's products and industrial processes were positively evaluated as being *low* or *lower*. They were never evaluated negatively by using the adjectives *high* or *higher*.

6. Conclusion

The present study explored conceptual metaphors in Neste Annual Report 2018 in order to learn how they contribute to Neste's environmental image. As opposed to most of the earlier metaphor studies on corporate environmental reporting, the present study did not limit the analysis to specific environmental themes or to specific conceptual metaphors but aimed to gain a more comprehensive picture of the role of conceptual metaphors in the construction of Neste's environmental image. A diverse set of metaphorical conceptualizations were found to contribute to Neste's environmental image and it appears that at least some of them had not been addressed in previous research on the topic. All the analysed metaphorical conceptualizations in the report were conventional metaphors and likely to be conventionally used in corporate environmental communication. Findings of the study can therefore be applied in the broader context of corporate environmental communication, especially with respect to the insights gained on the ways in which conceptual metaphors can be used to influence and manipulate corporate environmental image. 15 conceptual metaphors were analysed more closely. They contributed to Neste's environmental image by portraying Neste as an environmentally responsible company, a proactive and hard-working

innovator and a company whose contributions make a difference when it comes to resolving sustainability challenges facing society. Some of the metaphorical conceptualizations, especially the concept of creation, conveyed an unrealistic picture of Neste's capacity to achieve change. The report's main theme and personifications presented Neste as a company that is driven by the environmental cause. The analysis revealed that the portrayal of Neste as a race leader in sustainability related business activities conflicted with the image of Neste as a company that puts the environment first. The conflict was caused by the race metaphor entailment that Neste's priority in sustainability related activities is competitive success, excluding the possibility that they would be primarily motivated by the environmental cause. The analysis thus suggests that using the race metaphor to communicate corporate performance in sustainability related activities is not compatible with the image of a company that prioritizes sustainable development.

The main limitations of the study relate to the criteria by which lexical items were selected for analysis and to the method of metaphor identification. The choice of which lexical items to include in the analysis was based on the analyst's subjective assessment of their relevance to corporate environmental image. This may have resulted in relevant metaphors being ignored (see Cameron & Maslen, 2010, p. 98). This issue was addressed by applying the identification step to most of the text at least three times. Subsequent applications of the step helped gaining a better overall understanding the metaphorical conceptualizations used in the report and thereby reduce the number of relevant metaphors being overlooked. The method used for metaphor identification relied partially on intuition, which may also have caused relevant metaphors to be ignored. The reliability of metaphor identification can be increased by using a method of metaphor identification such as the MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). Its use was not considered a practical option in the present study, however. The target area of analysis was defined broadly to include all lexical items that had contextual relevance to corporate environmental image, which resulted in a considerable number of lexical items to be analysed for metaphoricity. Rigorously applying the MIP to all of them would have

been “unwieldy and overly time-consuming” (Kimmel, 2012, p. 6). It was more practical to use a less time-consuming method that combined the use of intuition and dictionary definitions, and it allowed for devoting more attention to the qualitative analysis of conceptual metaphors. No systematic criteria was used for determining the size of lexical units for linguistic metaphors, which may have affected the quantitative results (Cameron & Maslen, 2010, 106). This was not a major concern in the present study, however. Due to the small sample size and the qualitative focus of the study, obtaining precise quantitative results was of secondary importance.

The interpretative nature of metaphor analysis introduced another limitation to the study. The interpretation of metaphors was supported by earlier studies and dictionary definitions, which provided a degree of objectivity to the analysis. However, subjectivity cannot be eliminated from metaphor analysis. As Charteris-Black (2004) notes, metaphor “relies on interpretation”, which makes it “necessarily a subjective aspect of language” (p. 24).

Some of the findings of the study are worth further investigation. Earlier studies have found that the war metaphor has been used in order “to communicate the urgency to act on climate change” (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017, p. 458) and in order to prompt action by bringing attention to the threat (Nerlich 2009, p. 583). In Neste's report, the war metaphor focused almost exclusively on action taken against climate change. This did not draw attention to the problem itself but rather it emphasized the effectiveness with which the problem was addressed. One-dimensional use of the war metaphor that focuses on action may well be a characteristic feature of corporate environmental communication. Further studies could investigate if this is the case and if any significant variation exists in the use of the war metaphor between companies and between different industries. The evaluative pattern which conceptualized environmental action as a matter of urgency and as a matter of choice between moving forward and staying still could be explored further in order to learn if the pattern is more widely used in Neste's environmental communication and if a similar pattern is used by other companies. Metaphor had a prominent role in the report's recurring theme of Neste's

purpose to create a healthier planet for future generations. Future studies could investigate metaphor use in such recurring themes in corporate environmental communication in order to learn what kind of corporate images they promote.

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