

“We safeguard biodiversity”

A Qualitative Analysis of three Corporations' language use regarding nature in their Annual Reports' Sustainability sections

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Master's Thesis

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This thesis aims to study the language used in the three large Finnish Forest & Pulp Industry corporations’ year 2022 annual report’s when discussing nature in the sustainability sections. The purpose is to analyse the language from a critical ecolinguistic point of view focusing on how language is used when discussing nature and what this implies about how the corporations’ view nature and how the relationship between them and nature is constructed. This is done utilising Critical Discourse Studies with an Ecolinguistic point of view, together with Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar’s Transitivity Analysis.

The results show that language use perpetuates the view on nature as a resource to exploit. This is shown through the constructions of the clauses and superficial discussion on nature, the corporations’ impacts on nature and use of certain words to frame the corporation as sustainable, without further exploring the issues. The results indicate that when it comes to discussing sustainability and nature, there are many ways in which language use still furthers the idea of nature as a resource to exploit, even when seemingly the discussion is eco-friendly and nature positive. A more critical stance on the ability of corporations to obscure their impacts and exploitation of nature is needed.

Key words: ecolinguistics, critical discourse studies, transitivity analysis, corporate sustainability reporting, corporate communications

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Corporate Discourse.....	4
2.1	Corporate Communications briefly.....	4
2.2	Corporate Sustainability Reporting	5
2.3	The Annual Report	7
3	Theoretical Background	9
3.1	Critical Discourse Studies	9
3.2	Ecolinguistics.....	12
3.3	Systemic Functional Grammar.....	15
4	Materials and Methods	20
4.1	Materials	20
4.2	Methods	22
5	Analysis	25
5.1	Material processes	25
5.1.1	Corporation as the actor	26
5.1.2	Corporation's actions as the actor	33
5.1.3	Nature as the actor	38
5.1.4	No actor	43
5.2	Relational processes	47
5.3	Mental.....	55
5.4	Verbal.....	58
6	Discussion.....	60
6.1	General summary.....	60
6.2	Participants and process types.....	61
6.3	Lexical word choices	62
6.4	Limitations and issues.....	64
7	Conclusion	66
	References	68

Appendices	72
Appendix 1: All analysed examples from the materials	72
Appendix 2: The Finnish Summary	79

List of abbreviations

CSR = Corporate Sustainability Reporting

CDS = Critical Discourse Studies

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis

GRI = Global Reporting Initiative

1 Introduction

Language shapes the way we see the world, and through language use ideologies and ideas are conveyed, sometimes even unconsciously. We might not often think about the forces that create and uphold the words we use to discuss nature, but as the need to recognise and change our exploitative, ecologically harmful, and unsustainable actions grows, so does the need to examine our language and its use. The way we discuss and name nature, natural phenomena and everything else related to nature, is a crucial window to the way we understand them. Another important aspect in language use is power. It is not inconsequential who is the one coining new term and how financially and politically powerful entities utilise language. Beth Schultz has written about how commercial users of the environment have an impact on the language commonly used in regards to it, because of the power they wield in society (Schultz, 1992, 109). There is an added layer of responsibility on language use then, if the user has significant power to excerpt.

For this reason, this study looks at how three corporations in the Forest industry discuss nature in their annual reports' sustainability sections. As part of the industry, the corporations (Metsä Group 2023; Stora Enso 2023; UPM 2023) contribute to the industry lingo and common language use, which in turn contributes to our overall language use regarding the topics. In addition, the industry has a long history in Finland and has been the topic of much discussion the past few years, especially regarding sustainability. Environmental organisations and activists have criticised the corporations and gained media attention, which in turn has prompted the corporations to share their sides. Sustainability reporting and sustainable business practices have at the same time become ever more important in the world of business, which furthers the incentive to study the language use regarding these topics. Corporations have an ever-growing interest and incentive to report on sustainability and according to KPMG's survey on Corporate Sustainability Reporting in 2022, 96% of the 5800 companies from 58 different countries reported on sustainability or ESG matters (Environmental, Social and Governance).

Corporate Sustainability Reporting (henceforth CSR) encompasses a multitude of different aspects, and language use regarding nature and sustainability is one of them. CSR has been of interest to many researchers in multiple different academic fields, from accounting to international business and organisational studies to linguistics. What many studies have found is that what corporations mean by sustainability might not correspond to what is generally

considered as sustainable action by others in society. Güler and Crowther (2009) argue that CSR's use of 'Sustainability' obscures the real effects of corporate action, and Milne and Gray (2012) critique modern sustainability reporting and argue that with entities incorporating these performance indicators into their management and reporting, real concerns for ecology have become sidelined. In the field of linguistics, Conrad and Holtbrügge (2020) have studied decoupling tendencies in sustainability reporting of multiple manufacturing firms, and Fernández-Vázquez and Sancho-Rodríguez (2021) have analysed the world's top polluters' websites from an ecolinguistic point of view. Studying CSR from a linguistic point of view allows us to see how language shapes our understanding of corporate actions and to analyse the corporation's relationship to nature.

Another aspect to the issue is the growing importance of environmental issues to investors, governments, and people. CSR's role in corporate communications has become crucial, and legal binding s mandate more information to be published on the topics. Sustainability and concern for nature and ecological issues have gained importance in brand building and marketing, and with social media platforms news about unsustainable actions spread quicker than ever. More and more people have access and interest in what corporations are doing to halt climate change and which corporations act responsibly. This has prompted many corporations to put effort into both their CSR and their Sustainability Communications. Here again, the crucial part of language in the mix comes up.

Aran Stibbe opens his book *Language, Ecology, and the Stories we live by* (2015) with the conclusion that language shapes the way we see the world. The way we discuss issues and use language can intentionally or unintentionally affect the way we think about the nature around us. For example, using seemingly neutral language can actually downplay issues and the use of euphemisms can make issues appear much more positive than they are in reality (Penz 2018, 278). A way this can be seen in corporate communication is the 'corporate as a person' metaphor, not because of the metaphor itself but because of the way in which it is used (Stibbe 2015, 75). When corporations are talked about as if they are persons, persons, the matter of responsibility tends to become obscured (Stibbe 2015, 77). The "corporation person" is often a certain type of person; self-centred and profit-seeking, not caring about the impact on the environment, and when talked about as if it was a person deciding things for itself, problems start to arise (ibid.).

This metaphor is not the only “linguistic issue” in corporate communications. This thesis sets out to examine the language use in three Finnish Forest, Paper and Pulp industry’s companies’ annual reports’ sustainability sections regarding nature. The aim is to study both the grammatical constructions of the clauses discussing nature, and what they imply, and the word choices and their implications. To do this, this study will utilise both Halliday’s Transitivity Analysis as well Critical Discourse Studies, with an ecolinguistic perspective.

There are three research questions for the study:

1. How is nature linguistically represented in the materials and how does the corporation view nature?
2. What are the dominant process types in the materials and what do they together with participants in the clauses imply about the relationship between the corporations and nature?
3. The materials are part of the corporation’s annual reports’ sustainability sections and the industry in which the corporations operate directly utilises nature for profit. How do the corporations frame themselves as sustainable and eco-friendly in the materials?

For the first question, I hypothesise that nature is represented as something humans have the right to exploit, and language is used to support this via word choices and giving agency to the corporation over nature. For the second question, most likely the dominant process types are material for two reasons: first being, that they are the most common ones in the English language, but also utilising nature for profit as the base of business implies there are multiple actions performed to nature. The use of material processes and giving agency mostly to the corporations paints the relationship between the corporations and nature as exploitative. For the third question, my hypothesis is that the corporations mostly utilise “eco-friendly” language to frame themselves as sustainable.

In the next chapter I will discuss the concepts related to corporate discourse and communications in more detail, to provide context for the study’s primary materials. Following this, the theoretical background and frameworks used in the study are explored. There are three in this study: Critical Discourse Studies, Ecolinguistics and Systemic Functional Grammar’s Transitivity Analysis. After this, the materials and methods are introduced and discussed, followed by the Analysis. The analysis is then followed by the discussion and the study is finished with a conclusion.

2 Corporate Discourse

In this section, corporate communications are discussed in more detail and the most relevant concepts for this study are explored. As this study looks at corporate communicative materials, their background and features are explored to provide a better understanding of the materials. I will first discuss corporate communications briefly, and then move onto discussing Corporate Sustainability Reporting and the Annual Report in more detail.

2.1 Corporate Communications briefly

Corporate discourse is the communication used by a corporation in its interactions with audiences from its own employees to the public and to the investors. Breeze (2013, 19) defines corporate discourse as including all communications that a corporation has chosen to make public, as well as its internal communications. It can be noted as a discourse system that includes a range of varying texts and genres but is not limited to just them as it is ever changing as the corporations' appropriate other discourses from other areas of public life (Breeze 2013, 23–24). Its purpose is to provide a coordinating framework that makes all corporate communication, both internal and external, effective, and its goal is to create and uphold a good reputation among the various stakeholders that it depends on. (Cornelissen 2011, 50). Corporate communication is above all a mindset and an ambition that encompasses all communication within one perspective, and that has a vision of coherency and a singular aim to project an image of what the organisation is and stands for (Christensen, Morsing and Cheney 2008, 3). Breeze (2013 23–24) notes that recent trends emphasise the view of a coherent corporate communication strategy that is aiming to group together all aspects of communication. Corporate communication is thus not only the communication a corporation does, but a way of communication with a specific purpose and goal. As stakeholders across the board have both become more vocal about their expectations towards organisations and much more able to voice these expectations and demands through technological development, much more is expected from corporate communications in terms of information, interactiveness and dialogue with the stakeholders (Cornelissen 2011, 58).

As there has been communication between the corporations and others as long as there have been these entities, the history of corporate communications is rather long. However, until the 1970s communication's role was largely a supportive one for other functions of the organisation, used to help these functions perform their tasks (Cornelissen 2011, 59).

Communication with stakeholders was understood as ‘public relations’ since it mostly consisted of communication with the media but as the stakeholders started to demand more information, this view began to change (Cornelissen 2011, 48). In the 1980s communication began to take a more strategic role in building the corporation’s reputation among shareholders and helping to realise the corporation’s objectives (ibid.). Since then, this strategic role has only grown, and today corporate communication’s role is not merely a supporting function but an important aspect in creating and maintaining a favourable image of the organisation. Following Breeze’s (2013, 24) view on corporate communication as a discourse system, it is easy to understand that change is evident, as systems undergo changes in response to social changes and corporates must keep up to justify their actions. As in the late 20th century stakeholders began to demand more information, in the 21st century this change can clearly be seen in the general expectations regarding environmental awareness (Breeze 2013, 24–25). Corporations have started to recognize the need for change in their communicative culture following the increased demand from stakeholders, as well as the many global initiatives and agreements made in favour of environmental issues and climate change that have made it impossible for them to ignore these issues (ibid.).

2.2 Corporate Sustainability Reporting

Understanding corporate communications as a discourse system in which the overarching aim is to establish and maintain stakeholder relationships, sets out the basis for Corporate Sustainability Reporting (henceforth CSR). It must be noted that CSR also means Corporate Social Responsibility, which is how it is more commonly used. To understand Corporate Sustainability Reporting, we must first discuss Corporate Social Responsibility, as the two are interchangeably linked and Corporate Social Responsibility is the basis for Corporate Sustainability Reporting. Corporate Social Responsibility has a long history with traces of the business community’s concern for society dating back for centuries. The formal and current form began emerging in the 20th century, taking notable steps in the 1950s (Carroll 2008, 21). Carroll presents Patrick Murphy’s (1978) classification of the different ‘eras’ of Corporate Social Responsibility as a useful starting point to understanding the way in which CSR has evolved. In Murphy’s argument there are multiple eras of CSR, all which have different focus points. The period leading up to the 1950’s is classified as the philanthropic era, the period between 1953 and 1967 as the awareness era, 1968–1973 as the issue era and finally 1974–1978 and continuing beyond, is the responsiveness era. In the philanthropic era CSR was mostly companies donating to charities, and in the awareness era more recognition of the

overall responsibility of a company became more important. In the issue era, businesses started paying attention to certain issues, such as environmental issues like pollution, and in the responsiveness era companies began to take serious action to manage CSR issues (Carroll 2009, 25; Murphy 1978). While each era shows distinct ways in which CSR was approached, it was in the 1960s when actions to formalise CSR began to take, even though the most noticeable form of it was still philanthropy (Carroll 2008, 27–28). The 1970s saw the emergence of a managerial approach, according to which CSR was a matter of managing issues (Carroll 2008, 34). While legislative initiatives began to mandate companies to create organisational mechanisms for complying with federal laws, there was still more talk than actual action on the part of the companies during this time (ibid.)

As can be seen, the 1970s saw much development in the area, and this is also where the Corporate Sustainability Reporting related to the environment began to take off. With the environmental movements of the late 1960s and the 1970s, interest in sustainability and the environment began to grow and in many European countries environmental reporting was introduced (Brockett and Zabihollah 2012, 27–28). After the 1970s CSR gained recognition with the United Nations' Brundtland Report, which was published in 1987. The report promoted balancing economic and environmental issues and introduced the United Nations' (1987, 8) definition of sustainability as follows: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Early forms of CSR began to appear as part of the corporate annual reports in the 1970s and by the late 1980s and early 1990s more stand-alone reports addressing environmental issues started to appear (Milne and Gray 2007, 185). In the late 1990s along with the development of Ceres' Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), reports that are nowadays called Sustainability Reports began to emerge, combining social economic and environmental information (ibid.). The GRI was created in order to establish reporting and introduce the triple bottom of economic, social, and environmental performance (ibid.) It was later joined by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and in the early 2000s became an independent organisation (ibid.). In 2022, GRI was still the most dominant framework used for CSR in the world (KPMG 2022).

Voluntary CSR gained momentum during these times due to the demands of both investors and encouragement from policymakers, and because it had a positive effect on brand building (Brockett and Zabihollah 2012, 27–28). Finland was the first country to pass a mandatory sustainability reporting law in 1997, followed by many other countries around the world (ibid.). The 2010s also saw progress as the United Nations Principles for Reasonable

Investment (UNPRI) introduced the sustainable stock exchange initiative. According to Brockett and Zabihollah (2012, 27–28), the initiative had two goals. Firstly, it aimed to foster cooperation between various stakeholders, namely the companies, the investors and the stock exchanges. Secondly, it sought to add regulations that enhance corporate transparency by promoting long-term investments and sustainable practices.

In the 2010s the European Union also passed the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD), which set into force in 2016. Under NFRD, large corporations must publish information related to environmental matters, anti-corruption and bribery, and social matters, such as treatment of employees and respect for human rights, as well as diversity on company boards. However, under NFRD the corporations were able to choose the standards for the information they publish. This will change, as the new The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), that expands the NFRD, entered into force in January 2023. CSRD seeks to strengthen and modernise the rules around CSR and massively extends the number of companies required to provide information on these topics with binding standards.

It must be noted here that when discussing CSR, it includes both data collected and published according to for example the GRI standards, as well as other materials published by the corporation, such as the annual reports parts discussing CSR topics or CSR related separate reports. While CSR includes a multitude of aspects that can be measured and put into numbers, it is not merely data that should be studied. As mentioned before, language plays a crucial role in shaping the way we see things, and CSR is an aspect where language has a crucial part in shaping our understanding of the CSR actions. While this study seeks to look at the environmental aspects, as discussed CSR is not merely environmental reporting but includes many aspects of responsibility. The data for this study is from the corporations' annual reports sections, where sustainability and the corporations' actions towards the environment are discussed. Because of this, I will next discuss the annual report briefly, to clarify the importance and status of the document and its implications for this study's results.

2.3 The Annual Report

The annual report can be characterised as the principal document from the corporation to the shareholders. According to Breeze (2013, 85), the intention was originally to provide accurate data to investors. These days providing this information to shareholders is a legal requirement and this document serves this function (Breeze 2013, 84). These legal requirements regarding the report's content vary based on the location of the corporation and the jurisdictions in place

there, as well as on the nature of the company. Large, listed stock companies are required to publish more information than small unlisted companies. In the context of this study, all companies are listed and have their headquarters in Helsinki, Finland, and therefore follow the legislations present in Finland and the EU at the time of the publications of the reports in 2022.

Even though it is a legal requirement to inform shareholders, this is not the only function the annual report is perceived to have. Increasingly, it also serves as an opportunity for the company to promote itself, construct a positive image and communicate to wider audiences (Breeze 2013, 84–85). The audience is first and foremost the shareholders and potential investors, but secondarily, the audience includes the society at large, within which fall for example financial experts, the media, and the company's employees (Breeze 2013, 84). These groups have a varied level of financial literacy and differing social concerns, which makes it so that the goals set for the yearly report tend to overlap with the goals set for corporate communications in general. (Breeze 2013, 84–85). Technological advances have also made it easier for anyone to access these materials, as they are nowadays published on the companies' websites in easy to access forms.

While the three companies studied in this thesis are all Finnish, each of them published their annual report both in English and Finnish. English is the dominant lingua franca in the business world, and Jeanjean et al. conclude that the benefit of using English as a reporting language comes from the ability to raise investor base, decrease value discount and expose the firm to potential investors (2010, 202). However, in addition to the benefits, Jeanjean et.al suggest there are costs generated by this, one of which is related to the translation of the reports. While the translation process itself is not a great cost in the big picture, translation can lead to creating language that is difficult for native English speakers to interpret and thus less readable (Jeanjean et al. 2010, 202). I bring this point up, because in the case of this study's materials, it is not mentioned whether the texts are translations or original text in English. In the reports it is only mentioned that the Auditor's report is a translation, but for other texts there is no explicit mention. While this matter is not clear, it is important to keep in mind as this is a linguistic study.

3 Theoretical Background

This section introduces the theoretical background for this thesis. This study utilises and combines multiple frameworks to conduct the analysis, and I will start by introducing perhaps the broadest one, Critical Discourse Studies, first. I will then move on to discuss Ecolinguistics and Systemic Functional Grammar, of which the Transitivity System is a part of.

3.1 Critical Discourse Studies

Critical Discourse Studies (henceforth CDS) is an interdisciplinary approach that takes a particular interest to the relation between power and language (Wodak and Meyer 2001, 2). This approach can be utilised to analyse different types of power relations, and for this reason it works well to unravel the human-nature power relations found in language, as “CDS seeks to relate theories of language to theories of society” (Flowerdew and Richardson 2018, 2). CDS’s interdisciplinary roots are varied, including but not limited to disciplines such as rhetoric, text linguistics, applied linguistics and pragmatics, sociolinguistics, anthropology and philosophy (Wodak and Meyer 2016, 2). Because of this multifaceted background CDS is suitable for various kinds of research, within different fields, with many kinds of data and with various methodologies. It is important to note that CDS is not a single theory or method but rather a ‘school of thought’, as the varied background and almost limitless possibilities for its use show (Wodak and Meyer 2016, 5).

CDS’s roots as a field date back to the 1970s when ‘critical linguistics’ was established (van Dijk 2008, 7–8). During the 1980s and 1990s the critical linguistics grew to the internationally acknowledged form of CDS (*ibid.*). CDS has formerly been known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), but nowadays CDS is becoming the preferred term, (Flowerdew and Richardson 2018, 1) as it has broadened its scope, embracing not only applied analysis, but also methodological and practical concerns, as well as philosophical and theoretical matters pertaining to research (van Dijk 2009, 62). In this study I will use the term CDS, but as the term Critical Discourse Analysis had been widely used in the past and some scholars and materials may use it, the term is occasionally used in the text to emphasise the analytical component of research, but it should be but should be considered interchangeable with CDS.

As stated above, CDS is an interdisciplinary field with multiple different fields contributing to its legacy. CDS as a school of thought is characterised by multiple principles such as all the

approaches being problem-oriented and a shared interest in unmasking ideologies and pinpointing exercises of power through systematic data analysis (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 4). (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 4). CDS researchers also make their own positioning explicit, while simultaneously retaining the scientific methodologies and self-reflectiveness (ibid.). They do not aim to achieve the same kind of objectivity that is a goal in scientific research, but rather realise that it is often not possible and thus are critical and open about their own position (Bloor and Bloor 2007, 4).

Following this, it is thus important to discuss my own positioning regarding the study, to both personally reflect and be critical of it, and to give the reader the chance to assess my stance. I will also discuss the human-nature relations and understanding them in the context of this study. As has been discussed by the scholars quoted in this study, language is very powerful when it comes to creating our realities. As Schultz has pointed out, often the commercial forces get to create the common language used in regards to nature and the industries, and in my opinion, this is a reason we need to be critical and study their language use. It is also important to discuss the power relations found in language between humans and nature.

The Anthropocene is presented as a time period defined by the activities and impacts of the human, yet it is paradoxically also a period that is now out of human control, due to rapid, unpredictable and non-linear change. Conceptualisations of human-nature relations must recognise both human power and its embeddedness within material relations. We separate out humans at the same time as the evidence shows how deeply embedded, we are. (Head 2016, 5)

We tend to separate humans and human action from nature, even though it is impossible to separate the two. Language use can show us ways in which this is done and studying this can help us move forward and help to re-conceptualise human power and our relationship to nature. The change must happen on multiple levels, and language use is one. Many are already using language that more honestly discusses the ways in which we exploit nature, but still the entities with arguably more power (such as commercial corporations) have more ways of influencing than grass-roots organisations do. Because of this, using CDS to study their language use is an important way to help us uncover the hidden ways in which the separation of humans and nature is done. CDS's critical nature suits well to uncover hidden ideologies in text.

The term *critical* is important here, as it is what differentiates CDS from traditional discourse studies. The term is not used quite in the same way as it is in popular/mainstream use, where it is often associated with negativity. In CDS, however, it is used with a sense of *critique*, giving a chance for the analysis also to be directed towards a more positive outcome (Bloor and Bloor 2007, 4-5). What makes CDS critical is its objective to both analyse ideologies in language and discourse practices that reflect and construct social problems, *and* then investigate and increase awareness on the significance of language in creating power relations and maintaining them (Bloor and Bloor 2007, 12—13). The other central term in CDS is *discourse* which is a term that can be used and defined in many senses. Fairclough (2015, 7) defines discourse as “language viewed in a certain way, as a part of the social process (*part of social life*) which is related to other parts”. Bloor and Bloor define discourse “in its broadest sense to refer to all the phenomena of symbolic interaction and communication between people, usually through spoken or written language or visual representation” (2011, 6). Currently discourse is used in a general sense to refer to both spoken and written communication and is sometimes used in contrast with text (Bloor and Bloor 2011, 7). In these cases, *text* refers to the spoken or written data, whereas discourse refers to the whole act of communication (*ibid.*). Text can therefore also include elements such as photos and tables, which despite having no text are considered communication. Thus, studying discourse includes not only the data itself, but the context, background information and knowledge of the text. To be more specific, the context the analyst needs to identify includes for example the setting of the event, time or times of it, participants, their roles and attitudes, mode and medium of the event, themes, dynamics of the situation, the genre and the purpose of the discourse event. Text used in this meaning are the data discourse analysts primarily work with (Bloor and Bloor 2011, 29). In practical terms, what is critiqued when critiquing discourse is a particular text and, in the cases, where something larger is critiqued, such as an emerging political identity, the object of critique is a large body of text (Fairclough 2015, 8).

CDS is not without its critics, however. Stubbs argues that “CDA is unavoidably circular in certain respects” (1997, 2) and Widdowson criticises CDS for having a political agenda not grounded in linguistic analysis (1995, 148). Common criticisms of CDS relate to its political nature, accusations that analysts “find what they want to find” (Stubbs 1997, 2) and methodological shortcomings (Catalano and Waugh 2020, 224). But, as already mentioned, CDS is not a single approach, and Catalano and Waugh point out that because of these criticisms towards CDS are often only valid for parts of it (2020, 220). While the criticisms

are valid to a certain extent, CDS analysts tend to be self-reflective and transparent about their stance. Moreover, there are ways to make CDS more objective, such as corpus linguistics. The methodologies and data selection of this study are discussed in the *Material and Methods section*, where I will also discuss these concerns raised on CDS regarding the present study.

3.2 Ecolinguistics

Ecolinguistics offers a fitting lens for the study, as under examination are materials and language that discusses both nature and humans' relationship to nature. It is a relatively new field of study that is interested in the relationship between language and nature, however the term is also used for a strand of research that discusses the ecology of language(s), e.g. language diversity and survivability in the world. Fill (2018, 2) discusses that even though these two strands have different points of view, they are not opposed but complement each other and an umbrella term that covers both strands is advisable to use. For clarity, I will briefly discuss the ecology of languages before moving onto discussing the ecological linguistics strand in more detail.

Carl Voeglin and Florence Voeglin were the first researchers to use the term 'ecology' in reference to language in their article about Native American Languages in 1964 (Fill 2018, 5). In their 1964 article, they wrote about 'linguistic ecology', and how it begins with a comprehensive attention to all languages in a particular area instead of a selective attention to few languages. Following this, in 1970, Einar Haugen gave a talk about "The Ecology of Language", which has since then been dubbed as the "birth of the language ecology" (Fill 2018, 3). Haugen referred to the Voeglins but had developed his own theory on which he based his definition on. He published an article called "The Ecology of Language" in 1972, in which he compared language ecology with animal and plant ecology (Penz and Fill 2022, 233).

The concept of 'ecology' behind ecolinguistics has its origins with Charles Darwin and his research on evolution in the 19th century, with the term first being used in Ernst Haeckel's book published in 1866, where it was defined as "the study of the interrelations between organisms and their living and non-living surroundings—including organisms of the same and other species" (Haeckel in Fill 2018, 1; translation by Fill and Penz). The term acquired the meaning of 'biological, natural, environmentally friendly' when the ecological movement gathered momentum in the 1960s (Fill 2018, 2). Today, Merriam-Webster offers following definitions for 'ecology':

a branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their environments

the totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment (Merriam-Webster, s.v. “ecology” n.).

Following this we can now discuss the different definitions given to ecolinguistics where under scrutiny are language and its relationship to ecology. A prominent figure in the field, Arran Stibbe defines ecolinguistics as follows:

About critiquing forms of language that contribute to ecological destruction and aiding in the search for new forms of language that inspire people to protect the natural world (Stibbe 2015, 1).

He states that this is a superficial definition, as there are multiple different approaches within the field, with varying goals, aims and methodologies, and the analysis goes deeper than critiquing individual texts but that under scrutiny are the more common ways in which language influences us (Stibbe 2015, 1–2). Nevertheless, it offers a starting point to understanding what ecolinguistics about. Jorgen C. Bang and Jorgen Door, two pioneers in the field define ecolinguistics:

Ecolinguistics is the part of critical, applied linguistics concerned with the way in which language and linguistics are involved in the ecological crisis (Bang and Door 1993, 1).

Ecolinguistics then is a field with a critical yet forward-looking spirit, as it seeks to both critique existing ways while offering new ones, instead of only explaining phenomena or language. The point is not only to analyse individual texts but to dig deep into the language that shapes the way we see the world. Stibbe describes that ecolinguistics seeks to question the ‘stories’ our current civilization tells, and to expose the ones that are leading to ecological destruction while finding new ones that work better in today’s world (2014, 117). What Stibbe calls stories are not stories in a typical narrative sense but rather discourses, formations of linguistic elements, which function to convey particular views of the world. (ibid.).

Schultz (1992, 109) discusses the way in which linguistic devices are used in favour of commercial use of the environment, and how commercial users of the environment have impact on the language commonly used in regards to nature. In her view this is because as

they are power-brokers in society, they have power in setting the linguistic, political, social and economic agendas, leading the way for others to follow. She states that there are three ways to do this: one may use seemingly neutral words, euphemisms, and refer to something positive as something negative.

Schultz (1992) gives an example with the word 'development' which got the added adjective 'sustainable' after the Brundtland Report in 1987 to make it more acceptable, but commercial users of the environment took the phrase to mean 'sustained development', leading to conservationists to add ecologically to the phrase. This, however, suggests that there can be sustainable development that is not ecologically sustainable, which is not the case. She discusses how for many the phrase merely means what the commercial forces took it to mean before, sustained development. She then points out that development however is not a goal but a means to an end, and therefore a better expression to use would be development towards sustainability.

Another word Schultz (1992) discusses is 'resource', which even as a neutral word carries unstated values within it. She points out how whether something is considered a resource or not depends on human values and perceptions, and someone has always put it in this category? She does not argue that the words should not be used, but rather points out that it is worth critically thinking about what goes behind calling something a 'resource' and what these resources actually are.

Schultz (1992) also discusses the euphemisms of the resource development industries that often portray the activities in a much more positive light than the reality is. In a few of her examples, she states those of 'improving on nature' and 'value-adding' which imply that there is more value in human endeavours. Interesting for this study is Schultz's list of euphemisms used in forestry, from 'clear-felling' to 'normal' forest and 'harvest', which all describe actions where the forests are either being cut down or manipulated in a way to maximise the wood production. She points out how 'harvest' carries a slight righteous overtone of there being a moral entitlement to something on the basis of past effort, which derives from farming and gardening, where you 'harvest' after spending much time and effort into growing the crops. In the case of forests, the growth is very different and takes much longer, and a forest is not really comparable to a field crop that without any intervention often does not grow or live, and rarely these crops are the basis for entire ecosystems, nor do they bind carbon in the same

way. Therefore, as Schultz suggests, it can be seen as incorrect to use this term when describing logging.

Lexicogrammar is the term used to describe the relation between grammar and vocabulary (the lexis), showing how the two are not separate components of language but rather two parts of the same system (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 7). According to Goatly, it is possible to conceive the relationship between lexical grammar and ‘natural phenomena’ in multiple ways:

- (1) the lexicogrammar of a particular language affects our perception of and action on the environment; (2) our natural environment affects lexicogrammar; (3) lexicogrammar and the environment are in a dynamic relationship mutually affecting each other as interdependent systems which change over time as part of a culture. (Goatly 2018, 227)

According to Goatly (2018, 227), “most work on lexicogrammar, and ecology assumes some version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which states that our worldview is shaped by the language we speak or by the choices available to us in that language”. In Goatly’s (2018, 228) view, it is likely we accept the way language orders our experience and makes it appear to us as natural, because of how lexicogrammar is determined by ideologies might go unnoticed.

We are most aware of the vocabulary aspect of lexicogrammar, and because of this there are multiple contested terms in environmental discourse, such as the word environment itself. However, the most hidden ideological effects remain on the grammatical level (Goatly 2018, 229–231). An example Goatly (2018, 232) gives is how the English grammar makes a clear distinction between countable and neatly bounded entities and non-countable mass entities. As Goatly has studied lexicogrammar with the help of Halliday’s Transitivity system I will next discuss Systemic Functional Grammar and the Transitivity system in more detail.

3.3 Systemic Functional Grammar

Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth SFG), also known as Systemic Functional Linguistics, is an approach that focuses on the functional aspects of language and provides a comprehensive description of language. M.A.K Halliday first initiated the approach in 1961 with a publication of an article that discussed the categories of theory of grammar. The first

edition of Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar was published in 1985. The theory has later been revised by Christian Matthiessen.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), we have two main perspectives for studying languages: Firstly, one can focus on the text, on its own terms, as an object. Secondly, one can focus on the text instrumentally, to understand it as part of a large system. Text in this context refers to any instance of language use. Thus, depending on the focus the questions asked are different: if we focus on the text as an object, we can ask questions like “[w]hy does the text mean what it does?” and “[w]hy is it valued as it is?” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 3). If we then focus on the text as an instrument, the questions asked can be such as what does the text, written or spoken, reveal about the system of language? (Halliday Matthiessen 2014, 3). In Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) view, these are complementary perspectives and not contradictory, as we cannot explain the why without relating it to the entire linguistic system as a whole and the other way around. However, in their view, the text has differing status in these instances, as it is either viewed as an artefact or a specimen. This is important to note as, according to them, grammarians often say that all texts are equal, and are then thinking of them as specimens, as artefacts not all texts are equal (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 4). This is the complementarity of the perspectives; we see the value of a texts, because texts are only meaningful in reference to a larger set of meaning-making resources (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 3– 4).

In SFG, grammar is seen as a system network, instead of being seen as an inventory of structures like in some other views. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 23), “language is a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice”. In the “functional approaches to grammar, meaning is essentially equated with function” (Thompson 2013, 28). In other words, in SFG, meaning is understood as function, which there are three of: *ideational*, *interpersonal*, and *textual* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). While each metafunction has its own distinct view on language, they should be understood as being complementary to each other, as viewing language only through one metafunction provides a one-sided view. For this study's purposes, the main metafunction is the ideational metafunction, as the Transitivity system is a subsystem of it. Ideally, all three metafunctions could be utilised in the analysis, but due to the scope of the study focus will be on the ideational metafunction, which I will next discuss in more detail. The ideational metafunction

According to Halliday and Matthiessen “language provides a theory of human experience, and certain of the resources of the lexicogrammar of every language are dedicated to that function” (2014, 30, emphasis in the original). The ideational metafunction can be further divided into the experiential and logical components, of which the logical component simply relates to the kinds of connections made between the messages, unlike the others that relate to the meaning that are expressed in the messages (Thompson 2013, 39). However, it is important to note that each type contributes to the meaning of a message as a whole and both should be considered (Thompson 2013, 29).

Transitivity is a subsystem of the ideational metafunction. In simplified terms, it is a way of finding out “who did what to whom” (Thompson 2013, 86). It deals with the experiences that are central to the ideational metafunction. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe these experiences as ‘goings-on’ and ‘flow of events’ and these experiences are divided into smaller parts by how the sentence is structured. Then, each part is a representation of something “happening, doing, sensing, saying, being or having” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 213). These are all part “of a process unfolding through time and of participants being directly involved in the process in some ways” (ibid.).

The system of transitivity helps to describe the change of things in a situation by centring the main action. Actions can be grouped into the specific process types that all bring a different way of understanding experiences (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 213). There are six different process types in the Transitivity system (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 214-215). Material processes are ‘outer’ experiences, such as things happening out there in the world. Mental processes are ‘inner’ experiences we experience inside ourselves. Relational processes deal with how we learn to identify and classify. Behavioural processes operate between the line of material and mental, representing external displays of inner processes and physiological states. Verbal processes, on the line of mental and relational, establish symbolic relationships, that are constructed in our consciousness and then enacted in the way we use language. Lastly, existential processes, which are on the line of relational and material, are concerned with existence. Material, mental, and relational processes are the main types as they are most common in the English language.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 220) provide a framework. It consists of three core components:

- (i) a process unfolding through time

- (ii) the participants involved in the process
- (iii) circumstances associated with the process

(Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 220)

This framework provided by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 220-221), details the three components that set up the transitivity in a clause. In English structures usually consist of a process, participants, and, in some cases, circumstantial elements. Compared to participants that are inherent in the process, circumstantial elements are not obligatory components. Every clause tends to have at least one participant, while only some clauses are augmented circumstantially (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 221). Of these three components, processes are the actions taking place as expressed with a verbal group, participants are those somehow involved in the action, and the type of the participants is determined by the process type (ibid.) Circumstances then are typically realised by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases and are often optional as they reflect the background function in the clause (Thompson 2013, 93). Due to the scope of the study, I will not analyse circumstances in the data, but as discussed before, circumstances are optional, and thus leaving them out of the analysis should not affect the results.

Coming back to Goatly and lexicogrammar, there is a reason why transitivity analysis works well for a study with an ecolinguistic lens and an aim to analyse human-nature relations. Goatly uses Langacker's canonical event structure to explain the semantics of English grammar and human-nature relationships. Basically, "a typical transitive clause representing a physical action corresponds to [a] canonical event structure", which "conceptualizes events in terms of one energetic thing the Actor [...] exerting force through a physical process on another less energetic thing (the Affected)" (Goatly 2018, 232). By this "energy is transmitted from Actor to Affected to bring about change", while "[t]his takes place within a Setting and may be observed by a Viewer who is independent of the event and its setting (ibid.).

Here then the subject (Actor) performs an action volitionally while the object (Affected) is non-volitional (Langacker 1991, 302, 307). Goatly (2018, 233) elaborates on this point, as it is not related to the canonical event model but rather "determined by the empathy hierarchy". By this he means that the that subject participant roles are determined "with decreasing degrees of likelihood: speaker > hearer > human > animal > physical object > abstract entity" Goatly (2018, 233). Speakers, hearers, humans and animals are more likely subjects because

they are capable of volition, unlike physical objects and abstract entities. Goatly thus arrives to the conclusion that “the construal of the prototypical clause in which a human actor provides the energy to act upon a passive [...] affected nature” and, ultimately, “ecologically dangerous” as the setting or environment where this is stated to take place is deemed to be unimportant and as it is suggested that “humans can dominate or ignore a passive nature” (Goatly 2018, 234).

As can be seen, transitivity analysis can offer many insights into the way language constructs human-nature power relations and how they can be harmful in shaping our view on the world. As discussed, commercial entities also yield a lot of power when it comes to shaping the language we use regarding their respective industries, which is the reason I have chosen to analyse three commercial corporations’ materials in this study with the help of transitivity analysis. I will next introduce the materials and methods for the analysis in more detail.

4 Materials and Methods

This section will introduce the primary materials for the study as well as the methods of the study. I will discuss the corporations behind the reports briefly as well as the industry they operate in for additional context. I will then explain how the data for the study was gathered, introduce the digital tools used in the study and the method in which the analysis was conducted.

4.1 Materials

The primary materials for this study are clauses collected from three different corporations' year 2022 Annual Reports' Sustainability sections. The reports were published in 2023 and are digitally available on each corporation's website (Metsä Group 2023; Stora Enso 2023; UPM 2023). All the corporations are large, listed corporations and the materials are public and easily available, intended for both existing and potential investors and anyone interested. Thus, there are no ethical issues in using them as material for this study. Three corporations were chosen to be analysed to broaden the scope of the study. A diachronic comparison between one corporation's reports from different years was briefly considered, however, including multiple corporations provided more data and more possibilities to see the underlying ideologies in the industry, that a case study on a single corporation would not have done.

The chosen three corporations are the three largest corporations in the Finnish Forest, Paper & Pulp industry: Metsä Group, Stora Enso and UPM Kymmene. These corporations were chosen as they are all well-known and influential organisations in the industry that is very directly tied to nature and sustainability. The industry also has a long history in Finland and Finland is well-known for its forests. According to Metsähallitus, forests cover 70% of the land in Finland and of that land 13% (including forest land, poorly productive forest land and forested peatlands) is protected and strictly protected forest area is 10% of the total forest area, which when compared internationally is a rather large number, but nevertheless means that the majority of the land is not protected (Metsähallitus, 2024, MMM, 2024). Of all the forest areas in Finland most is in commercial use. This does not mean that the forests are only used for commercial purposes, but it highlights the importance of sustainable and ecological use of forests as most of it is used by humans. This is also a reason why many environmental activism organisations have demanded more protection and corporations to cease their actions

that harm the forests' ecology. The topic of forests has also been greatly discussed in politics, as the topics of climate crisis and the world's political situation have affected multiple aspects, and new EU directives and laws have been both supported and protested by politicians.

The Forest Industry has a long history in Finland, starting at the end of the 19th century, and wood is used in multiple different branches of manufacturing today. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland it is an important source of well-being and an important employer, and in 2023 the value of the industry's exports totalled 12 billion euros (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland, n.d.). As Finland is in relative terms the most forested country in Europe (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland, n.d.) it is strongly dependent on forests and leans the most on the activities of the forest sector, leading to Finland possessing competence and skills in forest management and the forest industry (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland, n.d.). There are three large corporations in the industry in Finland, each of which has a long history in the industry, as each began their operations in the 19th century. While each has headquarters in Helsinki, each also has operations outside of Finland and Europe. While the companies differ slightly in size, each one has thousands of employees and in 2023 each company had revenues between 6-10 billion euros, making them quite comparable when it comes to influence in the industry.

All three publish their Annual Reports both in Finnish and English. There are different practices when it comes to Annual Reports, and it is not known whether the English versions are full translations or partial translations, or which version was made first. All reports have both sections of text detailing the corporations past year, as well as numerical data, pictures and graphs. For clarity, this thesis will only analyse the text parts of the reports. Each report has a section dedicated to Sustainability endeavours, where the past year, the corporation's environmental views and sustainability initiatives are discussed. These sections are of varying lengths, with UPM's having 38 pages, Stora Enso's 44 and Metsä Group's 36. Due to the scope and detail of the study, only the clauses that directly discuss nature in these sections are analysed. This allows for a more detailed analysis and as the sections are of varying lengths, also makes it more comparable as only certain clauses are included in the analysis. Next, I will explain the methods used in the study, both for narrowing down the data and conducting the analysis.

4.2 Methods

This section will introduce the methods used in the study, and the reasons for choosing them. As the goal is to do a detailed analysis of the language, this study is qualitative in nature. As the interest is in a thorough analysis of language use regarding nature, the data was narrowed down to include only clauses with direct mentions to nature and any multimodal aspects of the materials were left out of the study. The main frameworks used in the study are Halliday's Transitivity Analysis, Critical Discourse Studies and Ecolinguistics, which were discussed in section three. As the primary materials for the are corporate annual reports, they are crafted with thought and have the goal of both informing and convincing the reader of the corporation's actions. While the final data only includes clauses discussing nature, the general context is considered in the analysis.

To narrow down the data from the reports to only include nature related clauses, I first created a corpus that included all the text found in the reports' Sustainability sections, not including texts from tables and graphs. As the reports are multimodal materials, they needed to be converted into simple text files that excluded all images, tables and other multimodal material.

Following this, I used AntConc to search for clauses that directly mentioned nature, using a list of keywords picked from the reports. These were chosen as keywords to search since each appeared in at least one report, and they are directly connected to nature, allowing to find the clauses that contain discussion related to nature. AntConc is a "freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordance and text analysis" (Anthony, 2024). In total, the data was narrowed to 113 clauses. I excluded clauses where a keyword was utilised as a part of an incomplete clause, such as possible headings, or as a part of a name, for example the Forest Action Programme, without the clause containing any other discussion on nature.

List of keywords used in the search:

1. Nature
2. Trees(s)
3. Forest(s)
4. Fauna
5. Biodiversity

6. Species
7. Habitat
8. Environment
9. Ecological

When the dataset was ready, I utilised UAM CorpusTool to annotate the data based on Halliday's Transitivity System. The UAM CorpusTool is a state-of-the-art environment for annotation of text corpora, that allows the user to annotate texts on various levels (UAMCorpusTool, 2024). While the tool also includes statistical features, they were not utilised in the study. Using UAM CorpusTool allows for a consistent and reliable annotation of the data, and in the case of Transitivity Analysis, it offers the possibility to annotate the clauses on multiple levels, in the cases where the clauses are complex.

After annotation, the clauses were classified based on the Transitivity system's process types and further analysed by their primary actors. In the cases that an example contains more than one process type, they were classified based on the main process of the main clause in the example. The analysis then looks at the clauses from an ecolinguistic perspective, utilising the transitivity analysis to draw conclusions of the corporation-nature relationships found both in the construction and grammar of the clauses, and the word choices where practices from Critical Discourse Studies are utilised. Combining these two methods allows for a thorough analysis on corporation-nature relations and helps to uncover possible ideologies found in the data. As this part utilises practices from CDS, there is a need to discuss the position from which the analysis is done. I will regard the data from a similar position as Schultz does in her (Schultz 1992, 109) text: language is analysed through the ways in which it might obscure human actions towards nature, and simultaneously convey our current values as inherently good. In terms of looking at materials from corporations, these values are understood to be those of good business practices and profitable operations. As has already been discussed in 3.1, CDS is not an inherently objective branch and thus it is important to discuss the analyst's own stance, to be as reflective as possible and give the reader a chance to reflect on the analyst's results. For this reason, this study combines CDS with Transitivity Analysis, as it allows for more objectiveness. As mentioned, the general context of the clauses is considered in the analysis, meaning the clauses as part of a corporate annual report, but as linguistic

elements and larger societal context could all be analysed much further, due to limitations of scope these are not considered in the analysis in detail.

The analysis is conducted by analysing each example, which is always one sentence that can contain multiple clauses in it, separately and analysing the implications of the transitivity analysis and grammatical construction, as well as the other linguistic and word choices present in the clause. The examples have been annotated and the different aspects are indicated in the analysis using bold, italics and underlining. The actors of are bolded, the (main) processes underlined and the goals of the clauses are in italics. For clarity, in the running text of the analysis, processes are referred to in single quotes. The numbering of the examples is based on the whole list presented in the appendix.

5 Analysis

In this section, the data is presented and analysed, as individual pieces. The analysis utilises both SFG's Transitivity Analysis, Critical Discourse Studies practices and Ecolinguistics. Transitivity analysis is connected to verbs, the processes, thus paying special attention to the participants and processes of the clauses and the choices made by their author. For example, who is presented as the first participant can demonstrate the focus of the clause, that could be different, had different choices been made. Transitivity analysis is a great tool for analysing the actions and their doers and works well with CDS. In Transitivity Analysis, there are six process types: material, relational, mental, behavioural, verbal and existential. Material processes describe outer actions or events, such as leave, relational processes describe state of being or static situations, such as refers to, mental processes describe inner actions, such as aim or think, behavioural ones are not found in the data, but would express actions that are of consciousness during an action, such as worrying, verbal ones are actions of communication, such as say, and existential processes represent the existence of something.

The data consists of 113 clauses, referred to here as examples. While in many examples the grammatical constructions are similar, the word choices and other linguistic elements differ and thus only few cases are multiple clauses analysed together. It must be noted that I refer to examples because many include multiple clauses within one sentence, one example. Thus, for clarity an example refers to the numbered singular set of clause(s), and when referred to a clause I refer to the clauses inside that example. The analysis is divided by process types, beginning with the most common ones and moving onto the least common ones. The numbering of the examples is based on the whole list presented in the appendix.

In the analysis, I will use "nature", when discussing related entities and concepts. This is to highlight the human-nature-relationships, and to clarify the analysis. Nature is a broad term, but generally refers to the physical world and everything not made by humans, such as plants, animals, waterbodies, ecosystems, other natural phenomena and so on. In this thesis, related concepts such as biodiversity are also included in the definition.

5.1 Material processes

Material processes were the most common ones in the data, which is to be expected as they are the most common in the English language. Of the data 68 examples are in this category, and the analysis is further divided by the (perceived) actor of the examples.

5.1.1 Corporation as the actor

The most common construction in the data had the corporation as the first participant and the actor in the clause with a material process. In 19 of the material process examples, the corporation was the actor. In these examples, commonly the focus was on the corporation's actions and how they benefit the corporation, or other related parties (such as humans on a larger scale). In these examples, nature and natural entities are often the goal of the clauses, with a passive role.

In example 1, the focus is on the company's continuing field trials. Nature is the goal of the clause, and the verb and the mention of the current area of the trials, suggest that this intervention could possibly expand.

(1) In Brazil (circumstance), **the company** (actor) continues (material process) *field trials with genetically modified trees* (goal), now totalling approximately five hectares.

The act of conducting field trials on trees shows the company's dominant role over nature. The trees have also been genetically modified, which suggests that human intervention in nature for the possibility of profit and corporate goals is acceptable. Yet, on the surface level, the tone of the clause is very neutral and there are no mentions of how the trials are going. Other than the circumstances detailing the size of the area, the clause lacks any adverbs that would specify the type of intervention this should be regarded as. The neutral tone works with legitimising the actions, as genetic modification could be viewed as a controversial practice and could be potentially harmful for nature.

The focus is often kept on the company's actions, emphasising the fact that the company is an active and eco-conscious operator. However, in many cases this focus on the company action obscures the fact that the actions are directly influencing nature. Examples 2 and 3 showcase this type of construction, where the company is the first participant and active actor, the clauses discuss and focus on corporate activity, but the underlying theme of the activity is related to nature.

(2) **Stora Enso** works (material process) actively with its stakeholders to promote (material process) *sustainable forest management*.

(3) **Stora Enso** combats (material process) *climate change* with renewable materials, resource efficient production and sustainable forest management.

In example 2, the focus is on the corporation's active work with stakeholders in regard to sustainable forest management. The corporation is the active actor with agency, while climate change is merely the goal of the clause, acting as something perceived as detrimental but without any agency in the clause. As discussed previously in regard to sustainable development by Schultz (Schultz 1992, 109), sustainable forest management implies there is a way for forest management to be unsustainable. The use of 'management' connects it strongly to the business world and human activity, making sustainable forest management a similar concept to what Schultz discusses in relation to sustainable development. It is taken to mean sustained development, which sustainable forest management is taken as in this context. In example 3, the same continues, with the tools the company must fight against climate change all being business related, and aspects that in today's world ought to be common practices. Renewable materials and resource efficient production, along with sustainable forest management, all highlight the continuity of business practices in the ways the corporation attempts to combat climate change. They all still require the use of nature for profit and view nature primarily as a resource. The positioning of the corporation and climate change being in "combat" showcases this too, as the reason climate change needs to be combatted is the fact that its effects could heavily impact the use of natural resources and ability to do business.

In many cases, the dominance humans/the corporation has over nature is not implicitly stated but shown through the ways in which the corporation is the one assigning value to nature.

(4) **Stora Enso** never establishes (material process) *plantations* in natural forest, protected (material process) *areas or watersensitive locations*, and only land with low biodiversity value, such as former pastureland, is used.

In example 4, never conveys a strong implication that the action described is condemnable. While the clause suggests through this that the plantations are not good for nature, the company nevertheless has the ability and right to establish them where it deems suitable. Certain land is viewed as to have low enough biodiversity value, thus, to be expendable. In this example we again have the corporation as the first participant and active actor, with nature being a passive recipient of action.

The following examples have the focus on corporate actions, such as programmes and different targets the corporations aim to hit in terms of nature protection. In each clause, the corporation is the first participant and the active actor, with the material processes emphasising the actual actions taken by the corporation. However, while the discussion points

seem to be positive and nature-friendly, in many points the underlying ideology of nature being a resource is seen.

(5) **Stora Enso** actively supports and implements (material processes) *voluntary forest conservation and restoration* measures on all the land it owns, leases and manages as well as in other areas where the Group purchases wood.

In example 5, the action in question is voluntary but the emphasis is on how the corporation supports and implements it. The corporation is given the active role in performing these processes, with the land and wood being stages where the corporation is able to act. The dominance over nature and the view of nature as something to be controlled is also shown with owns, leases and manages and through other areas where the Group purchases wood. These imply the view of nature as a resource, and the voluntary aspect of conservation and restoration, even if supported, highlight that this is not a requirement for the group.

In example 6 it is mentioned that the commitment for a net-positive impact on biodiversity has the corporation's own forests and plantations as the goal, emphasising the ownership of nature. The use of a material process emphasises the active role of the corporation in this commitment. Similarly, to example 5, here nature is a stage in which the corporation can perform actions.

(6) In 2021, **Stora Enso** made (material process) *a commitment to achieving* (material process) *a net-positive impact on biodiversity in its own forests and plantations by 2050*.

Net-positive as a term is also a term from the business world, basically meaning that a corporation puts back more than it takes. A net-positive impact on biodiversity then basically means that the corporation can impact biodiversity as much as it wants to, if the end result is net-positive. This constructs nature again as a passive recipient and biodiversity as something that is not negatively affected by action if the result is "net-positive". The circumstance of 2050 is also notable here, as it suggests that currently, the net impact is either negative or neutral.

(7) **The Group's forests and long-term supply agreements** secure (material process) *a sustainable and transparent wood supply*.

In example 7, the Group's forests and agreements are securing the wood supply. While the "sustainable" and "transparent" have positive connotations and emphasise an eco-friendly view, the underlying ideology points to nature as a resource. The forests securing the wood supply do so by simply existing, yet they are given an active role as part of the group. The focus is on securing the supply, which is presented as a desirable outcome.

(8) We annually provide (material process) *financial support* to development projects conducted outside Finnish commercial forests that have a regional impact, promote (material process) *biodiversity* and improve (material process) *the condition of water bodies*.

In example 8, the active role of the corporation is emphasised again, with provide, promote and improve being all material processes. The corporation is again the first participant and is framed as a supportive actor. Here, there is a more concrete mention of the actions taken towards nature, improving the condition of the water bodies, however, it is not directly linked to the corporation but rather to the development projects it supports. In example 9 then, the corporation is the one that directly through its targets has increased the amount of decaying wood.

(9) In 2022, we did (material process) well in our *biodiversity targets* to increase (material process) *the amount of decaying (material process) wood in commercial forests*.

In all examples, the focus is on the corporations' actions and the corporation is an active actor. This frames the corporation in a positive light yet reinforces the view that these types of projects are enough to provide a positive influence on nature. As the examples demonstrate, in some cases the actions are voluntary, the discussion is on commitments to future action and the targets are relatively small-scaled and local. Nature is the passive recipient of action, and the focus is on the corporation hitting the targets, rather than the actual effects this has brought in. In a similar manner, in the following examples the actions done are for a positive cause, yet the construction illustrates again how the corporation both can perform actions on nature and for nature.

(10) We leave (material process) *protective thickets for animals at different stages of forest management*.

In example 10, it is the corporation who is assessing where, how much and what to leave for the animals during their forest management. The animals are the beneficiaries of the action, yet they are not active participants in the clause. The corporation is likened to a human entity with the use of the pronoun “we” which is a form of the “corporate as a person” metaphor (Stibbe, 2015,75). This is problematic, as Stibbe points out that it becomes difficult to see who is responsible. While the clause here is emphasising the positive action of taking the animals into account, it is also done as a part of forest management which can have negative effects on the animals.

(11) **We** also promote (material process) *forest certification for private forest owners and other customers*.

In example 11, in a similar way “we” is used instead of the corporation's name. The focus is again on the corporation’s actions on promoting forest certification, and while the certification is a positive aspect, it is a documentation that can also be seen to serve mainly human stakeholders rather than the forests themselves. Noteworthy is also how as the beneficiaries are the private forest owners and other customers, as they are also the target of the promotion, meaning that it is not a requirement for the company to engage in business relations with parties not implementing forest certification.

(12) **We** safeguard (material process) *biodiversity* in our own forests and continue (material process) to implement (material process) *our biodiversity activities* as part of the new global Forest Action programme, launched (material process) in 2022.

In example 12 the corporation is the actor, with the pronoun “we”, promoting the corporation-as-a-person metaphor. The clause has ‘safeguard’ as the material process and biodiversity as its goal. The example also has the material processes of ‘continue’, ‘implement’ and ‘launched’ which regard the biodiversity activities that are part of a Forest Action Programme created by the company. Safeguard is implying defending biodiversity and having responsibility to do so. It implies the company takes the action seriously but is also vague as is the rest of the clause, which continues to highlight the responsibility the company takes to protect biodiversity.

(14) **We** do not use (material process) *wood* from illegal sources or from areas where high conservation value forests could be under threat.

As above, example 14 uses “we” when referring to the corporation. The construction is again similar with the corporation as the actor and first participant, highlighting its actions. The material process of “use” with wood as the goal demonstrates the relationship between corporation and nature. The circumstances of the clause reveal how areas are assigned value by humans, and how this makes using certain areas acceptable and certain unacceptable. It reinforces the idea that certain resources or certain areas are okay to be used and exploited, as long as they are thought to have more value through this by humans.

(15) **We** ensure (material process) *that our forests* continue (material process) to act (material process) *as carbon sinks*, remain (material process) *resilient and diverse in changing climate conditions*, and grow(material) well for future generations.

Example 15 continues with referring to the corporation as “we”, with the similar constructions of a material process and nature as a goal. This example has multiple material processes, but the main process that the corporation is performing is that of “ensure”. The corporation is ensuring actions their forests are to do. Essentially, even though it is the forests that are the actors for the remaining processes (act, remain, grow) they do not have an active role. It is the corporation that is ensuring these actions happen, giving the forests a passive role as a proxy. All the actions the forests are to perform are beneficial for humans, which is especially emphasised by the end of the sentence. The corporation is ensuring the forests grow well for future generations, which can be understood to be future generations of humans, rather than any other future generation. The forests acting as carbon sinks and remaining resilient in the changing climate conditions also support this. The use of “changing climate conditions” obscures the devastating effects of the climate crisis, and the responsibility.

(17) **Stora Enso's 50%-owned joint operation Veracel** protects (material process) and restores (material process) *biodiversity in the areas of natural Atlantic rainforest*.

Here we have the corporate actor protecting and restoring biodiversity in rainforest areas. While protect and restore are positive verbs, they demonstrate again how nature needs protection from human action and is a recipient of corporate action. Biodiversity is singled out as the main aspect to protect and restore, and this is common in the data. Biodiversity refers to the variety of biological life on Earth.

(18) **Stora Enso** also launched (material process) biodiversity action programmes for its land holdings in Sweden and wood supply operations in Finland to enhance (material process) biodiversity in their operations.

In the example 18 the corporation is the actor, again with a material process and with a biodiversity programme as the goal of the process. Nature is indirectly the recipient of action again, and biodiversity is again mentioned as the aspect to be enhanced. Land holdings and wood supply operations also reveal the view on nature as resources and something to be owned.

(19) Since the *plantations* were established (material process), **Veracel** has worked (material process) *systematically to protect and restore local biodiversity*.

In example 19, the first part has no actor mentioned, but it is understood to be the corporation that has established the plantations. The second part has Veracel (corporation) as the actor with a material process. Corporation is positioned as a protector and restorer of local biodiversity, while simultaneously the clause mentions the plantations, which are the reason for the need to restore biodiversity. This is common in the data, where corporation performs material processes towards nature, whilst also protecting it, from these processes it performs

(20) **We** take care (material process) of *threatened species* and increase (material process) their *number*.

In this example again corporation with a material process performs actions for the benefit of nature. This clause implies that the corporation takes care of threatened species and actively increases their number. There is however no mention of how they do this. While again this is a positive action, it is yet again the corporation performing actions towards nature and positioning the threatened species as having no agency in the issue. It also obscures the reasons why the species are threatened in the first place, which most likely is due to either climate change or other actions by humans/corporations (such as forestry).

(22) **We** reduce (material process) *our fossil carbon dioxide emissions* and safeguard *biodiversity*.

Here, the construction is the common one found in the data. Corporation as the actor both reduces emissions and safeguards biodiversity, nature again being a recipient of corporate action. Combining these two actions together implies a link between them. The example is

again a positive one, where the corporate action is for the benefit of nature and seemingly eco-friendly, however it also leaves out any ways in which the corporate aims to perform these actions. While the clause sounds positive, it is derived of any concrete action that would showcase how the corporation is achieving these goals.

(34) *With strict policies and various tools in place to ensure (material process) sustainable forest management and wood sourcing, **Stora Enso** is not engaged in (material process) deforestation or depletion of the world's forests.*

In this clause the corporation is the implicit actor with ensure and explicit with engaged, and the goals of the clauses are related to forest management and thus affect nature. The use of the corporation's name regarding stating that it is not engaged in deforestation or depletion of the world's forests strengthens the clause's message. The overall message of the clause is positive, but the underlying implication is still that forests are something that the corporation can use for profit, if they do not contribute to deforestation.

5.1.2 Corporation's actions as the actor

In 13 examples with a material process, the actor is either something that is related to the corporation and its actions (logging levels) or the corporation but in a different manner, such as a procedure it is doing (our wood procurement). Most of these examples have a similar construction to the ones where the corporation is the names/explicit actor. The first participant is the corporation-related entity, with nature being a passive recipient of action from it. They also further strengthen the view of nature as a resource, human dominance and present potentially negative effects in a neutral way, to legitimise the actions.

(13) **Our wood procurement** does not cause (material process) land-use change or deforestation as is evidenced (material process) by the fact **that forest cover is** (relational process) stable or increasing (material process) in all wood sourcing areas.

Example 13 has a similar structure, with the corporation's actions as the actor and a material process, where nature is as the goal of the clause. In this example, there is also an embedded relational clause, which has the forest cover as the entity described. Now, looking at the word choices in this example, we see that there is emphasis on the fact that the corporation's actions do not cause land-use change or deforestation, as "do not" very strongly implies that these bad things are not happening. 'Evidenced' also evokes a sense of factuality. Stable or increasing gives two potential options, that both convey that there is no decrease happening because of

the actions of the corporation. The emphasis is on the fact that their actions do not cause harm on the areas this action is done on. However, this example still showcases how nature is understood as a resource, as while the corporate action is said to not cause deforestation it is still meaning that the areas are used for profit, and this is only to control the amount.

(16) **Our efforts** to protect (material process) and restore (material process) *aquatic ecosystems* enhance the quality of watercourses and the natural habitat of species living there.

Here, the efforts of the corporation contribute to the welfare of aquatic ecosystems. While protect and restore imply a positive stance, they also highlight how it is the corporation doing these actions towards nature, and that nature needs these types of actions because of human action. The clause also points out that it is the corporate efforts that enhance the watercourses and natural habitat of the species living there.

(21) In Finland, **our hydropower plants** impact (material process) *the environment* by altering river flow rates and their ecosystems.

In example 21 there is again a similar structure of corporate actors with a material process and nature as the goal. The clause merely says that the hydropower plants impact the environment. Now, this sounds rather neutral but if we look at what this impact is, we can assume it is most likely not a neutral thing. River flow rates are altered and thus their ecosystems are altered, by corporate action, yet this is stated as an impact and not as a negative side effect or a side effect of any sorts. There is no further mention what altering ecosystems means in concrete terms. The example also uses the environment as the object of the impact, followed by the more detailed description of how. As mentioned before, the environment strengthens the distinction between humans and nature, positioning nature as something that is around us rather than humans being part of nature or among nature. In this example, this use exemplifies this view, by positioning the rivers and their ecosystems as an environment for the hydropower plants. An alternate way of wording could exclude the use of the environment completely, and position both the hydropower plants and nature on a similar level.

(29) Young stand management ensures **that** stands remain (material process) *vital*, and *growth* is focused (material process) on the best trees.

Here, it is stand management that ensures the health of trees, and the focus is on keeping trees vital and growth focused on the trees deemed the best. Nature is again a recipient of action

from the corporation and the corporate actions are shown in a positive light, while they contribute to the idea of nature as a resource. This is demonstrated through the need to keep them vital for best growth, which is beneficial for the corporation. The better the trees grow, the sooner they can be utilised for profit. Young stand management and focusing the growth on the best trees, implies that there are standards the trees must meet, created by the corporation.

(37) **Mixed cultivation** produces (material) *forests* that are more sustainable, more diverse and grow better than single-species forests.

Material processes where mixed cultivation is producing forests are better. Now, what is deemed as better is more sustainable, more diverse and better growing. This is an example of the corporation utilising certain words (sustainable, diverse) and comparison to single-species forest, to frame this action as sustainable. However, it is still a cultivated forest, created by the corporation and is only more sustainable compared to the most harmful version of a single-species forest. The example also demonstrates how it is the corporation that has the agency to establish forests and to choose what kind of forests to establish, for them to best serve their purposes.

(38) **The programme** helps (material process) *us* keep (material process) *forests healthier and more vibrant*.

Here, the example first has the programme as the actor with the corporation as the goal. The second part then has the corporation as the actor, with nature as the goal. The programme helps the corporation, which in turn keeps forests healthier and more vibrant. The corporation is presented as an actor whose actions and related actions are behind keeping the forests better, and nature is positioned as a passive recipient of this action. While the vibrancy and health of the forests is beneficial for nature, it is also beneficial for the corporation, as it secures a better wood supply making the actions ultimately have the view of nature as a resource.

(39) **Demand for wood-based products** creates (material process) *a strong economic incentive for good forest management and growth*.

Here, the actor is the demand for wood-based products, that creates the economic incentive for the corporation to do good forest management. The example demonstrates the view of nature as resources and something to exploit, as the demand for products created from it is

what is creating an incentive to focus on keeping the resource. Here, instead of sustainable, good is the adjective assigned to forest management, together with growth. This could imply that good forest management means profitable forest management, or good in the sense that it creates the best base for profits. However, as has been mentioned, forest management is tied to the exploitation of forests, and management as a word links it closely to the business world, implying that there is something that needs human intervention in the forests. The forest however does not need to be managed by people, as they function as an ecosystem without human intervention. The need for management comes from the need of humans.

(41) **Forest certification** plays (material process) *a crucial role in managing biodiversity in wood sourcing.*

In this example, the actor is forest certification which is something enforced by organisations. The process of “plays” is regarding a crucial role in managing biodiversity in wood sourcing, suggesting that this type of certification is necessary. Biodiversity is again managed by the human/corporate entities, with the focus of the clause being on the certification’s effects on wood sourcing. Nature is here again in the role of something humans are profiting off, as it is where the wood is sourced, and biodiversity is inherently linked to it. This example demonstrates again also the usage of biodiversity as the concept that is deemed to provide for a testament of the corporation’s nature-positive action. Biodiversity is of course an important aspect, but there are other factors at play too, yet throughout the data biodiversity is often singled out as the concept through which the corporation’s good actions are demonstrated.

(42) Although **logging levels** are increasing (material process), **they remain** (material process) below the annual forest growth levels.

In this example the logging levels are increasing, yet they remain below the annual growth levels. The logging levels are the actor of the clause, with material processes of increasing and remaining. The tone of the clause is neutral, the increase is neither framed as being a positive nor a negative development. Increasing implies that it is possible this development continues. This example again demonstrates the view of nature as a resource, pointing out both the increase in logging levels, i.e. use of forests, and the existence of forest growth levels, which indicate that there is a line up to which the use is accepted. Notable in this example is also the omission of the entity doing the logging. In contrast to example 16, where our efforts are positioned as the actor, here we see no mention of our logging levels. While this can indicate the raise refers to overall logging levels, it also demonstrates how in terms of a positive

example, such as example 16, this type of example is not promoted as being of corporate action.

(43) In addition to the actions taken in line with the global forest biodiversity programme, **many mill sites** have actively been promoting *biodiversity* at a local scale.

Many mill sites operate as the actors in the clause, with biodiversity being the goal of the clause. Biodiversity has been promoted by the mill sites on a local scale, but there is no further specification what this means in practice. “Promoting biodiversity” is quite vague and ambiguous; it does not offer a clear explanation of what it is. The clause continues the examples where nature is a passive recipient of corporate action, and those where the corporate is framed as the one doing actions for nature.

(52) **Emissions** change *the ecological living environment of different species*.

In this example, it is the emissions as the actor that change the living conditions of different species. There is no mention of the origin of the emissions, simply a statement of what they do. Changing the ecological living conditions continues in line with examples such as “changing climate conditions”, where the impacts of climate change are recognised, but the word choices to discuss them obscure the truly devastating effects of climate change. In this example, we see that there is merely change in the conditions, but no specification on how this change affects the species. Of course, the effects are different depending on the species, but as no species lives in a vacuum but they are all part of larger ecosystems, the effects to one species can ultimately affect entire ecosystems. Again, the example omits who is causing these emissions, focusing more on what the emissions do.

(53) **Sustainable forest management** promotes *vital and growing forests* while ensuring the preservation of biodiversity, which is also the key to the resilience of forests.

Here then sustainable forest management is the actor, with a material process of ‘promote’ and the goal of ‘vital and growing forests’. Continuing, there is the material process of ‘ensure’, with the preservation of biodiversity as the goal. The preservation of biodiversity is also linked to the resilience of forests, implying that in addition to its being important to preserve biodiversity, it is also important that through this the important resources, forests, are kept more resilient. This is further suggested by the word choices of vital and growing, in

reference to the forests and what sustainable forest management promoted. As this is done while ensuring biodiversity preservation, it suggests it is of higher importance.

(54) **Sustainable forest management** safeguards *forest health* and *productivity*, and protects and enhances *biodiversity* - whilst securing *the long-term availability of renewable resources*.

In this example, sustainable forest management is safeguarding forest health and productivity, whilst also protecting biodiversity. In addition, it is securing the availability of resources. The view on nature as a resource is emphasised in this example by putting the availability of resources on the same level of importance as forest health and biodiversity. Forest health then is on the same level as productivity, implying that health is important for this reason and not as a metric of the effects humans have on the forests. The use of material processes with nature as the goal furthers this view, as well as the verb choices that all position the corporation and its actions as something that is beneficial for nature, whilst simultaneously using nature.

5.1.3 Nature as the actor

The data includes clauses where the active actor is nature, but in many of these cases, the clauses are related to explaining certain concepts or to discuss ways in which nature helps the corporations with securing their business objectives. In examples where nature is given agency, the constructions are similar to those where the corporation is the active actor. In many cases, despite nature being the active actor, the beneficiary of the action is in fact the corporations. Other ways in which this link and the view of nature as a resource is amplified is through highlighting the ways in which the qualities can be utilised by humans to solve issues.

(30) *The carbon that growing (material process) **trees** bind is stored (material process) in wood products and buildings throughout their life-cycle.*

In example 30, trees are the actors both growing and binding carbon, yet the clause focuses on the products created from the wood from the trees. While nature is the grammatical actor in the clause, the clause has a human-centred ideology behind it. While it is the trees that do the binding, the emphasis is on the fact that it is stored in human products made from it. The trees are not the first participant in the clause either, but the goal of carbon is, which puts more

emphasis on the fact that the goal of what the trees do is more important than the trees themselves.

(44) For our **forests** to remain (material process) *carbon sinks*, **the growth** needs (mental process) to exceed (material process) *harvests*.

Material process of remaining with the goal being carbon sinks. Possessive pronoun of our forests. Growth is the actor in the second clause with the mental process of need and then there is the material process of exceeding with the goal of harvests. The importance is placed on the forest's remaining carbon sinks. Growth to exceed harvests should be a relatively easy task, if one would just harvest less. Also notable is the use of harvests: as discussed by Schultz and Goatly, harvest implies that the produce is something ready to have and needs to be gathered before turning bad, such as many crops are for example. However, forests and trees operate in a very different way. They are not something that could be classified as harvestable in the way crops are.

(55) **Every natural tree species** maintains (material process) *a number of species that depend on it*.

Tree species as the actor and a material process of maintain, with a number of species that depend on it as the goal. Natural tree species suggest there are tree species that do not fit this description or share this responsibility. The construction here is similar to the examples where the actor is a corporation: the species are the active actor and the first participant, with a natural process where the goal is nature. Nature is given agency here, and in contrast to the clauses where corporations are involved, the focus is more on the interconnectedness of nature and how different aspects support others, creating a thriving ecosystem. While not explicitly stating anything, the mention of how the tree species support other species would imply that this means they ought to be protected.

(56) **Bred trees** grow (material process) 10-30% better than naturally generated trees.

Here the example discusses trees growing, pointing out that bred trees, so trees made from the company's tree breeding programme, grow better than naturally generated trees. In the grammar, the trees are the actors and grow as the material process is not undermining nature. However, the word choices in the clause uphold the idea of nature as a resource. The better growth is better for the company because it enables faster profits.

(57) **High biodiversity stumps and retention trees** increase (material process) *the amount of decaying wood in the forests.*

Here, similarly as in example 55 the focus is on nature's connectedness and nature has an active role in the clause. Nature is shown in a positive light and the health of forests is concretely emphasised.

(58) **Biodiversity** also plays (material process) *an important role in ensuring* the sustainability of our energy business and in particular our hydropower plants.

(59) **Freshwater** plays (material process) *a central role in Stora Enso's production processes and is a key component in forest growth.*

In the next two examples then, nature again has an active role in the clause, but this time it is having a fundamental role in the corporation's business. The corporation is the beneficiary in the clauses, and "plays" emphasises the active role nature has in the business operations. In both examples, the beneficiaries are corporate activities. Biodiversity is given a role in ensuring energy business' sustainability, and freshwater a central role in the production process as well as in forest growth.

(60) **Resilient forests** adapting (material) *to changing climate.*

Example 60 continues with nature as the actor, and in this clause, forests are adapting to changing climate. From a transitivity point of view, nature has an active role and agency but looking at the word choices of the clause we see that despite this, what is causing these actions is the changing climate. As mentioned before, changing climate as an euphemism for climate change obscures its serious and devastating effects, evoking more of a change of gradual, small changes that are not necessarily detrimental. The forests are also described as being "resilient", emphasising this quality as being of importance for them.

(61) **Forests and wood-based products** play (material) *a unique role in climate change mitigation.*

Here again, the forests and wood-based products play an important role in something where the beneficiary is humans/corporations. Here, climate change is referenced but in relation to how nature can be used in mitigating it.

(62) Thanks to sustainable forest management, **Finland's forests grow** (material) significantly more than they are used.

Here, sustainable forest management is given credit for ensuring that forests grow more than they are used. The forests are the actors, with the process of “grow” but the clause also has the material process of “used”. While the emphasis is on the fact that the forests grow more than they are used, it still positions them as something to use, if this balance is kept.

(63) For example, in Finland, **nurseries are producing** *hardwood seedlings*, which enable the *restoration of vibrant mixed forests*, in turn helping to support enhanced biodiversity and climate adaptation.

Here, the actor is “nurseries” and they are performing the material process of producing hardwood seedlings, which in turn help in restoration and biodiversity enhancement. While the nurseries are the actors, they are created by the corporation/humans, implying that as they enable the restorative actions, it is indirectly humans who enable the actions. In this example, restoration of vibrant forests is helping to support biodiversity and climate adaptation. Climate adaptation is again a way of mentioning climate change, but in a manner that does not make it seem urgent.

(64) **High-quality seedlings will ensure** *good growing conditions* for the forests and are important not only for wood raw material production but also for carbon sequestration, restoration of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change.

Here, the actor is again high-quality seedlings, with the process of will ensure and good growing conditions as the goal, indicating that since these seedlings are produced by the corporation, they too have an important role in these aspects. This clause also emphasises the way in which nature supports nature, and humans are the beneficiaries. In this example, it is seen not only through good growing conditions but also through the latter part which details their importance for production, carbon sequestration, restoration of biodiversity and resilience to climate change. As in the above example, restoration and biodiversity are emphasised as positive aspects the corporation contributes to through its technological use of nature. These seedlings will also contribute to increasing resilience towards climate change, demonstrating again the view where climate change is the enemy, but obscuring the facts that humans and the corporation contribute to it.

(65) **Protected areas** include (material process) *valuable habitats, natural forests, and other areas of high value.*

In examples 65 under discussion are protected areas and what they include. The clause centres around the value of the lands, and this again showcases the anthropocentric views. It is humans who assign these values and decide to protect certain areas over others.

(66) **Healthy forests** ensuring (material process) *the vitality of our business.*

In this example, the forests are ensuring business practices. The clause construction indicates that the forest would be directly and actively ensuring the vitality of business, while more accurately, what is happening is that the vitality of the business is ensured by them because they can this way be used for business practices.

(67) **Improved circularity** plays (material process) *a critical role in mitigating climate change and halting biodiversity loss.*

This is similar to the examples above, in that it has improved circularity by having an active role in climate change mitigation and biodiversity loss halting, while being a concept that happens through actions of other actors. This is a common theme in the materials, where these concepts' role in climate change mitigation is emphasised, without mentioning the corporation or humans and thus constructing the clauses as if climate change is happening in some sort of vacuum.

(68) According to the UN, and despite ongoing efforts, *biodiversity is* deteriorating (material process) worldwide.

This example demonstrates how leaving out human/corporate actors obscures the harmfulness of nature deterioration. This deterioration is happening despite efforts, but there are neither mentions of whose efforts are discussed nor why is biodiversity deteriorating. Humans and the corporations are removed from these happenings.

(69) The faster and better the **reforestation** begins, the sooner the **forests** begin to bind *carbon* from the atmosphere.

In this example, the actors are the forests that through reforestation can begin to bind more carbon from the atmosphere. What is not mentioned in the clause is who is starting this

reforestation. Why this is both urgent and important is because of its importance to humans, who are the beneficiary in this example. We see that while nature is the actor, the actions it is doing are emphasised from the point of view of humans.

(73) Similar to Stora Enso's managed seminatural forests, *commercial plantations* are also certified (material process) to ensure that all aspects of sustainability are taken into consideration.

In this example, the main process is “are certified” which has no explicit actor in the clause but is some sort of organisational entity. Commercial plantations are the goal of the clause, the ones that are undergoing this action. While the dependent clause discusses how all aspects sustainability is taken into consideration through the certification, the existence of commercial tree plantations already implies that this is an action that is inherently not sustainable. While it allows for some sustainability aspects, a plantation in itself is not sustainable and therefore all aspects cannot be considered. The construction of the clause also highlights the unsustainability: the plantations are linked to seminatural forests to compare them in terms of sustainability, yet both of these are merely receiving action from the organisational entities.

5.1.4 No actor

Some of the examples in the data do not have an explicit grammatical actor at all. What is common in these cases, is the fact that they discuss actions that the corporation/humans do, without naming them as the actor. Many of the actions in these have a direct effect on nature and leaving out the actor in these cases obscures the fact that they highlight a human-centric approach to nature.

(23) Increasing (material process) *nature's values* and strengthening (material process) *biodiversity* by implementing (material process) *biodiversity actions in Stora Enso's own forests in Sweden and wood supply in Finland*.

There is no actor in the clause on the grammatical level, but it is understood to be the corporation that is performing these actions. It is increasing nature's values, which is an ambiguous statement, given that there is no elaboration on what is meant by nature's values. The material processes in the clause highlight how nature is the recipient of physical action from the corporation.

(24) *Trees* can be bred (material process) for any heritable trait including growth, stress resilience and wood properties.

In example 24 it is discussed that trees can be bred for a variety of traits, which all are traits mostly beneficial for the corporation, as better growth and wood properties benefit business practices more than they benefit the trees themselves. However, there is no explicit mention of who is doing this breeding. It is understood to be the corporation, but this is left out of the clause and there is no active actor in the clause, just the goal of the action. This example highlights again the dominance humans have over nature. Choosing to breed trees for traits specifically beneficial for humans furthers the view of nature as a resource to be exploited, and intervenes as wished. Utility is given higher priority than the ecological aspects of tree breeding.

(25) In all breeding programmes, *genetic diversity* is maintained (material process) by having several breeding populations of sufficient size and avoiding the crossing of closely related parents.

Example 25 continues the discussion on tree breeding, showing again the view of trees as resources. Breeding programmes must have genetic diversity, because the implication that crossing of too closely related trees could lead to them not being as good. Tree breeding showcases the relationship between the corporation and nature, as it highlights how the corporation can use and meddle with nature to benefit its own goals.

(26) Mixed cultivation increases *biodiversity* by establishing the forest initially as a mixed forest and ensuring that sufficient amount of silver birch and other broad-leaved trees are left on the site in addition to pine and spruce.

In this example, mixed cultivation is the actor with a material process and biodiversity as the goal. Nature has a passive role here, and the corporation/humans are framed as taking care of biodiversity by implementing this action.

(27) *Retention trees* are usually left (material process) in bigger groups and *their undergrowth* is left (material process) in place to serve as a protective thicket.

(28) *Protective thickets* are primarily placed (material process) in connection with retention trees, high biodiversity stumps and decaying (material process) *wood*.

The trees and thickets are left and placed by the corporation, and while it is not mentioned explicitly when this happens it can be understood to happen during forest management. The role of nature as a passive recipient of action is highlighted here, as in both examples it is humans/corporations that are doing the leaving and placing of the thickets and trees.

(32) *Protective thickets* are created (material process) by leaving (material process) *brush and small trees* untouched in the clearing **that** precedes (process) *the felling*.

(33) The share of broadleaved trees increased and the protected area continued (material process) *to grow*.

In both of these examples there is a material process relating to nature and the actions discussed require human action but there is no specific mention of who has done the actions. Creation and protection of certain areas are things specifically done by humans to ‘benefit’ nature perhaps. Example 32 discusses the elements created in regard to felling, demonstrating how the corporation has the power over nature.

(35) Between 1994 and 2022, *a total of 7,900 hectares of forest* have been restored (material process).

The entity doing the restoring is not mentioned by name here but understood to be the corporation. While this initially sounds like a good thing, looking deeper we can derive that 1) to restore means that at some point the forest has been cut down 2) again nature is here as the recipient of action from humans 3) we do not know what we are comparing the 7,900 hectares to. There is a relatively long-time span and no mention of how much there was forest in the beginning. And we must remember to also question what does restore mean? An old forest cannot be restored in 20 years and the restoration getting to the same results is also not certain.

(36) *The key role of forests in combating* (material process) *climate change* and supporting biodiversity has been widely recognised (mental process).

The mental process of recognising has the key role of forests as the goal and then there is the clause with combating as a material process and climate change as the goal. Who has this role been recognised by? Also paying attention to the key role that has been assigned to forests in combating climate change and supporting biodiversity. Their role is widely recognised (by

who?) but it is something that has been assigned importance by humans because ultimately climate change is a human issue even though it affects everything around the globe.

(45) No wood sourced (material process) from tropical rainforests or from forest plantations that have been established by converting natural forests.

This clause has a material process of sources with no wood as the goal, and no implicit actor but the one doing the wood sourcing is the corporation.

(46) *The biodiversity values of the area* are assessed (material process) before the plantation is established (material process), and *all valuable biodiversity hotspots and native forests* are protected (material process).

Again, material process towards nature. Corporation assesses the biodiversity value of an area and protects the areas deemed valuable. Corporation is simultaneously destroying and protecting nature; establishing plantations and protecting biodiversity hotspots, yet as we see it is the corporation that also assesses the value, leaving nature to be merely something it exerts power onto.

(47) As part of this project, *active measures* were put (material process) in place to encourage three endangered predatory species to nest in commercial forests using species inventories and artificial nests will also be built.

Here again we have a material process and the corporation as the actor in the form of a project and its active measures. The discussion is about getting endangered species to nest in the commercial forests using multiple measures. While a positive thing, it also shows the way commercial forests and forest management and the industry have driven these species to have problems nesting, as most likely the issue is that the commercial forests do not offer enough of what the species need for them to successfully nest in them.

(48) Sustainably managed (material process) commercial forests provide (material process) wellbeing and recreation.

Forests are the recipient of a material process, managed. The positive things of wellbeing and recreation have humans as the beneficiaries. These things are not exclusive for these forests but are provided by every forest.

(49) Rivers have been dammed (material process) **which** has affected (material process) the flows and changed (material process) the living conditions of migrating fish and other river-dwelling fauna.

In this example nature is a passive recipient of action from humans/corporations that has affected it on many levels. The whole clause is very neutral in its tone, despite the overall message clearly being negative. The damming has changed the living conditions of fish and fauna, and considering that often even very delicate changes have huge impacts on species that rely on certain types of flows, discussing this as neutral obscures the harm done to nature.

(51) Today, thanks to modern technology, harmful emissions can be neutralised, allowing sensitive species such as lichen to return.

Material process, where the implies actor is modern technology. Harmful emissions are the goal of the clause, being affected by the actions of modern technology. However, the other part of the clause has sensitive species such as lichen as the actor, as they are allowed to return. It is implied, that because of emissions these species have had to leave their natural habitats. While the message in the clause is framed as a positive one, technology allows to neutralise emissions, it also contains the implications that these emissions have previously caused these species harm.

5.2 Relational processes

Relational processes were the second most common process type in the data, with 38 examples having the main process be a relational process. Relational processes set relations between entities and attribute things to other things and are the second most common process type in the English language. In the data, relational processes demonstrate ways in which different attributes are assigned to different actors, and how the actors are described being.

(31) *Sturdy aspen and other broadleaved trees that are sparsely found (process) in forests, such as the great willow, bird cherry, rowan and aspen, will be left (material process) in the forest.*

In this example, the process of 'found' is referencing the specific types of trees. There is also a material process of leaving them in the forest. There is the value assigned for trees done on the background implying that some tree species are more valuable and thus to leave them.

(40) *Our business is based (relational process) on sustainable forest management.*

Here, the business is implied to be based on sustainable forest management. It tells that the basis for business is forest management, i.e exploitation of nature. As discussed before, the existence of sustainable forest management would imply there is also unsustainable forest management, rendering the specification of “sustainable” useless in the sense that business based on unsustainable forest cannot be possible.

(70) **Stora Enso** has (relational process) long-term strategic tree breeding programmes to ensure *future fit forest*.

In this clause the corporation is the actor that has something, which is the strategic tree-breeding programme, with the goal of ensuring fit forests in the future. Through this, the corporation is directly affecting nature and using it as it will, with the tree breeding programme having the goal of ensuring the forests are as the corporation wishes in the future.

(71) **Stora Enso's approach to sustainable forest and tree plantation management** is (relational process) *to ensure healthy and diverse ecosystems as well as the long-term availability of wood to meet the needs of the people and the planet*.

The main clause has the corporation's approach as the subject/actor of the clause with the relational process of 'being' and having the embedded clause as the object. In the embedded clause there is the material process of ensuring again with healthy and diverse ecosystems as the goal and then there is the material process of meet and the needs of the people and planet as the goal. The actor is implicit but understood to be the same as the main clauses. This example shows how nature is the goal of the action in the clauses and the actor who is ensuring these things is the corporation.

Looking at other choices in the clause we see how healthy and diverse ecosystems and long-term availability of wood to meet the needs of the people and planet are assigned similar value. Also noteworthy is the latter part of wood availability to the needs of the people and the planet. What is meant with this? It is easily understood what people need wood for, but what is meant by the needs of the planet? What wood needs does the planet have, that a corporation must ensure they are met with their actions?

(72) **Stora Enso** has (relational process) a *solid track record of achievements in safeguarding (material process) biodiversity in its forests and tree plantations since*

the 1990s, for example by pioneering forest certification, restoration and various forest management practices.

In this clause again the corporation is the actor that through a relational process of having is the one doing something towards nature. The embedded clause has safeguarding as a material process with biodiversity in its forests and tree plantations as the goal. We see here again how it is the corporation that is protecting nature. There is the possessive form of 'its' when referring to forests and tree plantations, showing how the company owns them, and the circumstance also details the ways in which the corporation has been safeguarding biodiversity. These ways however are also mostly human made practices: certification and forest management are actions only humans perform. They can be effective, but this highlights the way in which nature is viewed. It is through human action that nature can be protected from harmful human action.

(74) **Stora Enso** is (relational process) one of the largest private forest owners in the world.

Here, the dominance the corporation/human has over nature is clearly seen as the corporation is described as the largest owner of forests, showing how it has the power to own nature.

(75) **We** were (relational process) also not on target in terms of establishing new forests.

This example uses "we" again when discussing the corporation, which makes it sound more like a humane actor. The clause says that the corporation was not on target when it comes to establishing new forests, which is not further elaborated. The corporation again has the power over nature by being the one to establish new forests and set targets for the amount.

(76) **We** have (relational process) a long history of working (material process) with researchers, academic institutions, environmental organisations and other stakeholders to develop (material process) *sustainable forest management*.

Material process and another material process with sustainable forest management as the goal. Looking at the list of stakeholders with whom sustainable forest management is developed we see again that these are all human-led institutions. Despite a long history with different stakeholder groups, we do not know the effect they have and if one group is prioritised over another.

(77) **Stora Enso's ambition** is (relational process) to meet (material process) *the needs of ecosystems*, and the company has therefore committed (relational process) to delivering (material) *a net-positive impact on biodiversity*.

Corporation's ambition is to meet the needs of ecosystems, which is implied to be achieved by delivering a net-positive impact on biodiversity. The use of ambition and committing to delivering do not explicitly state whether this action is to be achieved or already achieved, leaving it open whether the company currently has a net-positive impact or not. Again though, the clause demonstrates how it is the corporation that has power over nature by being able to affect its impacts on nature significantly.

(78) *Our operations* are widely **linked** (relational process) with biodiversity.

Here, the corporation's operations are linked with biodiversity. Linked with biodiversity can mean a multitude of things and in general working in the industry itself means they are linked with biodiversity.

(79) **The emissions our production sites generate** can have (relational process) a negative impact on biodiversity.

The emissions from the corporation's production site are the actor in this clause with can have as the relational process. 'Can have' is rather ambiguous way of discussing the possible effects as it leaves the door open. Can have a negative impact on biodiversity does imply a negative effect but also leaves it up to debate if they do have a negative impact. This way it is not as determining, nor does it actually say they do have a negative impact, but it also does not say that they do not have negative impacts.

(80) **We** are committed (relational process) *to climate-positive forestry and improving biodiversity*.

Here, the corporation is describing its commitment to climate-positive forestry and biodiversity improvement. The relational process of being committed, which is an attributive relational process. The clause again has the corporation as the main actor who is on focus, and the actions of it are towards nature, and even when positive, position the corporation as the one having power over nature. Climate-positive forestry is an interesting choice, as it too implies there can be forestry that is not climate-positive. Climate-positive as an adjective is also ambiguous and has a vague meaning; is the positive impact as small of an impact as

possible or does it mean it better the climate? As has been seen in multiple examples, biodiversity is again the aspect of improvement, used more like a buzzword than to properly mean something.

(81) **Stora Enso applies** (relational) precautionary management actions to mitigate and remedy potential adverse impact on the environment and people.

The corporation's actions are on the focus, and the clause describes what they would do in an event of adverse impact. While it is mentioned as a precautionary management action, it also suggests there are possibilities for adverse outcomes for the environment and the people.

(82) In short, **tree breeding** (carrier) is (relational process) the crossing of selected elite parent trees to create (material process) a new generation with improved growth and resilience.

Tree breeding is the carrier in the clause with a relational process explaining what it is. The breeding described, choosing "elite" parent trees to achieve the desired qualities (desired by the corporation). Using "elite" signals that there's a way to classify the trees that leads to some being a lot better than others. The qualities of the new generation are qualities desired by the corporation, as the corporation is the one doing the breeding to achieve the qualities.

(83) **Biodiversity management is** (relational process) an integral part of Stora Enso's forest management practices.

Here biodiversity management is said to be an integral part of the corporation's management practices, with the grammar implying an active role for biodiversity management. Using management again here emphasises the business aspect, and also implies a need for biodiversity to be managed.

(84) **Sustainable forest management is** (relational process) an important means to adapt to climate change.

Here the management is the carrier with a relational process and having the attribute of being an important means to adapt to climate change. Here the corporation's actions are said to be important in adapting to climate change.

(85) **Actions to mitigate climate change and enhance biodiversity remain** (relational) the highest priorities of our customers.

The customers' highest priority is said to be climate change mitigation and biodiversity enhancement, and the construction of the clause positions these as the actor in the clause as they remain as the highest priorities.

(86) **Mitigating climate change** is (relational process) the single most important action to improve biodiversity.

(87) **Making high biodiversity stumps** is (relational) voluntary for forest owners, and it is agreed separately in connection with wood trade.

Both examples have a similar construction, with a relative attributive process. The carriers in the clauses describe actions being done, and both detail actions where nature is the object of action. Example 86 positions climate change mitigation as the most important action in biodiversity improvement. However, the clause does not have any entity that would be doing either of these actions, which obscures the responsibility humans have. In example 87, the action is making high biodiversity stumps, which is described as voluntary for forest owners. This implies that while this type of action is recognised as beneficial, it is not a requirement for business continuation.

(88) In fast-growing tree plantations, **the landscape** typically consists (relational) of mosaic areas of both intensive wood production and biodiversity conservation.

The landscape is the carrier here, consisting of mosaic areas of wood production and biodiversity conservation. In this example, these two aspects are of equal value and exist together at the same time.

(89) **They** are (relational process) key tree species **that** support (material process) *a diverse range of living organisms*.

The trees are the entities with the attributes, and they support other species. The clause itself gives the trees agency and frames them in a positive light, as important aspects in the ecosystem that have an important role in supporting other organisms. The construction of the clause supports this, and the tone is showing nature in a positive light.

(90) **Sustainable forestry** is (relational) a stakeholder interest as environmental NGOs are calling, among others, for increased forest protection and changes in forest management.

Here the discussion is on how sustainable forestry is a stakeholder interest, and a notion towards environmental NGOs and their demands on forest protection and other changes. As has been discussed previously, the idea that there is sustainable and unsustainable forest management is paradoxical, and here as they are contrasted it looks like the environmental NGOs are talking about making changes to unsustainable forest management. Yet, all the previous examples show the discussion on how the company does sustainable forest management, so what exactly are the NGOs calling for?

(91) **Sustainability managed forests and plantations** have (relational) a key role in maintaining natural water cycles.

Here, human intervention is made acceptable by emphasising how sustainably managed forests and plantations have a key role in another natural process. Even though the forests and plantations are the actors having this attribute, the focus in the example is on the human intervention, as it is emphasised.

(92) **Herb-rich forests** are (relational process) not common in Finland, but they are home to nearly half of our threatened species.

In this example, it is mentioned that these forests are not common in Finland but are still important in regards to threatened species. Notice the use of our threatened species, creating a sense of unity between the corporation and the readers. The emphasis on home also evokes likens the species and forests to humans, alluring sympathy.

(93) **They** are (relational) small untended thickets that provide shelter and food for birds and mammals, thereby securing the habitats of forest-dwelling species.

Here, the first part of the clause has the small untended thickets as the carrier, and they are said to provide shelter. The second part then discusses this shelter providing, and how this is securing the habitats of certain species. It is the thickets that are said to have all these attributes, but it is the corporation who is creating these thickets in the midst of their forest management, indirectly implying that the corporation has an active role in all this.

(94) **Biodiversity** is (relational process) instrumental in maintaining healthy forest growth and ensuring that forests adapt to the changing climate.

(95) **Forests and forest diversity** are (relational process) critical for mitigating the effect of climate change.

In these two examples, biodiversity and forests and forest diversity are given instrumental roles in mitigating climate change. They are described as being critical and instrumental in these processes, intensifying their responsibility in these actions. In example 94 there is also mention of how biodiversity maintains healthy growth showcasing the company's underlying values of profit, as the reason for needing good growth is to benefit from the forests.

(96) In the USA, **the forest lands** are (relational) considered a crucial conservation tool in protecting the iconic Mississippi River which serves as an essential water supply to millions of people in Minnesota where our forests are located.

In this clause the forest lands are the carrier with again the attributes given to it are those of a crucial part in nature conservation. The clause also has multiple material processes in it. Protecting has the river as the goal, with the actor being the forest lands. Serves then has the river as the actor, with essential water supply as what it is, and millions of people are the beneficiary in the clause.

(97) **Healthy forests** are (relational) an essential asset to clean water throughout a country.

Here, healthy forests are an essential asset to clean water throughout a country, emphasising their importance. The emphasis on clean water and the regarding of forests as an asset demonstrates the human-centric view present in the example.

(98) **128,000 hectares of land** is (relational) now dedicated to rainforest preservation and restoration, and Veracel aims to restore approximately 400 hectares of rainforest habitat every year by planting native species.

Here, an amount of land is dedicated to rainforest preservation and restoration by an unknown entity, and the aims of a corporation are discussed in relation to restoration. While it is initially a nature-positive example, it also reveals how much protection and restoration is needed, and the pace at which restoration is set to happen, is rather slow. Again also, it is the corporations that are doing this important job of restoration, still affecting nature.

(99) **A high biodiversity stump** is (relational) a trunk that is cut off at a height of a few meters and left to decay in the forest.

Here, the clause explains what a high biodiversity stump is and how it is created. There is no mention of who is creating them, but we see that they are not something that naturally occur

in the forests on their own, as they require cutting off a height of a tree and leaving it in the forest. This showcases the ways in which the corporation can control nature, by choosing where and when to create these.

(100) **Biodiversity** refers (relational) to the diversity and variation of species and ecosystems on our planet.

This example explains what biodiversity is and is very neutral. In the data, biodiversity is mentioned in many examples as something the corporation is striving to “better” or something that is “vital” for business, making it the dominant concept that is referred to when sustainability and nature positivity want to be signalled.

(101) **Biodiversity** is (relational process) instrumental to ensuring the vitality of our business.

In this example then contrary to the one above, the construction is similar however the tone and message is very different. While in example (100) biodiversity is the variation on the planet, in example 101 it is instrumental to the business, revealing the ideology behind, in which nature is valuable as it is valuable to the business.

(102) **Water** has (relational) *a fundamental role in the biosphere regulating the amount of biomass and impacting the amount of carbon in the entire Earth system.*

Here, water’s fundamental role in Earth’s system is recognised and the focus of the clause. The role is attributed to water by a relational process and the whole clause is positive in tone, emphasising the connectedness of nature and the important role of every aspect.

5.3 Mental

Mental processes are those of the internal world of the mind (Thompson, 2013, 94). These include verbs such as analyse and recommend. There were nine instances with mental processes as the main process in the data, out of which only one had some other entity as the actor than a corporation.

(103) **Stora Enso** continuously analyses (mental process) *the future impacts of climate change* and works (material process) to increase (material process) *the resilience of forests* to diseases, storms and other physical risks related to the changing climate.

Here, the corporation has the internal process of analysing the future impacts, followed by material processes that have the forests as the goal of action. Through the analysis, the company then is performing actions towards nature that aim to maintain the forests as beneficial for the corporation.

(104) **We** recommend (mental process) *to forest owners* that herb-rich forests be treated on the species' terms, with most suitable management measure, and with voluntary protection for the best sites.

In this example we again have “we” instead of the name of the corporation, and the mental process of recommending a certain action to a group. This example demonstrates the human dominance over nature and the way humans can assign value to nature from their own perspective. The forests are recommended to be treated on the species’ terms but management measures and voluntary protection for best sites follow this, implying that treating on species’ terms includes continuing forest management actions. It is not clarified what is meant by “best sites”. This could mean best sites in terms of biodiversity or the species, or best sites in the eyes of the corporation. Regardless, the clause reveals that protection is again not a requirement from the corporation but a recommendation, demonstrating that despite recommending this positive action, the aim for it is not so strong as to make it a requirement for continuing business.

(105) From 2022, **we** will review (mental process) *our owner members' herb-rich forests* and intensify (material process) *our guidance for their* management.

Similarly, this example discusses the company’s actions towards forest owners, with nature being an indirect recipient of action. The corporation is reviewing forests, by which criteria is not included and intensifying guidance for their management. There is no specification what this means in practice, but what can be seen in both instances is the role of the corporation as being the decider on the actions towards the forests.

(106) In our forestry operations in the US, **we** consider (mental process) and restore (material process) the forest's natural diversity by aligning (material process) *management actions with the forest's natural ecology*.

In example 106 the clause has both a mental and material process with forest’s natural diversity as the goal. Consider and restore, while different both demonstrate how the corporation is the actor that gets to perform actions on nature. The final process of “aligning”

management action with the forest's natural ecology supports this too, as the forest is a recipient of this action and it is the corporation that is doing the aligning, implying this will be done from the corporation's perspective.

(107) We examine (mental process) our impacts on the surrounding *waterbodies, groundwater, fish, fauna and air quality*.

Here, the corporation examines its impacts on the environment. The tone of the clause is very neutral, and "impacts" indicated neither positive nor negative happenings. This together with the construction of the clause however illustrates the uneven relationship between nature and the corporation. The corporation is examining the impacts it has, and this suggests there are impacts. Nature is a recipient of these impacts, and they are examined by the entity causing the impacts too.

(108) We aim (mental process) to safeguard (material process) and strengthen biodiversity by offering more of the conditions required by species and preserving valuable *habitats*.

Here, the main process is "aim" which indicates that the actions followed are something to be done. The rest of the clause has material processes, which all have nature as their goal. The corporation is again framed as the entity doing these actions to nature, and even as nature is presented as the beneficiary in the clause, the corporation is said to offer more conditions required by nature to nature. This constructs an image where even when the action is coming from nature's beneficial point of view, it is the corporation who ultimately has the power to do the actions.

(109) Despite changes to wood procurement areas, we know (mental process) *the origin of the wood*, and certification and actions that improve *biodiversity* play a key role in that.

In this example, wood is viewed as a resource and thus it is important to know its origin. Certification and actions, that are not directly said to be by the corporation, but the implication is that they are, are said to improve biodiversity.

(110) We want to (mental process) increase (material process) the role of biodiversity in our *business to respond to the current and future ecological challenges*.

This example shows the corporation's want to increase biodiversity's role in business. The clause indicates the operations are not yet there. Biodiversity's role is again said to be important in ecological challenges.

(111) **Forests and plantations** need (mental) *rainwater* for growth, and active water management of plantations contributes to positive effects on the total water balance as well as water storage purity and quality.

Here, the actor of the clause is forests and plantations that have the physical need for rainwater to grow, with the rest of the example detailing how corporate action then positively contributes to water balance.

5.4 Verbal

There were only a few verbal processes in the data as the main process. Verbal processes are processes of exchanging information, for example "saying" and "reporting", and the typical participants are a sayer and a receiver. The verbal processes in the data all were rather similar: in each example the sayer is something to legitimise corporate actions that have nature as the object of action.

(50) **Studies** show (material process) that, since the start-up in 2007, mill operations have had no measurable negative impact on biodiversity.

Here, studies are the "sayer" showing how the mill operations have had no measurable impacts. Referring to studies legitimises the claims, but there is no further mention of what studies are referred to. Measurable negative impact on biodiversity is also not equal to no negative impact. Measurable says that no impact has been able to be measured, not that there has been no negative impact.

(112) **The indicator** for newly established forest area indicates (verbal process) that the area of post-felling forest regeneration and reforestation.

In example 112 then, the sayer of the clause is "the indicator" with a verbiage of post-felling forest regeneration and reforestation.

(113) **The policies** require (verbal) sustainable forest management through responsible sourcing and land use - to safeguard the health and ecological functions of ecosystems and to help conserve biodiversity, soil and water resources.

Here, similarly as in example 50, the policies require sustainable forest management through actions. The policies requiring these actions legitimise the corporate actions, and while the clause discusses the safeguarding of ecosystems, it also mentions soil and water resources, indicating the view where they are primarily seen as resources.

6 Discussion

This study looked at three corporation's annual report's sustainability sections' language discussing nature, utilising Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar's Transitivity System, Critical Discourse Studies and Ecolinguistics to analyse the data. This section summarises the main points of the analysis and explores the implications and possible reasons. Limitations and possible future research are also discussed in this section.

6.1 General summary

The data consisted of 113 examples, and most of these examples contained material processes, with the second most common process type being relational processes. Material processes describe physical actions or happenings, and while they are the most common processes in the English language, this also emphasises how in most examples when discussing nature, the actions are physical. Relational processes describe "state of affairs" and most relational processes in the data describe different attributes of entities. The focus on material processes is fitting for the genre, as the Annual report details the corporation's past year, but also emphasises how nature is tied to physical action by or related to the corporation. It also demonstrates the ideology of humans dominating over nature and seeing nature as a resource: nature is something things are done to, and it is acceptable to do these physical actions to nature. While not all material processes are verbs that entail harmful action to nature, it perpetuates the idea that humans or corporations' actions towards nature are accepted. I argue that the results show how the materials have an overarching ideology of nature as a resource, and humans having the right to use and edit nature as they wish. The findings of the study support this, and there are multiple examples in the materials that overtly emphasise how certain actions and nature benefit humans. Nature is discussed as something that is simultaneously a passive recipient of action from the corporation, and a part of supporting the corporation's business operations. For example, how forests are discussed to act as carbon sinks and grow for business highlight that their importance lies in their perceived benefit to humans. Many examples also use passive voice and omit who is doing certain actions. This obscures both the responsibility and the implications of an entity doing these actions to nature. Multiple examples also use neutral language in regard to the impact on nature, which implies that the impact is more negative than positive, as positive impacts are highly emphasised in the materials. Overall, the materials show the imbalance in power

between corporations and nature, and how corporations view nature as a resource to exploit even when they say otherwise.

6.2 Participants and process types

Through transitivity analysis and annotation, the participants of the clauses were able to be identified. In the case of material processes, corporation was most often the first participant and actor of the clauses, appearing as the first participant in 50 examples. Nature appeared as the actor in 33 examples, and 30 examples had neither as the actor or no actor. However, in the case of these examples, in many the actor could be understood as the corporations, as the entity that is the first participant and actor is related or of corporate, such as a mill operation. When corporations appear as the actor, nature is often in a passive role in the clauses, most often as the goal of the clause. In these examples the focus is usually on the corporate action too, putting the possible effects on nature or other implications to the side. Multiple examples discuss the varied operations, programmes and goals the corporation has, with their varying goals. While the goals can be nature-positive, such as increasing decaying wood, the focus is not the goal but rather on the fact that the corporation has put this programme or goal in place.

In the examples where nature is the actor or first participant, it often has a supporting role, either supporting the corporations or humans or other natural entities, such as trees supporting other species. This highlights how nature is given agency mostly in cases where this agency leads to nature benefiting others and highlighting the view on nature as something to use, a resource that supports the business practices, rather than is used by them. Comparing the clauses with corporation as the actor to nature as the actor, we also see that when nature is the actor the corporations are rarely a participant in the clauses. This demonstrates how corporations can and have the right to do actions to nature, but the relationship is one-way, and nature is a participant in corporate action with a supporting role in business.

There are a few more aspects related to participants that warrant discussion. Firstly, in many of the examples the corporations are referred to with the pronoun “we”. While this is a common practice in corporate communication, there are implications to it. We used in corporate communications materials firstly creates a sense of unity and cohesion and evokes a sense of humanity. “We” is a set group of people and conveys to the reader that it is this we, that is behind these actions, rather than a large impersonal, organisational entity. This is useful in crafting a brand image and straightening it and appearing more “human-like”. As the data includes examples from three different corporations' materials, it is clear that this is a

preferable way of addressing the corporation in these materials. For a comparison, the only one out of the three that frequently also uses the corporation's legal name is Stora Enso. This implies that using "we" is preferable to using the corporation's name, perhaps because of the humanising effect it has. When it comes to discussing what this "we" does, we see that it still operates like an organisation.

Following this, it can be seen that in the data the corporations appear often much like humans, i.e. they appear to act like people and are talked about in that way. Arran Stibbe explores the "corporation as a person" metaphor and points out the "danger of representing a corporation as a person who decides things for itself": "it becomes difficult to locate responsibility for behaviour that damages the environment" (2015, 77). For Stibbe, corporations utilize this metaphor in a number of ways, for example in brand building by attempting to shape the public's view of the corporation's personality (ibid.) This is visible in the data too, as the materials are corporate annual reports where corporations themselves discuss their own brand and actions. Seeing how in many examples the actions the corporations say they do, or aim to do or have goals of, are very nature-positive and what would be considered sustainable, the corporations are trying to convince the reader that the corporation is like this. Notably, only a few examples outright discuss negative aspects or failings on the corporation's actions, and even in those examples, the language used is very neutral and careful not to position the corporation in a negative light.

6.3 Lexical word choices

As the topics discussed in the materials all relate to nature and many also discuss sustainability, lexical word choices are important in constructing the corporate image and analysing the ideologies behind the clauses.

Climate change appears in the data 16 times and is referred to with multiple different expressions. It is used together with verbs "mitigate" and "adapt" often and nature's role in these processes is brought up in many examples. The words used to refer to climate change each have different connotations and implications. "Climate change" in itself is a much-established term, and even if in the materials the urgency of the issues is not emphasised, utilising climate change portrays that the issue is recognised as something that needs attention. In contrast, one example uses the phrase "changing climate conditions" which then seems to downplay the issue and does not accurately portray the magnitude of the situation. In some examples, it is mentioned how the corporation "combats" or "mitigates" climate change,

but little concrete examples of these actions are given. The focus in the examples discussing climate change is more on how it affects the business, as in the cases where nature is mentioned regarding climate change, many examples portray it as something that is equally adapting or mitigating climate change in the same way as humans. For example, examples point how forests help mitigate climate changes and how they adapt to the changing conditions. The implication behind the examples is that these things need to happen, for the corporation to be able to continue its business actions and humans continue to be able to use nature as a resource. Continuation of operations is the focus of many examples, and the ways in which the corporation aims to “combat” climate change are merely business operations that by all accounts are already in place: they are not new interventions or changes in actions or operations.

Nature’s need to stay “resilient”, “vibrant”, “healthy” and “growing” is brought up multiple times in the examples, highlighting the idea of it as a resource to benefit humans.

Simultaneously, the corporation's effects are discussed very little, and the role of ownership and dominance over nature is emphasised i.e. how the forests owned by the corporation need to flourish in the future too. This demonstrates the overarching ideology in the text, of seeing nature as resources for humans and thus the primary reason for needing to take climate change into account is securing the future of resources. In one example, it is even pointed out that the forests need to grow for future generations.

Biodiversity appears in the materials total of 47 times and is often singled out as the aspect the corporation aims to safeguard, promote, enhance, protect and views as a key part of business practices. While an important concept, in the materials it begins to appear almost like a buzzword, that is used to portray good intentions and nature-positive actions, without further discussion on the topics. There are only a handful of examples where concrete biodiversity enhancing actions are described. Many examples also position biodiversity as an instrumental or key aspect of business, without elaborating how they do this. Simultaneously, the materials mention actions that directly harm biodiversity, such as establishing plantations.

Sustainable forests management is another term that is frequent throughout the materials and brings with certain implications. As mentioned before, the existence of sustainable forest management implies the existence of unsustainable forest management, which renders the word meaningless in what it is perceived to try to achieve. This action is used as the primary way through which the corporations positively affect nature, demonstrating how the

corporations view on how to protect nature still involves its involvement. Nature is not enhanced or protected by simply letting it be it is protected through human action on it. In addition, verbs such as “protect” and “restore” are frequently used throughout the materials, in regard to nature and often together with forest management actions or other corporate actions. While these actions are positive for nature, the materials utilise them more to build a better image of the corporations as little concrete actions are discussed, and often this protection and restoration is done side by side with harmful actions such as establishing plantations.

Animals are not discussed much in the materials, but when they are brought up, little specifications are used. In the materials, animals are entities that occur in units without clear boundaries (Goatly 2018, 232) despite not actually being uncountable units. Multiple times instead of referring to animals the materials refer to species. In some cases, species can also include other entities (such as fauna) but there are examples where species clearly refers to animals, but species is used instead. This use obscures the actions, as species is much vaguer and less sympathy evoking than “animals” is. The corporation's actions affect the animals' habitats and whole forest ecology, but using species makes it vaguer who is affected by the corporate action.

6.4 Limitations and issues

While transitivity analysis combined with an ecolinguistic point of view worked well in the study for the purposes of uncovering language use related to nature, there were some issues with the study. Firstly, qualitative and detailed analysis works for the materials, but it also limits the amount of data that can be analysed. Thus, while the results provide for insights on the specific materials, larger conclusions are difficult to draw. Yet, the data size proved to be quite large, and while many examples share similar constructions, the language use differed in many places in ways that it felt difficult to group them together without losing important aspects of analysis. This study also focused on materials collected from three different corporations. Utilising only one corporation for a more thorough case study or for a diachronic comparison could have been a possibility. A corpus study including larger sets of data and/or more corporations to analyse would provide for quantitative results that could better be drawn conclusions from. However, this would limit the detail of the analysis. As the results show, in many cases the language used does perpetuate ecologically destructive views through linguistic choices. Utilising a clear classification system would have helped to

produce more quantitative results and data from the study. However, as the study aimed for a more qualitative analysis this was not the main goal of the study.

7 Conclusion

This study examined the language used when discussing nature in three corporation's annual reports' sustainability sections. The research questions focused on what type of language and how it was used in the materials. The main goal was to see how the relationship between the corporation and nature is established. Transitivity analysis was utilised to analyse the clause constructions and their indications, such as the participants and process types and how they affect the clauses. Critical Discourse Studies practices and Ecolinguistics were deployed to further analyse the language and word choices of the materials. The study had three research questions:

- 1) How is nature linguistically represented in the materials and how does the corporation view nature?
- 2) What are the dominant process types in the materials and what do they together with participants in the clauses imply about the relationship between the corporations and nature?
- 3) The materials are part of the corporation's annual reports' sustainability sections and the industry in which the corporations operate directly utilises nature for profit. How do the corporations frame themselves as sustainable and eco-friendly in the materials?

The first research question explored the language in the materials and to answer it both CDS, Ecolinguistics and Halliday's Transitivity analysis were used. I argued that the result shows that nature is primarily viewed as a resource by the corporations and represented as something that humans have the right to use and edit as they wish. The materials do not promote a view of humans and nature existing in harmony, as nature is represented as a resource for humans and something that humans protect from themselves, as it is the exploitation by humans and the effects of climate change that is caused by human action that the environment needs protection from.

To answer the second research question, Halliday's Transitivity Analysis was utilised. The results showed that the dominant process type was material and the participant most often performing these processes was the corporations, demonstrating how the corporation is the active actor and nature the passive recipient of its action.

While the utilised methods worked well for the research questions, the scope is relatively small. However, a larger data set would have made detailed analysis difficult. This study adds to the field of ecolinguistics and sustainable language use. As the climate crisis becomes an ever more pressing issue, along with our practices our language must become more sustainable. Large corporations yield a lot of power in their respective fields and are able to have more influence on both practices and the industry's use of language than singular people are. While corporate communications have been studied in multiple fields, ecolinguistic perspectives continue to offer new insights and help to shift towards more sustainable language in communications. For future research there are many possibilities. As Annual Reports and other new corporate communicative materials are produced every year, diachronic comparisons or larger scale corpus studies are possibilities. Utilising this study's methods, other materials produced by the corporations or other corporations in the field could also be studied.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: All analysed examples from the materials

- (1) In Brazil (circumstance), **the company** (actor) continues (material process) *field trials with genetically modified trees* (goal), now totalling approximately five hectares.
- (2) **Stora Enso** works (material process) actively with its stakeholders to promote (material process) *sustainable forest management*.
- (3) **Stora Enso** combats (material process) *climate change* with renewable materials, resource efficient production and sustainable forest management.
- (4) **Stora Enso** never establishes (material process) *plantations* in natural forest, protected (material process) *areas or watersensitive locations*, and only land with low biodiversity value, such as former pastureland, is used.
- (5) **Stora Enso** actively supports and implements (material processes) *voluntary forest conservation and restoration* measures on all the land it owns, leases and manages as well as in other areas where the Group purchases wood.
- (6) In 2021, **Stora Enso** made (material process) *a commitment* to achieving (material process) *a net-positive impact on biodiversity in its own forests and plantations* by 2050.
- (7) **The Group's forests and long-term supply agreements** secure (material process) *a sustainable and transparent wood supply*.
- (8) **We** annually provide (material process) *financial support* to development projects conducted outside Finnish commercial forests that have a regional impact, promote (material process) *biodiversity* and improve (material process) *the condition of water bodies*.
- (9) In 2022, **we** did (material process) *well in our biodiversity targets* to increase (material process) *the amount of decaying (material process) wood in commercial forests*.
- (10) **We** leave (material process) *protective thickets for animals at different stages of forest management*.
- (11) **We** also promote (material process) *forest certification for private forest owners and other customers*.
- (12) **We** safeguard (material process) *biodiversity* in our own forests and continue (material process) to implement (material process) *our biodiversity activities* as part of the new global Forest Action programme, launched (material process) in 2022.
- (13) **Our wood procurement** does not cause (material process) *land-use change or deforestation* as is evidenced (material process) by the fact *that forest cover is (relational process) stable or increasing (material process) in all wood sourcing areas*.

- (14) We do not use (material process) *wood* from illegal sources or from areas where high conservation value forests could be under threat.
- (15) We ensure (material process) that *our forests continue* (material process) to act (material process) as *carbon sinks*, remain (material process) *resilient and diverse in changing climate conditions*, and grow(material) well for future generations.
- (16) Our efforts to protect (material process) and restore (material process) *aquatic ecosystems* enhance the quality of watercourses and the natural habitat of species living there.
- (17) Stora Enso's 50%-owned joint operation Veracel protects (material process) and restores (material process) *biodiversity in the areas of natural Atlantic rainforest*.
- (18) Stora Enso also launched (material process) *biodiversity action programmes for its land holdings in Sweden and wood supply operations in Finland* to enhance (material process) biodiversity in their operations.
- (19) Since the *plantations* were established (material process), Veracel has worked (material process) *systematically to protect and restore local biodiversity*.
- (20) We take care (material process) of *threatened species* and increase (material process) their *number*.
- (21) In Finland, our **hydropower plants** impact (material process) *the environment* by altering river flow rates and their ecosystems.
- (22) We reduce (material process) *our fossil carbon dioxide emissions* and safeguard *biodiversity*.
- (23) Increasing (material process) *nature's values* and strengthening (material process *biodiversity* by implementing (material process) *biodiversity actions in Stora Enso's own forests in Sweden and wood supply in Finland*.
- (24) *Trees* can be bred (material process) for any heritable trait including growth, stress resilience and wood properties.
- (25) In all breeding programmes, *genetic diversity* is maintained (material process) by having several breeding populations of sufficient size and avoiding the crossing of closely related parents.
- (26) Mixed cultivation increases *biodiversity* by establishing the forest initially as a mixed forest and ensuring that sufficient amount of silver birch and other broad-leaved trees are left on the site in addition to pine and spruce.
- (27) *Retention trees* are usually left (material process) in bigger groups and *their undergrowth* is left (material process) in place to serve as a protective thicket.
- (28) *Protective thickets* are primarily placed (material process) in connection with retention trees, high biodiversity stumps and decaying (material process) *wood*.

- (29) Young stand management ensures **that** stands remain (material process) *vital*, and *growth* is focused (material process) on the best trees.
- (30) *The carbon that growing (material process) **trees** bind is stored (material process) in wood products and buildings throughout their life-cycle.*
- (31) *Sturdy aspen and other broadleaved trees that are sparsely found (process) in forests, such as the great sallow, bird cherry, rowan and aspen, will be left (material process) in the forest.*
- (32) *Protective thickets are created (material process) by leaving (material process) *brush and small trees* untouched in the clearing **that** precedes (process) *the felling*.*
- (33) The share of broadleaved trees increased and the protected area continued (material process) *to grow*.
- (34) *With strict policies and various tools in place to ensure (material process) *sustainable forest management and wood sourcing*, **Stora Enso** is not engaged in (material process) deforestation or depletion of the world's forests.*
- (35) Between 1994 and 2022, *a total of 7,900 hectares of forest* have been restored (material process).
- (36) *The key role of forests in combating (material process) *climate change* and supporting biodiversity has been widely recognised (mental process).*
- (37) Mixed cultivation produces forests that are more sustainable, more diverse and grow better than single-species forests.
- (38) **The programme** helps (material process) **us** keep (material process) *forests healthier and more vibrant*.
- (39) **Demand for wood-based products** creates (material process) *a strong economic incentive for good forest management and growth*.
- (40) *Our business* is based (relational process) on sustainable forest management.
- (41) **Forest certification** plays (material process) *a crucial role in managing biodiversity in wood sourcing*.
- (42) Although **logging levels** are increasing (material process), **they** remain (material process) below the annual forest growth levels.
- (43) In addition to the actions taken in line with the global forest biodiversity programme, **many mill sites** have actively been promoting *biodiversity* at a local scale.
- (44) For our **forests** to remain (material process) *carbon sinks*, **the growth** needs (mental process) to exceed (material process) *harvests*.
- (45) No wood sourced (material process) from tropical rainforests or from forest plantations that have been established by converting natural forests.

- (46) *The biodiversity values of the area are assessed (material process) before the plantation is established (material process), and *all valuable biodiversity hotspots and native forests are protected (material process).**
- (47) As part of this project, *active measures* were put (material process) in place to encourage three endangered predatory species to nest in commercial forests using species inventories and artificial nests will also be built.
- (48) *Sustainably managed (material process) commercial forests provide (material process) wellbeing and recreation.*
- (49) *Rivers have been dammed (material process) **which** has affected (material process) the flows and changed (material process) the living conditions of migrating fish and other river-dwelling fauna.*
- (50) **Studies** show (material process) *that, since the start-up in 2007, mill operations have had no measurable negative impact on biodiversity.*
- (51) Today, thanks to modern technology, harmful emissions can be neutralised, allowing sensitive species such as lichen to return.
- (52) **Emissions** change the ecological living environment of different species.
- (53) **Sustainable forest management** promotes vital and growing forests while ensuring the preservation of biodiversity, which is also the key to the resilience of forests.
- (54) **Sustainable forest management** safeguards forest health and productivity, and protects and enhances biodiversity - whilst securing the long-term availability of renewable resources.
- (55) **Every natural tree species** maintains (material process) a number of species that depend on it.
- (56) **Bred trees** grow (material process) 10-30% better than naturally generated trees.
- (57) **High biodiversity stumps and retention trees** increase (material process) the amount of decaying wood in the forests.
- (58) **Biodiversity** also plays (material process) an important role in ensuring the sustainability of our energy business and in particular our hydropower plants.
- (59) **Freshwater** plays (material process) a central role in Stora Enso's production processes and is a key component in forest growth.
- (60) **Resilient forests** adapting (material) to changing climate.
- (61) **Forests and wood-based products** play (material) a unique role in climate change mitigation.
- (62) Thanks to sustainable forest management, **Finland's forests** grow (material) significantly more than they are used.
- (63) For example, in Finland, **nurseries** are producing hardwood seedlings, which enable the restoration of vibrant mixed forests, in turn helping to support enhanced biodiversity and climate adaptation.

(64) **High-quality seedlings** will ensure *good growing conditions* for the forests and are important not only for wood raw material production but also for carbon sequestration, restoration of biodiversity and increasing resilience to climate change.

(65) **Protected areas** include (material process) *valuable habitats, natural forests, and other areas of high value*.

(66) **Healthy forests** ensuring (material process) *the vitality of our business*.

(67) **Improved circularity** plays (material process) *a critical role in mitigating climate change and halting biodiversity loss*.

(68) According to the UN, and despite ongoing efforts, *biodiversity* is deteriorating (material process) worldwide.

(69) The faster and better the **reforestation** begins, the sooner the **forests** begin to bind *carbon* from the atmosphere.

(70) **Stora Enso** has (relational process) long-term strategic tree breeding programmes to ensure *future fit forests*.

(71) **Stora Enso's approach to sustainable forest and tree plantation management** is (relational process) *to ensure healthy and diverse ecosystems as well as the long-term availability of wood to meet the needs of the people and the planet*.

(72) **Stora Enso** has (relational process) *a solid track record of achievements in safeguarding (material process) biodiversity in its forests and tree plantations since the 1990s*, for example by pioneering forest certification, restoration and various forest management practices.

(73) Similar to Stora Enso's managed seminatural forests, *commercial plantations* are also certified (material process) to ensure that all aspects of sustainability are taken into consideration.

(74) **Stora Enso** is (relational process) one of the largest private forest owners in the world.

(75) **We** were (relational process) also not on target in terms of establishing new forests.

(76) **We** have (relational process) a long history of working (material process) with researchers, academic institutions, environmental organisations and other stakeholders to develop (material process) *sustainable forest management*.

(77) **Stora Enso's ambition** is (relational process) to meet (material process) *the needs of ecosystems*, and the company has therefore committed (relational process) to delivering (material) *a net-positive impact on biodiversity*.

(78) *Our operations* are widely **linked** (relational process) with biodiversity.

- (79) **The emissions our production sites generate** can have (relational process) a negative impact on biodiversity.
- (80) **We are committed** (relational process) *to climate-positive forestry and improving biodiversity.*
- (81) **Stora Enso applies** (relational) *precautionary management actions to mitigate and remedy potential adverse impact on the environment and people.*
- (82) In short, **tree breeding** (carrier) is (relational process) the crossing of selected elite parent trees to create (material process) *a new generation* with improved growth and resilience.
- (83) **Biodiversity management is** (relational process) an integral part of Stora Enso's forest management practices.
- (84) **Sustainable forest management is** (relational process) an important means to adapt to climate change.
- (85) **Actions to mitigate climate change and enhance biodiversity remain** (relational) the highest priorities of our customers.
- (86) **Mitigating climate change is** (relational process) the single most important action to improve biodiversity.
- (87) **Making high biodiversity stumps is** (relational) voluntary for forest owners, and it is agreed separately in connection with wood trade.
- (88) In fast-growing tree plantations, **the landscape** typically consists (relational) of mosaic areas of both intensive wood production and biodiversity conservation.
- (89) **They are** (relational process) key tree species **that** support (material process) *a diverse range of living organisms.*
- (90) **Sustainable forestry is** (relational) a stakeholder interest as environmental NGOs are calling, among others, for increased forest protection and changes in forest management.
- (91) **Sustainability managed forests and plantations have** (relational) a key role in maintaining natural water cycles.
- (92) **Herb-rich forests are** (relational process) not common in Finland, but they are home to nearly half of our threatened species.
- (93) **They are** (relational) small untended thickets that provide shelter and food for birds and mammals, thereby securing the habitats of forest-dwelling species.
- (94) **Biodiversity is** (relational process) instrumental in maintaining healthy forest growth and ensuring that forests adapt to the changing climate.
- (95) **Forests and forest diversity are** (relational process) critical for mitigating the effect of climate change.

(96) In the USA, **the forest lands** are (relational) considered a crucial conservation tool in protecting the iconic Mississippi River which serves as an essential water supply to millions of people in Minnesota where our forests are located.

(97) **Healthy forests** are (relational) an essential asset to clean water throughout a country.

(98) **128,000 hectares of land** is (relational) now dedicated to rainforest preservation and restoration, and Veracel aims to restore approximately 400 hectares of rainforest habitat every year by planting native species.

(99) **A high biodiversity stump** is (relational) a trunk that is cut off at a height of a few meters and left to decay in the forest.

(100) **Biodiversity** refers (relational) to the diversity and variation of species and ecosystems on our planet.

(101) **Biodiversity** is (relational process) instrumental to ensuring the vitality of our business.

(102) **Water** has (relational) *a fundamental role in the biosphere regulating the amount of biomass and impacting the amount of carbon in the entire Earth system.*

(103) **Stora Enso** continuously analyses (mental process) *the future impacts of climate change* and works (material process) to increase (material process) *the resilience of forests* to diseases, storms and other physical risks related to the changing climate.

(104) **We** recommend (mental process) *to forest owners* that herb-rich forests be treated on the species' terms, with most suitable management measure, and with voluntary protection for the best sites.

(105) From 2022, **we** will review (mental process) *our owner members' herb-rich forests* and intensify (material process) *our guidance for their management.*

(106) In our forestry operations in the US, **we** consider (mental process) and restore (material process) *the forest's natural diversity* by aligning (material process) *management actions with the forest's natural ecology.*

(107) **We** examine (mental process) *our impacts on the surrounding waterbodies, groundwater, fish, fauna and air quality.*

(108) **We** aim (mental process) to safeguard (material process) and strengthen biodiversity by offering more of *the conditions required by species and preserving valuable habitats.*

(109) Despite changes to wood procurement areas, **we** know (mental process) *the origin of the wood*, and certification and actions that improve biodiversity play a key role in that.

(110) **We** want to (mental process) increase (material process) *the role of biodiversity in our business to respond to the current and future ecological challenges.*

(111) **Forests and plantations** need (mental) *rainwater* for growth, and active water management of plantations contributes to positive effects on the total water balance as well as water storage purity and quality.

(112) **The indicator** for newly established forest area indicates (verbal process) that the area of post-felling forest regeneration and reforestation.

(113) **The policies** require (verbal) sustainable forest management through responsible sourcing and land use - to safeguard the health and ecological functions of ecosystems and to help conserve biodiversity, soil and water resources.

Appendix 2: The Finnish Summary

Johdanto

Kieli vaikuttaa siihen, miten ymmärrämme maailmaa. Emme useinkaan ajattele niitä tahoja, jotka luovat ja ylläpitävät kieltä, jota käytämme, kun puhumme luonnosta. Kuitenkin, samalla kun tarve ymmärtää ja muuttaa riistäviä, epäekologisia and kestäättömiä tapoja ja käytäntöjä kasvaa, täytyy kielenkäytön muuttua sen mukana. Ei ole samantekevää, kenellä on taloudellista ja poliittista valtaa luoda uusia termejä ja tuoda niitä yleiseen käyttöön, ja tällä hetkellä luontoa kaupalliseen toimintaan käyttävillä tahoilla on paljon valtaa kielenkäytön ja termien normalisoinnissa (Shultz 1992, 109). Tästä syystä tämä tutkielma tarkastelee kolmen suomalaisen metsäyhtiön kielenkäyttöä luontoon liittyen, niiden vuosikertomusten kestävyysosioissa. Alalla on pitkä historia Suomessa, ja viime vuosina metsäyhtiöt ja metsät ovat nousseet uutis- ja keskustelunaiheiksi erityisesti vastuullisuuteen liittyen useita kertoja. Samaan aikaan yritysvastuu ja vastuullisuusviestintä ovat nousseet yhä tärkeämmiksi osa-alueiksi yrityksille, ja yrityksiltä vaaditaan yhä enemmän panostusta vastuullisuuteen.

Tutkielmalla on kolme tutkimuskysymystä:

1. Millä tavoin luonto on kielellisesti edustettuna materiaaleissa ja miten yhtiöt näkevät luonnon?
2. Mitkä ovat dominantit prosessityypit materiaaleissa ja mitä ne yhdessä lauseiden osallistujien kanssa kertovat yhtiöiden ja luonnon välisestä suhteesta?
3. Materiaalit ovat osa yhtiöiden vuosikertomusten kestävyysosioita, ja yhtiöiden toimiala suoraan hyödyntää luontoa voittoa tavoittelevat. Millä tavoin yhtiöt kehystävät itsensä ekologisiksi ja luontoystävällisiksi materiaaleissa?

Tutkimus perustuu kriittiseen diskurssintutkimukseen ja on suuntaukseltaan ekolinguvistinen. Kriittinen diskurssianalyysi on monitieteinen ala, joka on kiinnostunut vallan ja kielen välisestä suhteesta (Wodak ja Meyer 2001, 2). Se pyrkii analysoimaan erilaisia valtasuhteita, ja sopii tästä syystä hyvin myös ihmisen ja luonnon välisten valtasuhteiden analysointiin (Flowerdew ja Richardson 2018, 2). Ekolinguvistiikka tutkii kielen ja luonnon välistä suhdetta ja pyrkii sekä kritisoimaan että löytämään uusia vaihtoehtoja ekologisesti haitalliselle kielelle (Stibbe 2015, 1). Tutkimus hyödyntää analyysissä lisäksi systeemifunktionaalisen kieliopin (SFG) transitiivisuussysteemiä, joka keskittyy lauseiden verbeihin, joita kutsutaan prosesseiksi, ja niiden toimijoihin (Halliday ja Matthiessen 2014).

Aihe on ajankohtainen, sillä ilmastonmuutos ja sen aiheuttamat ongelmat, kuten luontokato, ovat yhä suurempia ongelmia maailmassa. Samaan aikaan yritysten vastuullisuusviestintä kiinnostaa yhä laajempaa joukkoa ihmisiä, ja vastuullisuuden merkitys sijoittajien päätöksenteossa on myös kasvussa (Breeze 2013).

Tausta, materiaalit ja metodit

Yritysten vastuullisuusraportointi (Corporate Sustainability Reporting) pohjaa yritysvastuun (Corporate Social Responsibility) käsitteeseen. Yritysvastuun käsitteellä on pitkä historia, ja se sisältää ympäristön lisäksi yhteiskunnallisen ja sosiaalisen vastuun käsitteet. Nykypäivänä vastuullisuusraportointi on kaikille suurille yrityksille pakollista lain nojalla. Yleisimmin yritykset käsittelevät laajimmin yritysvastuuta osana vuosikertomustaan, joka julkaistaan kerran vuodessa. Tämän tutkielman materiaaleina on kolmen suomalaisen metsäyhtiöiden vuosikertomusten vastuullisuusosiot.

Vuosikertomus ja vastuullisuusviestintä ovat osa yritysviestinnän (corporate communications) kenttää. Yritysviestintä voidaan nähdä viestintäjärjestelmänä, joka kattaa sekä kaiken yrityksen julkisen että sisäisen viestinnän, ja sisältää erilaisia tekstejä ja genrejä kuitenkin rajoittumatta niihin (Breeze 2013, 19, 23–24). Se ei ole pelkästään informatiivista viestintää, sillä sen tarkoitus on myös ylläpitää ja kehittää yrityksen mainetta sidosryhmien silmissä (Cornelissen 2011, 50). Vuosikertomukset ovat yhtiöiden keskeisimpiä osakkeenomistajilla ja potentiaalisille sijoittajille tuotettuja dokumentteja ja tämän lisäksi niiden yleisönä voidaan nähdä yhteiskunta laajemmin (Breeze 2013, 84–85). Tämän takia ne ovat materiaaleina sekä informatiivisia, että pyrkivät rakentamaan tai vahvistamaan yrityksen brändiä ja imagoa.

Tutkielma on kriittinen diskurssianalyysi ja sen teoreettinen viitekehys pohjaa ekolinguistiikkaan. Analyysissa hyödynnetään systeemifunktionaalisen kieliopin transitiivisuusteoriaa (Halliday ja Matthiessen 2014). Kriittinen diskurssintutkimus on monialainen lähestymistapa, joka on erityisen kiinnostunut vallan ja kielen välisestä suhteesta (Wodak and Meyer 2001, 2). Sen monialaisuuden takia sitä voidaan hyödyntää monipuolisesti erilaisessa tutkimuksessa, erilaiseen dataan, eri metodien ja eri teorioiden kanssa. Tässä tutkielmassa kriittistä diskurssintutkimusta hyödynnetään sekä yhdessä transitiivisuusteorian kanssa lauserakenteiden analyysissa, kuin yritysten ja luonnon välistä suhdetta rakentavien piirteiden analyysissa. Näitä voivat olla esimerkiksi eri sanavalinnat, asioiden sanomatta jättäminen ja kielikuvat. Kriittinen diskurssintutkimus sopii siis hyvin piilotettujen ideologioiden ja ideoiden paljastamiseen. Kriittinen termi tässä yhteydessä myös ei tarkoita täysin samaa kuin arkikielessä: kriittisessä diskurssintutkimuksessa kriittistä käytetään kritiikin merkityksessä, ja se voi johtaa myös positiivisiin lopputuloksiin (Bloor ja Bloor 2007, 4–5). Kriittisen diskurssintutkimuksen tavoite on siis analysoida kielessä ja diskurssikäytännöissä esiintyviä ideologioita, ja sitä, miten ne heijastavat ja rakentavat yhteiskunnallisia ongelmia (Bloor ja Bloor 2007, 12–13). Samalla se pyrkii tutkimaan kielen merkitystä valtasuhteiden luomisessa ja ylläpidossa (ibid.). Kriittisen lisäksi tärkeät termit kriittisessä diskurssintutkimuksessa ovat diskurssi ja teksti. Termit voidaan määritellä monin tavoin, mutta diskurssintutkimuksen kontekstissa diskurssi voidaan ymmärtää koko kommunikaatioprosessiksi, ja teksti kirjoitettuun tai puhuttuun dataan sen sisällä (Bloor ja Bloor 2011, 7). Tässä kontekstissa teksti voi sisältää myös multimodaalisia elementtejä kuten kuvia ja taulukotia, sillä ne ovat osa kommunikaatiota.

Ekolinguistiikka on luontoon liittyvän diskurssin tutkimiseen sopiva suuntaus, sillä se on kiinnostunut kielen ja luonnon välisestä suhteesta. Tavoitteena ei ole pelkästään yksittäisten tekstien tarkastelu, vaan syvempi pureutuminen kieleen ja niihin tapoihin, joilla se vaikuttaa ekologiseen kriisiin, etsien samalla parempia vaihtoehtoja (Stibbe 2014, 117). Kuten kriittisessä diskurssintutkimuksessa, ekolinguistiikassa on keskiössä kritiikki, joka kohdistuu tapoihin joilla kieli on mukana ekologisessa kriisissä. Tässä tutkielmassa tämä kritiikki kohdistuu kaupallisiin toimijoihin, jotka käyttävät luontoa voitontavoitteluun. Näillä tahoilla on yhteiskunnassa valtaa vaikuttaa kieleen, jolloin niiden käyttämän kielen tutkiminen ja analysointi ekolinguistiikan kautta tarjoaa mahdollisuuden tuoda huomiota ekologisesti haitallisiin, yleisesti käytössä olevaan kieleen.

Systeemifunktionaalinen kielioppi (Halliday ja Matthiessen 2014) on lähestymistapa, joka keskittyy kielen funktionaalisiin aspekteihin ja tarjoaa kattavan kuvauksen kielestä. Systeemifunktionaalisisessa kieliopissa kielioppi nähdään systeemiverkkona, jossa merkitys rinnastetaan funktioon (Thompson 2013, 28). Systeemifunktionaalisisessa kieliopissa on kolme metafunktiota, ideationaalinen, interpersoonallinen ja tekstuaalinen, joiden keskeinen osa tämä on. Tämän tutkimuksen kannalta tärkein metafunktio on ideationaalinen metafunktio, jolla ilmastaan ajatuksia ja tapahtumia, sekä kuvataan niiden välisen suhteen rakentumista kielen avulla. Transitiivisuusteoria (transitivity system) on ideationaalisen metafunktion alasyteemi, jonka tavoitteena on selvittää mitä tehdään ja kenelle. Transitiivisuusteoria toimii erinomaisesti yhdessä kriittisen diskurssinanalyysin kanssa, sillä sen avulla voidaan analysoida miten kieli rakentaa merkitystä ja miten eri toimijoita ja suhteita kuvataan kielessä. Transitiivisuusteoriassa on kuusi prosessityyppiä, joista jokainen kuvaa eri tavoin kokemusten ymmärtämistä.

Materiaaliprosessit kuvaavat ulkoisia kokemuksia, mentaaliset prosessit taas sisäisiä kokemuksia. Behavioraaliset prosessit sijoittuvat materiaalien ja mentaalisten rajalle, ja kuvaavat sisäisten tilojen ulkoisia ilmentymiä. Relationaaliset prosessit ovat tunnistamista ja luokittelua, ja niiden ja mentaalisten prosessien rajalla ovat verbaaliset prosessit, jotka kuvaavat tietoisuudessa rakentuvia symbolisia suhteita ja niiden kielellistä ilmentymistä. Kuudes prosessi tyyppi on eksistentiaaliset prosessit, jotka sijoittuvat relationaalisten ja materiaalien rajalle ja liittyvät olemassaolon kuvaukseen. Eri prosessityypit siis kuvaavat erilaisia asioiden muutoksia ja oloiloja. Transitiivisuussysteemissä lausekkeet koostuvat prosessien lisäksi kahdesta muusta komponentista, osallistujista (participants) ja olosuhteellisista elementeistä (circumstantial elements), joista jälkimmäinen ei kuitenkaan ole pakollinen osa lausekettä. Tästä syystä tämä tutkielma ei huomioi olosuhteellisia elementtejä analyysissa.

Tutkimuksen materiaalina on yhtiöiden vuoden 2022 vuosikertomusten vastuullisuusosiot ja tarkemmin niistä kerätyt lauseet, joissa luonto on osallisena. Vuosikertomukset ovat julkisia materiaaleja, jotka ovat vapaasti saatavilla yhtiöiden sivuilla. Tutkielmassa tarkasteltavat yhtiöt Metsä Group, Stora Enso ja UPM Kymmene ovat Suomen kolme suurta metsäteollisuusyritystä. Materiaaleista rajattiin analyysia varten vain luontoa käsittelevät lauseet. Tämä suoritettiin AntConc-ohjelmalla (Anthony 2024) hyödyntäen listaa avainsanoista. Analyysia varten lauseet annotoitiin UAM CorpusTool-ohjelmalla (2016), transitiivisuusteorian mukaan. Näiden avulla materiaalit voitiin rajata yhteensä 113

lauseeseen, joita analysoitiin tarkemmin. Analyysia varten lauseet jaoteltiin transitiivisuusteorian prosessityyppien mukaisesti lauseiden pääverbin perusteella. Analyysissa tutkittiin transitiivisuusteorian mukaan prosessityyppisiä, osallistujia sekä osallistujien toimijuutta, ja analysoitiin kriittisesti sekä näiden merkityksiä kuin sanavalintoja.

Tulokset ja pohdinta

Tutkimuksessa tarkasteltiin yhteensä 113 lausetta, joista suurin osa (68) sijoittui materiaalien prosessien kategoriaan. Tulokset osoittivat, että yhtiöt käyttävät monia kielellisiä keinoja kehystääkseen itsensä ekologisesti vastuullisempina, kuin ovat. Tulokset myös osoittavat, että luonto nähdään ensisijaisesti resurssina, jota yhtiöllä ja ihmisillä on oikeus käyttää ja muokata kuten toivovat. Tämä ilmenee esimerkiksi sillä, että materiaaleissa tuodaan useasti esiin luonnon tarve pysyä terveenä ja kasvavana, sekä liiketoimintaa että tulevaisuutta varten. Materiaaleissa ei myöskään mainita eläimiä kuin muutaman kerran, vaikka monet yhtiöiden toimet vaikuttavat luonnon lisäksi eläimiin. Tämä toiseuttaa eläimiä, ja korostaa ihmisen oikeutta luonnon käyttöön.

Keinoja, joilla yhtiöt kehystävät itsensä ekologisina ja ympäristöystävällisinä löytyi useita. Yksi keino, jolla negatiivisten vaikutusten vastuuta vältellään, on passiivisen äänen käyttö. Tämä häivyttää vastuuta ja kehystää ekologisesti haitallisia tekoja asioina, jotka vain tapahtuvat. Toinen keino, joka esiintyy materiaaleissa usein, on ”me” pronominin käyttö yhtiöstä puhuttaessa. Tällä inhimillistetään yhtiötä, ja kuten passiivisen äänen kanssa, häivytetään vastuuta. Yhtiöstä puhutaan materiaaleissa ikään kuin ihmisinä, jotka tekevät asioita, eikä suurista organisaatioista. Tämä on ”yhtiö ihmisenä”-metaforan käyttöä, jossa piilee vaara, että ympäristölle haitallisen toiminnan vastuuta on vaikea asettaa (Stibbe 2015, 77). Yksi syy hyödyntää tätä keinoja on brändinrakennus, joka julkisten, yhtiön positiivisessa valossa esittävien materiaalien pyrkimys voi olla. Tätä tukee myös se, että materiaaleissa on vain muutama negatiivisia vaikutuksia käsittelevä lause, ja niissä käytetään neutraalia kieltä ja häivytetään yhtiön näkyvyyttä. Neutraali ja ongelmia häivyttävä kielenkäyttö näkyy myös materiaalien sanavalinnoissa. Ilmastonmuutoksesta esiintyy eri variaatioita materiaaleissa ja biodiversiteetti esiintyy materiaaleissa 47 kertaa, kuitenkin liittymättä konkreettisiin tekoihin sen hyväksi.

Transitiivisuusanalyysi näytti, kuinka yleisin aktiivinen toimija lauseissa oli yhtiö ja luonnon rooli näissä lauseissa oli passiivinen toiminnan kohteena olija. Luonto ilmenee tuloksissa pääosin jonain, jolle tehdään asioita ja josta muut toimijat hyötyvät. Esimerkeissä, joissa luonto oli asetettu lauseen toimijaksi, sen rooli oli usein tukea yhtiöiden toimintaa jollain tavalla tai esimerkissä keskityttiin sen muille toimijoille (kuten ihmisille, muille lajeille) tuomiin hyötyihin. Materiaaleissa keskitytään yhtiöiden eri toimiin, kuten mahdollisiin ohjelmiin, tavoitteisiin ja toimintaan, enemmän kuin niiden vaikutuksiin luontoon. Tällä tavoin pystytään näyttämään tapoja, joilla yhtiöt pyrkivät parantamaan luonnon tilaa, kuitenkin samalla jättäen kertomatta niiden todellisia vaikutuksia.

Tutkimuksella on myös rajoittavia tekijöitä. Kvalitatiivisena tutkimuksena tutkimuksen aineisto on rajattu. Laajempi aineisto mahdollistaisi yleispätevämmät tulokset. Laajempi aineisto ja/tai tarkempi luokittelusysteemi tai viitekehys mahdollistaisi myös kvantitatiivisia tuloksia kvalitatiivisten rinnalle.

Johtopäätökset

Tässä tutkielmassa analysoitiin kolmen metsäyhtiön kielenkäyttöä luontoon liittyen niiden vuosikertomusten kestävyysosoiden teksteissä. Tutkielma toteutettiin kriittisenä, ekolinguistisena diskurssianalyysinä ja analyysissä hyödynnettiin systeemifunktionaalisen kieliopin transitiivisuusanalyysia. Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että kaupallisten toimijoiden kieli luontoon liittyen on niiden ekologisista tavoitteista huolimatta vielä luonnon hyväksikäyttöä ja toiseuttamista tukevaa. Ilmastokriisin ollessa yhä akuutimpi ongelma, jatkotutkimukselle on monia mahdollisuuksia. Yritysviestinnän materiaaleja julkaistaan jatkuvasti, ja materiaalia on myös tarjolla pitkältä aikaväliltä, mikä mahdollistaa esimerkiksi laajemmat korpustutkimukset alan kielenkäytöstä.