

**THE NATURE OF LAPLAND AS A TOURISTIC PRODUCT:  
AN ANALYSIS OF NATURE DISCOURSES THROUGH  
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Matkailuun keskittyvät tekstit, kuten matkailulehdet, matkaoppaat ja esitteet, osaltaan rakentavat matkailukohteiden identiteettiä eli kohdekuva. Kohdekuvat vaikuttavat matkailijoiden matkustuspäätöksiin. Vuodesta toiseen sekä kotimaiset että kansainväliset turistit löytävät Suomen Lapin. Lumoavan luonnon tunteineen tiedetään olevan yksi Lapin tärkeimmistä vetovoimista, joka houkuttelee matkailijoita vuodenajasta riippumatta. Houkutellakseen matkailijoita turismidiskurssi hyödyntää erilaisia kielellisiä keinoja, joista yksi on erilaisten kielikuvien käyttö. Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman tarkoituksena on tarkastella, miten erilaiset kielikuvat rakentavat luontodiskursseja Lapin luonnosta suomalaisessa <i>In the Far North</i> -matkailulehdessä ja siten muovaavat Lapin kohdekuva.</p> <p>Tämä tutkielma pyrkii sekä lisäämään ymmärrystä kielikuvien käytöstä osana kohdekuvan rakentumista että täyttämään tutkimusaukon, sillä luontodiskurssit ovat jääneet vähemmälle huomiolle turismidiskurssin tutkimuksessa. Tutkielman aineisto koostuu matkailulehden englanninkielisestä versiosta, josta on julkaistu kuusi numeroa vuosien 2013-2019 aikana. Yhteensä 48 artikkelia analysoitiin laadullisen sisällönanalyysin ja diskurssianalyysin keinoin. Aineistosta nousi esiin viisi keskeistä luontodiskurssia, jotka rakentuivat metaforien, vertauskuvien sekä personifikaatioiden avulla. Lapin luonto esitettiin taiteena, talven ihmemaana, loisteliaana jalokivenä, elollisena olentona sekä paratiisina. Vaikka jokainen diskurssi toi esiin erilaisia piirteitä Lapin luonnosta, yhteistä niille oli kuitenkin se, että ne esittivät luonnon idyllisenä aistikokemuksena. Diskurssit harjoittavat sosiaalista kontrollia, sillä ne kannustavat tiettyntyyppiseen turistiseen toimintaan. Etusijassa diskurssit kannustavat tarkastelemaan luontoa näköaistin avulla, sillä Lapin luonto näyttäytyi idyllisenä turistin katseen (eng. tourist gaze (Urry 2002) kohteena eli esteettisenä maisemana. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että kielikuvatkin yksinään voivat toimia diskurssiivisina keinoina ja siten osaltaan vaikuttaa matkailukohteiden kohdekuvan rakentumiseen.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is not a modern-day phenomenon. Travel has existed as far back as ancient times. However, tourism, as we know it, has evolved massively. Thanks to developments in transport, traveling has become easier and more accessible. At present, internationalized tourism manifests itself in a myriad of subtypes, for example, nature tourism, culinary tourism, and sports tourism. Hence, there are a great variety of ways to practice tourism. The World Tourism Organization attempts to define it on their website as a “social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes” (UNWTO, n.d.). Hummon (1988: 200, as quoted by Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger 2010: 121), on the other hand, has defined tourism as “a social ritual that involves a movement away from the world of home, work, and necessity”. Tourism is thus a threefold phenomenon – social, cultural, and economic – and it has an impact on all three spheres. From an economical point of view, as an industry it is indispensable to many countries worldwide as many businesses’ economic position and economic growth are heavily dependent on the revenues that tourism flows bring in.

From tourists’ point of view, tourism is, in essence, a way to escape and disconnect oneself from mundane life at home and work. From a social and cultural point of view, tourism “is also a linguistic experience” (Topler 2018: 448). Language and languages have a central role in the tourism experience at every stage of the trip. One way to attempt to describe the role of language in the tourism experience and how tourists are exposed to languages is that tourists bathe in language baths at every stage of the trip. At the pre-trip stage, tourists may seek inspiration from travel literature or consume information about the chosen destination. At the on-trip stage, tourists share linguistic exchanges with tour guides, local people, and other tourists. They locate and immerse themselves in the local and global linguistic landscape. Therefore, as Thurlow and Jaworski (2010: 10) highlight, “language and languages sit at the very heart of the tourist experience”. Dann (1996: 2) goes on to say that without language “there

would be little tourism at all". In this perspective, the language of tourism is regarded as a language of its own, also referred to as tourism discourse.

Tourism discourse, i.e., tourism-related texts act as "mediators" between those who are seeking to travel, and the destinations people choose to visit (Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger 2010: 88). The language of tourism constructs and mediates destination images that affect tourists' travel decisions. That is, "tourism is grounded in discourse" (Dann 1996: 2). Hence, the role and impact of language in tourism should not be disregarded. Quite the contrary, as Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (2010: 9) put it, "in this era of increased opportunities to tour and increased numbers of communities to tour, it is quite relevant to examine increased means for spreading and retrieving information about these opportunities". Thus, it is important to place emphasis on the language of tourism and explore how it tries to persuade prospective tourists and turn them into actual tourists by means of language. In this perspective, the salient role of language in tourism makes tourism discourse a worthy topic in linguistics.

The foregoing paragraphs are intended to lay the rationale for why the language of tourism is worth exploring. In that regard, this study aims to explore how figurative language is employed in a Finnish travel magazine, *In the Far North*. The main aim is to explore how figures of speech are used in constructing discourses of the nature of Finnish Lapland as a touristic destination. This study focuses on analyzing the use of metaphor, simile, and personification. The decision to focus on these figurative devices was partly data-driven because it became noticeable that these figures of speech were employed the most with reference to nature. The method of analysis combines qualitative content analysis (QCA) and descriptive discourse analysis (DA). Based on previous research, DA has proved to be an applicable method in investigating the language of tourism (see e.g., Jaworski and Pritchard 2005). In this study, QCA is used as a tool to reduce the material according to the research question, and DA, on the other hand, serves the "attitude" (Schreier 2012: 49) toward the final analysis.

According to Dann (1996: 171), figurative devices such as metaphor and simile are some of the verbal techniques frequently employed in the tourism discourse. To a considerable extent, the use of figurative language has been of interest to tourism discourse researchers. Certain text types, however, have notably been favored over others. There is a considerable body of research concerning the use of figurative devices in promotional tourism materials (e.g., Jaworska 2017; Djafarova and Andersen 2008). Travel magazines have received less attention. Norasetkosol and Timyam (2012) have turned their attention to popular global travel magazines and Pathumratanathan and Tapinta (2012) to advertisements in in-flight magazines. By turning the attention to a travel magazine, this study seeks to shed light on the use of figurative language in an understudied genre of tourism discourse.

The arctic nature of Lapland and its natural phenomena such as the northern lights attract both domestic and international tourists to choose Lapland as their travel destination. Hence, nature is considered a major pull factor of Lapland (e.g.,

Järviluoma 2006, Tyrväinen et al. 2014). In tourism, the term pull factor refers to extrinsic factors such as the tangible physical qualities of a destination that attract or pull tourists to visit a destination (Dann 1996: 137). Pull factors of a destination are always destination specific (Sulaiman and Wilson 2019: 10). Nature as a pull factor attracts tourists inasmuch that it has become a “touristic product” (Saarinen 2004a: 445), and nature-based tourism has evolved into its own tourism sector. In Lapland “touristic wilderness is a commercialized space” (Saarinen 2004b: 41). Clearly, nature does not become a touristic product by itself, but it is the tourism industry and tourists themselves who transform it touristic. In the tourism industry, tourism communication constructs and circulates images of nature as a touristic product both visually and linguistically. Although nature-based tourism is a significant research focus in tourism research, it is still a rather unexplored research area in the domain of the language of tourism. Such a research gap has been recognized, for example, by Krisnawati et al. (2021). Furthermore, although the relationship between figurative language and tourism discourse has been examined (e.g., Djafarova and Andersen 2008; Jaworska 2017), research on this topic is still limited.

Finnish Lapland, from now on referred to as Lapland only, is the northernmost region of Finland. It is a popular tourist destination among domestic tourists as well as foreign tourists, especially among the British and continentals. Lapland witnessed a steady growth in tourism movements before the COVID-19 pandemic (Foreign Overnights in Finland 2019). In 2019 record-breaking 1,8 million foreign overnights were recorded which was a fourth of the overall number of foreign overnights in Finland (ibid.). In studies of tourism discourse, destinations other than Lapland have received more attention. Räsänen (2021), however, has turned her attention to Lapland. She investigated how a French-language catalog constructs discourses of Lapland as a tourism destination. The present study aims to increase the understanding of how Lapland is promoted to international tourism markets.

This study is organized as follows. The next chapter sets the theoretical context of the present study by providing a discussion of the theoretical framework. Then, chapter three continues to examine and discuss travel magazines as a genre of travel writing. In chapter three, the magazine *In the Far North*, which serves as the data of the study, is presented in further detail. Thereafter, chapter four outlines the design of the study, and a discourse-analytic discussion of the findings is taken up in chapter five. This is followed by a discussion in chapter six. Lastly, chapter seven serves as a conclusion by providing a summary of the findings and a discussion on suggestions for future research.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the theoretical framework that serves as the cornerstone of the present study is outlined. Attention is paid to tourism discourse, the characteristics of the language of tourism, and the role of figurative language in tourism discourse.

### 2.1 Tourism discourse

Before considering tourism discourse further, it is appropriate to consider the notion of discourse. Discourse is a challenging concept because there are many distinct definitions of what 'discourse' is depending on how it is approached. On one hand, in its simplicity, discourse can refer to any written or spoken language in use (Fairclough 2002). On the other hand, discourse can be regarded as "texts which serve various communicative purposes and perform various acts in situational, social and cultural context" (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2004: 27). Like discourse, tourism discourse is also a concept that lacks a universal and absolute definition in linguistics. We should now turn to an exploration of tourism discourse.

Graham Dann, a tourism researcher, was notably among the first researchers in the 1990s who shed light on the sociolinguistic nature of tourism. His work is pivotal in tourism discourse. He acknowledged that tourism has a language of its own, namely tourism discourse. Dann (1996) sees tourism discourse as a specialized language that through different sensory modes, such as linguistic, visual, and aural, communicates and transmits information pertaining to tourism. To date, the concept of tourism discourse has gained wider attention both in tourism and sociolinguistics. For instance, Jaworski and Pritchard (2005: 79) define tourism discourse as "a set of expressions, words, and behavior as well as particular touristic structures and activities that describes a place and its inhabitants". Thus, tourism discourse is considered a language that serves a specific purpose to transmit tourism-related information in the hope that it will convert potential tourists into actual tourists. As Hummon (1988:



181, as cited by Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger 2010: 14) considers, “as a ritual text, tourist advertising is involved in a symbolic transformation of reality, remaking ordinary places into extraordinary tourist worlds”. Thus, tourism discourse is about (re)creating and (re)shaping tourism destinations, their inhabitants, and their culture through the language of tourism.

In essence, the language of tourism is twofold in nature. According to Dann (1996: 2,3), tourism discourse is both “an act of promotion” and “an act of discovery”. It communicates necessary information pertaining to tourism and, at the same time, it aims to persuade people to buy tourism products and services. While it is a mix of persuasiveness and informativeness, it is argued that the language of tourism is inherently persuasive (Maci 2018: 37). This makes it akin to the discourse of advertising (Dann 1996). It has inherent communicative strategies through which it endeavors to “persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings, and, in doing so, convert them from potential into actual clients” (Dann 1996: 2). To achieve these endeavors, tourism discourse must be persuasive because the services it aims to sell are mostly “intangible experiences” (Sulaiman and Wilson 2019: 12) that cannot be tested prior to purchase, in other words, prior to travel. In fact, it is the image of a destination that is being sold to potential tourists. This image must be appealing enough to persuade tourists. For that reason, tourism discourse solely exploits “positive and glowing terms” (Dann 1996: 65). Destination image is the mental image that tourists create in their minds through the language of tourism. Thus, it is the mental end product of the visual and written components of tourism language that tourists use as a basis for their decision (Blažević and Stojić 2006: 58). Thus, constructing an appealing destination image is pivotal in tourism precisely because it is one of the main factors that influence tourist behavior.

Tourism is a multisensory experience (e.g., Dann 2002), and hence, so is tourism discourse. Via its multimodal and multifarious meaning-making methods, such as written or verbal language, still or moving images, or a merger of these, the language of tourism endeavors to stimulate the audience’s minds. Each channel that it employs stimulates different sensory channels. By using multiple channels to communicate, the language of tourism “build[s] new schemata and reinforce[s] the relevant existing schemata” (Yui Ling Ip 2008: 8, cited in Stoian 2015: 39–40).

Urry (2002) has introduced the concept of the ‘tourist gaze’ which is essentially based on the idea that in tourism the world is seen and experienced through touristic lenses. Though the ‘tourist gaze’ is subjective for each tourist, it is partly “socially organized” (Urry 2002: 1). That is, to a great extent, it is constructed and ruled by the tourism industry and the language it exploits. Therefore, it is important to examine the ways tourism discourse mediates the touristic experience linguistically. Studies in ‘tourist gaze’ have found that touristic gazes tend to idealize and romanticize nature (see e.g., Fälton 2021; Karlsdóttir 2013).

In addition to different modes, multiple different genres and text types embody the discourse making it multifarious and multidimensional. Each provides different affordances in the making of meanings. Tourism websites, travel guides, magazines, brochures, and travel programs are only some examples of the various channels and genres through which tourism is circulated to the public. The types of texts that embody tourism discourse can be classified according to their audience and objectives. Firstly, tourism discourse can be divided into professional and promotional communication. Professional tourism discourse refers, for example, to legal, corporate, and organizational communication (Maci 2020). Promotional tourism discourse, on the other hand, refers to communication whose objective is to promote tourism products and services to prospective tourists (ibid.). Secondly, Dann (1996) in his turn, categorizes tourism-related texts into pre-trip, on-trip, and post-trip categories. Dann's categorization of tourism texts is based on the idea that trips consist of three stages. He proposes that certain tourism texts are most likely consumed at a certain stage of a trip. For example, at the on-trip stage tourists consume tourism materials such as in-flight magazines and brochures provided, for instance, by the tour operator. The focus here is on promotional tourism discourse, namely online travel magazines. The genre of travel magazines is discussed in more detail in chapter three.

### **2.1.1 Tourism as a language of social control**

Before turning my attention to the role of figurative devices in the language of tourism, it is important to discuss why the language of tourism is considered a language of social control. As Cappelli (2006: 39) explains, "the language of tourism can become a powerful tool in the hands of the professionals in the tourism industry". Furthermore, Dann (1996: 3) states that "above all it is a language of social control". He explains that social control can be exerted with various strategies and to different extents using both visual and linguistic strategies. One of the most obvious examples is the use of visuals that communicate what tourists should see at a destination (Dann 1996: 87). Images, which tend to be highly edited and embellished in tourism writings, are used to visually promote destinations and to give pleasure to audiences' sense of sight. In such a manner tourists might even "become victims of fantasy" (ibid.: 74) because the reality that waits at the destination might be completely different from what the images have promised.

The language of tourism also employs social control through language. For example, guidebooks usually include sections that discuss what to do at a destination, where to go, and what to eat. This type of social control is typically employed via the use of imperatives that direct tourists to behave in a certain manner. Additionally, information is provided about only certain, selected attractions, restaurants, and other tourism services while many other aspects are left unmentioned. Such inclusion and exclusion strategies are likely to mediate the destination image and tourists' perceptions of destinations (McWha et al. 2016: 86). By carefully selecting which

destinations and which attributes are promoted, the experts of tourism communication exercise social control by trying to influence the behavior of tourists.

Lastly, the language of tourism can exercise social control also on the micro-level of language, i.e., on a word level. For example, carefully selected key words, discussed further in sub-chapter 2.2, are more likely to respond to the demands of tourists rather than describe the attributes of a destination. This type of micro-linguistic level of social control manipulates tourists by providing information that is likely to meet their expectations. The language of tourism makes use of figurative language and especially metaphors. Such language can be considered another linguistic strategy to manipulate the minds of tourists because especially metaphors are “the most powerful device available to us for changing people’s attitudes, quickly, effectively and lastingly” (Elgin 1993: 146 cited in Dann 1996: 172).

## **2.2 The strategies of the language of tourism**

As pointed out above, tourism discourse is multifarious in nature because it communicates meanings via multiple modes and channels. The verbal language of tourism makes use of specific linguistic techniques that over time have become characteristic of the language of tourism. As Sulaiman and Wilson (2019: 24) put it, through the “skillful and strategic manipulation” of language, tourism discourse aims to persuade potential tourists. In addition to the linguistic techniques, several visual techniques are employed in tourism discourse. This study, however, focuses on the linguistic aspect of tourism discourse, and hence only strategies that are verbal in nature are explored here. Furthermore, the language of tourism exploits various linguistic techniques, however, my intention is not to give an exhaustive account of all the techniques employed but instead turn the attention to some of the most employed strategies as suggested by literature (e.g., Dann 1996; Sulaiman and Wilson 2019). The linguistic strategies introduced here are comparison, exoticizing, ego-targeting, and keying and key words.

To begin with comparison, it is one of the most frequently employed linguistic techniques in tourism discourse. Comparison is employed to decrease the contrast of “familiarity and strangerhood” (Dann 1996: 171). It is frequently employed via the use of figurative devices such as metaphor and simile (*ibid.*), both of which are used to compare sometimes very dissimilar concepts in terms of another. Since such figures of speech can be of help to minimize unfamiliarity, they are frequently employed in tourism discourse (Dann 1996, Dann 2002). Via both simile and metaphor, something that is assumed to be foreign to a potential tourist can be made less foreign by comparing the novel to something that is familiar to the reader. This decreases the impression of unfamiliarity.

Another key technique utilized in tourism discourse is exoticizing, also referred to as languaging. It has received different approaches in linguistics, yet in the domain of the language of tourism, languaging refers to the use of foreign words. It has several functions. First, the use of a local lexicon adds “local colour” and “local linguistic flavour” (Cappelli 2013: 11) to touristic communication. However, if their meaning is not explained to the reader, the use of foreign words intensifies the exoticness and uniqueness of destinations (Sulaiman and Wilson 2019: 28). Second, exoticizing can be considered a contrasting technique for comparison. When comparison aims to control and reduce the notion of strangerhood, exoticizing aims to strengthen it. Third, it has also been suggested that exoticizing familiarizes the reader with the unfamiliar culture, but this is the case only if translations are provided to bridge the cultural gap (Cronin 2000 in Cappelli 2013: 11). According to Dann (1996: 237), exoticizing is a common technique employed, especially when describing the local cuisine.

In addition to comparison and exoticizing, ego-targeting is another frequently employed verbal technique in touristic communication. In ego-targeting, the reader is explicitly addressed as *you* which forms a direct relationship between the reader and writer. Ego-targeting makes the reader feel singled out and unique (Dann 1996: 186), which makes the message seem more personalized and individualized. According to Sulaiman and Wilson (2019: 25), ego-targeting is considered an eligible technique when the language of tourism aims to turn potential tourists into actual tourists. It is most commonly used in touristic communication that is purely advertising in nature (Dann 1996: 187). Ego-targeting is a popular marketing technique and, thus, strengthens the idea of tourism discourse being akin to advertising discourse in general.

Lastly, the technique of keying is introduced. It is a technique in which key words are used to respond to tourists’ demands by highlighting aspects that tourists are looking for in a destination (Blažević and Stojić 2006: 60). Key words can be positive adjectives such as genuine, authentic, and pure, or other key words such as escape, freedom, and luxury. Sulaiman and Wilson (2019: 19) describe key words as words that “jump out” at readers and make them even more interested in what they are reading. In acting as triggers in the minds of tourists, key words may not necessarily communicate any specific attributes of a destination but merely describe attributes that tourists wish for (Dann 1996: 174–175). That is, keying is a technique in which a carefully and deliberately selected lexicon aims to emphasize the positive features of a destination (Maci 2018: 31; Mănescu 2020: 224) and present it in a favorable light. Thus, keying can be considered the most manipulative verbal technique in the language of tourism.

To conclude, tourism discourse is, in essence, highly persuasive in nature. It attempts to attract possible tourists and convert them into actual tourists via the help of persuasive linguistic techniques. In addition to the aforementioned linguistic techniques, figurative language *per se* contributes to the persuasiveness of tourism language in various ways, which I shall discuss in more detail next.

## 2.3 The role of figurative language in tourism discourse

In linguistics, a basic division is made between literal language and nonliteral, figurative language. Although the division is not always clear-cut, it presupposes that there is something different between the meaning of literal language and the meaning of nonliteral language. While literal language communicates meanings that are supposed to be understood literally, non-literal language can be thought of as a language whose meaning takes “the mind on some kind of a journey” (Kelen 2007: 10). Figurative language often uses words and expressions in contexts that literal language would not use, for example, when referring to something. Therefore, figurative language adds a new, extra level of meaning (Kelen 2007: 15–16) that is beyond the meaning that each word carries alone (Katz 1998: 25). In addition, Katz et al. (1998: 3) explain that figurative language differs from non-figurative language in three ways. First, it makes comparisons that are literally untrue. Second, its meanings are sometimes challenging to interpret. Third, the actual meaning of an utterance is the opposite of what is being expressed, as is the case in irony.

Figures of speech, or figurative devices, are the modes of figurative language. There are over 70 types of figures of speech, and they are further classified into tropes and schemes (Kelen 2007). The present study deals with tropes such as metaphor, simile, and personification.

The meaning of figurative language is often considered unexpected and nonlogical, and, thus, might be difficult to conceptualize. Hence, the context in which figurative language is being used can be of great help to interpret the intended meaning. For example, Glucksberg and McGlone (2001: 12) discuss context dependency, a criterion that can be used to make a distinction between literal and nonliteral meaning. They propose that the meaning of nonliteral utterances is more dependent upon the context in which it is used. However, they add that also literal language might sometimes be context dependent.

Figurative language is known to have persuasive power (e.g., Maci 2018). It has gained a steady role in tourism discourse, which is, in essence, a persuasive discourse. For example, Djafarova and Andersen (2008) have explored the reasons why figurative language is common in tourism discourse. Firstly, they note that it is especially common for tourism promotional materials that are lacking space, such as brochures, since figures of speech allow to express a large amount of information succinctly. In addition, figures of speech make it possible to express abstract, intangible qualities of destinations in a more persuasive and attractive manner compared to literal language. Third, figurative language is a verbal technique that can be used to verbalize and strengthen the message of visual images. Finally, they note that figurative language is considered eye-catching. Therefore, it is used to attract the audience and to make and keep them interested in the text they are consuming. Dann

(1996) has also suggested that more metaphors and similes are employed when a destination that is both geographically and culturally distant from “home” is being promoted. This theory has been proven, for example, by Jaworska (2017). In addition, as Sulaiman and Wilson (2019: 29) propose, figurative devices such as simile and metaphor can also be of service to the reader by helping them to envisage the destination prior to travel. This can make them feel more comfortable in traveling to an unknown and yet unvisited destination.

Although figurative devices are considered fruitful to the language of tourism, extensive use of them might be disadvantageous. Djafarova and Andersen (2008) discuss some aspects that might make the use of figures of speech fruitless. Firstly, some figures of speech might be difficult to interpret and thus the overuse of complicated nonliteral language might just confuse readers. Secondly, while figurative devices are useful to communicate the intangible aspects of tourism products, sometimes the meanings that they communicate can be too abstract. Thus, figures of speech might not always communicate actual, concrete information that tourists might be looking for. Last, because figures of speech are open to interpretation, tourists might interpret a figurative expression differently than it was intended. Such misinterpretations could lessen the persuasive power of the language of tourism.

To conclude, although research concerning the role of figurative language in tourism exists, more systematic research is needed to deepen the understanding of its use in travel magazines. Norasetkosol and Timyam (2012) have found that metaphor, personification and simile were the most used figurative devices in four international travel magazines. Research concerning the use of figurative language with reference to Lapland as a tourism destination is scarce. Räsänen (2021) has found that in a French-language travel catalogue Lapland is metaphorically conceptualized in terms of a fairy tale which is used to promote Lapland as a unique destination. Furthermore, Lapland is described as the Mecca of cross-country skiing. She has found that such metaphors are used as narrative devices. Lindholm (2014) has found that Sámi people, the indigenous people inhabiting the northern Lapland, are metaphorically described as ‘the cowboys of the north’ on Nordic tourism websites.

I will now move on to discussing the figures of speech that were found to be the most useful for the present study.

### **2.3.1 Metaphor**

Metaphor is one of the traditional figures of speech that is used not only in poetry and literary work but also widely in everyday language. As Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) theory of conceptual metaphors proposes, humans conceptualize the world and its concepts to a great degree metaphorically. That is, “metaphor is one of the basic mechanisms we have for understanding our experience” (ibid.: 211). Metaphors, thus, according to Lakoff and Johnson, help people to make sense of the world.

Metaphor involves a conceptualization of one thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5). Furthermore, it can be thought of as an indirect way to compare two things (Glucksberg and McGlone 2001: 29). By comparing sometimes two very dissimilar and unexpected concepts in terms of other, metaphors state something that in reality is not factual. Kelen (2007: 14) proposes that the interpretation of metaphors involves “imagining worlds other than the ‘real’”. Therefore, metaphors create new conceptions of the world by extending meanings. Metaphors are composed of two concepts, *topic*, and *vehicle*, and their juxtaposition, *ground* (Gibbs 1994: 211). The vehicle domain stretches the meaning of the topic domain, and hence, creates meanings beyond single words. To provide an example, in the metaphor ‘life is a roller coaster’, *life* is the topic domain and the *roller coaster* is the vehicle domain that carries the meaning. That is, life is metaphorically conceptualized and comprehended through a roller coaster. Together the topic and the vehicle and their relationship create a particular metaphorical conceptualization of life.

More is known about the role and use of metaphor in tourism discourse than other figurative devices. Dann (1996: 171–172), for example, discusses the role of metaphors in managing the unfamiliarity of destinations. He discusses that metaphors are especially employed in the comparison, as discussed in subchapter 2.2. This has been supported by research (see e.g., Norasetkosol and Timyam (2012)). Djafarova and Andersen (2008: 299–300) contribute to the discussion by pointing out that metaphors are used to describe the qualities of a destination that are considered to attract potential tourists the most. Since tourism discourse mainly uses positive and embellished language, metaphors are also employed to call attention to the positive attributes of a destination that the writer wants to underline (Dann 1996: 172–173). Metaphors are great devices in making tourists see destinations in a certain light since they “can keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 10). That is, they are great devices for influencing tourists’ opinions (Djafarova and Andersen 2008: 294). In addition, Maci (2018: 37) adds to the discussion and proposes that the role of metaphors in the language of tourism is mainly to act as attention-seeking devices that fire tourists’ imagination. Also, because metaphor is considered to be “pregnant with meaning” (Gibbs 2010: 11), metaphors are used to communicate meanings that would otherwise be difficult to explain (Maci 2018: 29).

### 2.3.2 Simile

A simile is another type of traditional figure of speech in which a fictionalized comparison is made between two concepts using the prepositions *like* or *as* (Kelen 2007: 13). What distinguishes similes, such as ‘she is like the sun’, from accurate comparisons, such as ‘she looks like her mother’, is the fictionality of simile. The comparison ‘she looks like her mother’ is true also literally. The simile ‘she is like the sun’ says something about a person which cannot be true in real life, and hence, states something fictionalized. In other words, a simile does not make sense if it is understood

literally. Furthermore, similes are akin to metaphors in the way that both establish a juxtaposition and a relationship between two, sometimes dissimilar, concepts. However, similes differ from metaphors in the way that similes employ a preposition to compare, while metaphor does not. As Kelen (2007: 13) notes, “a simile can be thought of as a metaphor made explicit”. However, she continues that simile and metaphor should be differentiated from each other, although they share similarities between their communicative functions.

The role of similes in tourism discourse has received far less attention compared to metaphors perhaps because of the similarities shared between them. For instance, Dann (1996) discusses the role of similes in the verbal technique of comparison. Similes allow us to make explicit, fictionalized comparisons and thus can be of great help to compare an unfamiliar notion to a more familiar one. However, Dann (1996: 172) argues that metaphors are more powerful devices than similes. In general, the poetic-like comparison and thus the poetical effect of similes has been recognized (e.g., Gargani 2016). Apart from the use of simile in comparison and despite the general persuasive power of simile, little has been written about how simile can contribute to the language of tourism.

### 2.3.3 Personification

Finally, personification is also another widely used figure of speech. Personification, or *prosopopoeia*, is considered a type of metaphor in which a non-human or something inanimate, such as an animal, object, or abstraction, is personified as a human and given human-like attributes or properties (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 33). For example, in the personification ‘the sun found its smile again’, *the sun* is personified by giving it human-like features, that is, *smiling*.

Research in tourism discourse concerning personification *per se* is lacking since not much research treats metaphor and personification as separate. Nevertheless, there is some understanding of the use of personification in the language of tourism. For instance, Isakova, Kryukova, and Aleksandrova (2021: 4) discuss that the use of personification can add a mythical effect on texts. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 34) propose that personification allows not only create a particular view of certain non-human things but also new ways of acting towards them. In the language of tourism, nature is often personified, and that has been considered a way to inform tourists of the ways how nature should be treated (Krisnawati et al. 2021: 2477). Additionally, the conceptualization of nature as a person can make tourists feel more emboldened to explore nature because personification helps to create mental images of nature (ibid.).

Having discussed the role of figurative language in tourism discourse, I will now discuss the relationship between tourism, language, and nature.



## 2.4 Previous research

Tourism as a cultural, social, and economic phenomenon, and as a ground of “cultural production and exchange” (Thurlow and Jaworski 2010: 2) has attracted researchers from multiple disciplines, such as business and management, cultural and humanistic studies. Although tourism has been researched within several disciplines, it still lacks, for instance, its own theoretical frameworks. Hence, it is questionable whether tourism is an independent discipline or an interdisciplinary subject (Butler 2015; Jaworski and Pritchard 2005). However, despite the criticism towards tourism, it is regarded as a multidisciplinary field that has its roots in sociology (Robinson, Heitmann, and Dieke 2011: xii).

Since language and languages play a pivotal role in tourism and tourist experience, tourism as a domain has also been of interest to language researchers. As Dann (1996) notes, there has been a growing awareness of tourism as a specialized language since the 1990s. Nowadays it is classified as a language of its own. By the same token, Thurlow and Jaworski (2010: 1) refer to ‘the sociolinguistics tourism’ which recognizes tourism as a domain of sociolinguistic enquiry. The research on tourism discourse has particularly been on the rise from the 2010s onwards. Much emphasis has been paid to the sociocultural perspective of tourism discourse. A considerable body of sociolinguistically oriented research has focused on concepts such as authenticity, othering, and representation. Attention has been paid to the representation of hosts, that is, local people, and especially to ethnicity and minority representation of local people. Lapland as a tourism destination has also been of interest from the perspective of the Sámi. For instance, Lindholm (2014) and Niskala and Ridanpää (2016) have focused on ethnic representations by examining the representations of Sámi people and Sáminess in Nordic tourism promotion texts.

A growing body of research has focused on examining how the language of tourism shapes destination images. For example, Räsänen (2021) examined how the destination image of Lapland is discursively constructed in a French-language travel catalog produced by a Swiss tour operator. She found three prevailing discourses, namely the discourses of *well-being*, *exclusive experiences*, and *uniqueness*. The discourses were found to be interconnected because “arctic nature occurs in all three discourses and functions as an important resource in constructing each discourse” (2021: 41). The nature of Lapland was portrayed as a source of physical and mental well-being that offers space not only for activities such as cross-country skiing but also space for unwinding. Other themes that were found to construct the discourses were, for example, sauna bathing, reindeer farms, cross-country-skiing, and Sámi culture. Räsänen (2021: 41) found these themes to represent “authentic Finnishness” for tourists. She concluded that the discourses construct “a unique image of Finnish

Lapland” (2021: 41) since they revolve around themes that distinguish Lapland from other destinations.

As mentioned above, even though there has been a growing interest in tourism discourse and the ways tourism language constructs and circulates destinations images, studies on the language of tourism are still rather small in scope. Furthermore, the majority of previous research has been more comprehensive in the sense that it has examined several linguistic techniques of tourism discourse at once instead of aiming for a more detailed analysis by looking at one technique at a time. I will now introduce a few studies that have examined the use of figurative language.

Norasetkol and Timyam (2012) examined the use of figurative devices in four travel magazines. They found that metaphors, similes and personifications were the most used figurative devices. Metaphors and similes were used to compare places and their attributes to concrete things which could help the readers to visualize the place. Personifications were found to describe both physical features and abstract qualities of places with human-like attributes to make the places seem more spirited. Pathumratanathan and Tapinta (2012) analyzed how figurative language was used in travel-related advertisements in in-flight magazines. Their findings showed that alliteration, parallelism, personification, and rhetorical questions were used the most. They propose that the use of metaphors made the advertisements more memorable and attractive. Further, the use of personification potentially makes the readers see the advertised tourism service in a positive light. Overall, they suggest that the use of figurative devices draws attention and stirs curiosity.

Djafarova and Andersen (2008) examined the changing nature of figurative devices by comparing 400 British tourism promotional texts. Taking texts from the 1970s as a starting point, they compared them with texts published in 2005 and investigated what had changed in the use of figurative devices. Metaphors, puns, and alliterations were chosen as the objective of the research. Their findings of metaphors can be considered useful for this study. They found that the use of metaphors decreased. They suggest that metaphors are useful in tourism advertising when describing positive attributes of a tourism destination. Metaphors with too abstract meanings, however, might make it difficult to interpret the main intended message. They concluded that while figurative devices are useful in tourism advertising because they can make the advertisement more interesting and memorable, the occasional ambiguity of them can be disadvantageous for the objective of tourism advertising.

Last, Jaworska (2017) explored the connection between the use of metaphors and the distance between the departure point and the destination in promotional tourism discourse. She tested a theory proposed by Dann (1996), who suggested that more metaphors are employed when culturally and geographically faraway destinations are promoted. Jaworska investigated three corpora, namely a home corpus, that is Britain, a Europe corpus, and a faraway corpus. She found that more metaphors were used when destinations far away from Britain, both geographically and culturally,

were promoted. Additionally, she discovered that the main vehicle domains that were used to create the metaphors included domains such as body parts, jewels, colors, tastes, and religious objects. From the metaphors she then identified conceptual mappings, namely a tourist destination is “*a central place*”, “*a sleepy body*”, “*a painting*”, “*a land of plenty*”, and that “*elements of landscape are jewels*” or “*a (sweet/delicious) taste*”, and, last, “*a tropical island is a paradise*”. She suggests that metaphors and their conceptual mappings “appeal simultaneously to the imagination, vision and taste creating sensory fusions that could potentially increase the “appetite” for “consuming”, that is buying a trip” (ibid.: 174). She concluded that the “metaphor of paradise in combination with the jewel and color metaphors conveniently erases serious ecological and social problems that affect destinations making them more appealing” (ibid.: 175).

Having presented a few previous research concerning the use of figurative devices, I will conclude this chapter by discussing the relationship between nature, tourism, and language.

## 2.5 The relationship between nature, tourism, and language

Because this study specifically focuses on examining nature discourses, it is important to shed some light on the relationship between nature tourism and language.

First, nature tourism is a broad term for a particular niche of tourism in which nature is the driving motive behind tourists’ decision-making (Räikkönen et al. 2021). Nature tourism is an umbrella term for all types of tourism that takes place in nature settings and in which nature is experienced actively or passively (Coghlan 2014). Nature tourism thus encompasses a variety of nature-based activities such as hiking, camping, and skiing, and more passive consumptions of nature such as birdwatching and photographing.

Nature attracts tourists to the extent that it can be considered a “tourist product” (Saarinen 2004a: 445). Nature can be considered perhaps the most important attraction that makes tourists want to visit Lapland (e.g., Järviluoma 2006). Generally speaking, tourists’ interest in nature-based tourism has been on the rise, especially since the global pandemic although nature tourism is not a new phenomenon. Quite the contrary, nature tourism has been of interest to tourists since the 1980s (Saarinen 2004a: 440). Hence, research is needed to understand how the language of tourism promotes nature as a tourist product. It is important to recognize that research that merely focuses on nature discourses in the domain of tourism discourses is still scarce (e.g., Krisnawati et al. 2021).

Krisnawati et al. (2021) examined how discourses of Indonesian nature as a tourist attraction are constructed through metaphors in a travel magazine. They found that nature is conceptualized “as a person, as heaven, as a thing to be detected and as an entity”. Nature as a person discourse was found to be the most prevailing. They

consider this discourse a means to remind tourists that nature should be respected. Nature as heaven was conceptualized using the metaphor of paradise which, according to them (2021: 2475), is “synonymous with heaven”. Additionally, they found that the metaphorical conceptualizations of nature “evoke the senses of sight, hearing and touch” (2021: 2480). Therefore, according to them, tourists might be emboldened by the metaphorical conceptualizations to explore nature because the figurative expressions can help them to visualize the unknown aspect of nature beforehand.

Trčková (2016) examined the representation of nature and the nature-human dichotomy in ecotourism advertisements. She found that nature is represented as both the actor, the experience, and the goal of the tourist experience. Additionally, nature was represented “as an aesthetically pleasing artwork and a spectacle of supernatural qualities” (ibid.: 92). Nature was found to be described with adjectives that deal with aesthetics such as beautiful, gorgeous, and picturesque, and the colors were highlighted to create “a visual effect” (ibid.: 83). The representation of nature as a spectacle “endows nature with power” (ibid.: 84), and adjectives such as jaw-dropping, spectacular and dramatic were employed to portray nature as “a monument to be gazed at and admired” (ibid.). Similarly to Krisnawati et al. (2016), Trčková (2016: 92) suggests that the representations of nature guide tourists to respect it since it is advertised as “a precious object resembling a gem”. Last, she found that the representations of nature suggest exploring nature using the sense of vision because it serves “mainly as the object of a tourist’s gaze, affection, and admiration” (ibid.: 92).

### 3 TRAVEL MAGAZINE AS A GENRE OF TOURISM DISCOURSE

In the previous chapter, the theoretical framework of the present study was outlined. The current chapter attempts to put some perspective on one specific genre of tourism discourse, that of a travel magazine, which is also the genre that this study is interested in. First, travel magazines as a genre of travel writing is outlined. After that, *In the Far North*, the travel magazine chosen for analysis is presented in more detail.

#### 3.1 Travel magazines as a genre of travel writing

The concept of genre, as Jaworski and Pritchard (2005: 7) propose, is interlocked with the concept of discourse. Tourism-related materials comprise a variety of texts and one quintessential and comparatively fixed genre of travel writing is travel magazines. In the present study, I consider travel magazines a specific genre of tourism discourse in the sense defined by Swales. Swales (1990) sees genre as a text type that has distinctive features that distinguish it from other text types. He defines genre as a communicative event that is recognizable by a) its main communicative purpose(s), b) its 'prototypical' features of the structure, style, content, and intended audience, and that c) it is recognized as a genre of its own by the discourse community members that are experts in a specific genre.

In tourism discourse, promotional travel literature can be classified into different categories and genres. Generally, the distinction between purely advertising materials, such as brochures, and publicity materials, such as travel articles, is made. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter two, Dann (1996) classifies tourism texts into pre-trip, on-trip, and post-trip categories. Calvi (2010: 22–23, in Castello 2021: 3), on the other hand, classifies travel-related texts into main genre families. These are editorial, institutional, commercial, organizational, legal, scientific and academic, and informal. Following Calvi's classification, travel magazines fall best into the commercial category.

Dann's (1996) classification, on the other hand, is not as unambiguous as Calvi's. Travel magazines could fall into every category as they can be consumed anywhere and anytime, especially online magazines. According to Maci (2020), travel magazines belong to traditional travel literature.

According to Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (2010: 88), travel magazines serve "as mediators between potential tourists and destinations". They have a pivotal role in mediating destination images (McWha et al. 2016). That is, their main purpose is to promote destinations and their attributes. As a genre, travel magazines are akin to the genre of lifestyle and leisure magazines in terms of their orientation and structure, even though they differ content-wise (Hanusch 2010). The communicative purpose of travel magazines could be considered three-fold. That is, the aim of travel magazines falls somewhere between information distribution, entertainment, and advertisement (Hanusch 2010). Firstly, they narrate stories that, first and foremost, entertain people. In narrating in-depth stories in the form of feature articles and travel stories, readers are entertained and potentially inspired to travel. In addition, travel magazines provide information regarding destinations, accommodations, restaurants, sights, and such information that can be considered practical for tourists. Finally, they also advertise travel and tourism products and services in articles or in the form of print advertisements.

Travel magazines can be published in traditional paper format or online. The structure of a travel magazine is relatively fixed in terms of its layout and, in general, follows the genre conventions that of lifestyle and leisure magazines. They have a visually attractive front cover that has a master head, main image, main cover line(s), and supporting cover lines. Usually, the first spread contains a table of contents and an editorial that sets the context. Travel magazines have a larger space for verbal information compared, for example, to brochures. This allows more detailed stories to be told. Articles that cover topics such as where to go, where to stay, what to do, and what to see can be considered to represent the common 'prototypical' content. Although travel magazines can be considered one of the most text-heavy genres in tourism discourse, visuals still play a considerable role in the act of entertainment and persuasion. In fact, it is the interplay of multiple semiotic modes that attracts and persuades readers (Manca 2016: 7). As a matter of fact, readers might first see the attractive images which then persuade them to engage in the articles.

There are different types of travel magazines, although the overall structure is relatively stable. Maci (2020, 7.2.2 Linguistic analysis section) discusses each travel magazine as having "its own distinct personality". First, some magazines are more international in that the destinations they cover are located all over the world. Some, on the other hand, concentrate on promoting only one country or an area of a country. Second, content may vary according to the type of tourism the magazine specializes in. Some magazines specifically focus on a specific niche of tourism, such as luxury tourism or culinary tourism, and some may be more universal. That is, content may

be tailored according to the intended audience because “different audiences share different tastes and values” (Hiippala 2007: 11). Last, language and linguistic strategies can also be tailored to fit the target audience (Franceschi and Hartle 2021: 2). The linguistic strategies echo the personality of a magazine (Maci 2020, 7.2.2. Linguistic analysis section). A travel magazine intended to attract and persuade tourists that are interested in, for example, nature-based tourism may be significantly different in terms of vocabulary compared to a luxury tourism magazine.

Next, I will present the magazine that this study deals with.

### **3.2 *In the Far North* magazine**

*In The Far North* is a Finnish travel magazine produced by Inari-Saariselkä Tourism Ltd, which is a destination management organization in the northern Lapland region. There are three different editions of the magazine. The English-language edition, *In the Far North*, can be considered the international edition because English is considered “the language of international tourism” (Thurlow and Jaworski 2010: 39). The other two editions are *Kaukana Pohjoisessa*, which is in Finnish and localized to a Finnish-speaking audience, and *Im Hohen Norden*, which is a German-language edition and thus localized to a German-speaking audience.

In the present study, I investigate only the English-language version. To the best of my knowledge, it is the only Finnish travel magazine that a) is written entirely in English, and b) concentrates on promoting only one region of Finland – Lapland. It has been published between 2013 and 2019 with one issue per year except for 2016 when no issues were published. No issues have been published since the last issue of 2019 for an unknown reason. The issues of 2013 and 2014 are called *Lapland Inari Saariselkä* after which the name changed to its current form, *In the Far North*. In the present study, only the name *In the Far North* is used when referring to the magazine for the sake of clarity. As far as I know, the magazine is only available to the public online on Issuu, which is a digital publishing platform. Hence, the magazine is an online travel magazine.

The purpose of the magazine is to market and promote year-round tourism in the northernmost region of Finland, and, especially, in North Lapland. This region covers the municipalities of Inari, Saariselkä, and Utsjoki. The magazine consists of articles that provide information about where to travel, when to travel, where to stay, what to do, and, what to eat, for instance. The topics that the magazine deals with tend to revolve around nature and nature-based activities, the “eight seasons” of Lapland, the Lappish cuisine, and traditional Northern livelihoods, such as reindeer herding. The magazine, therefore, offers a mix of feature articles that narrate inspirational travel experiences. It does not specifically focus on one niche of tourism, although

articles covering nature-based activities are prevailing. Therefore, the focus of the present study is on nature discourses.

In conclusion, *In the Far North* follows the communicative purposes characteristic of the genre of a travel magazine. The magazine does not only provide information about Lapland and its attributes but also narrates inspirational stories that are both entertaining and persuasive.

Next, I will present the research design of this study.



## 4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter is concerned with the research design of the present study. First, the aim and research questions of the study are presented, as well as how this study aims to contribute to the existing research on the language of tourism. Second, the methodological framework is introduced after which the data selection and data collection process are discussed.

### 4.1 Aim and research questions

As discussed in the previous chapter, travel magazines construct and mediate destination images. The linguistic strategies and choices made by the tourism experts who produce these texts have a pivotal role in this process. In seeking to contribute to the existing research on tourism discourse and to fill a specific research gap, this study aims to examine the use of figurative language in a Finnish travel magazine, *In the Far North*. This study has three broad aims. Firstly, the main aim is to examine how figures of speech discursively construct representations of the nature of Lapland as a touristic product. Secondly, this study seeks to find how the nature discourses shape the destination image of Lapland. Lastly, it aims to find how figurative language contributes to mediating tourist gaze. The research questions are thus as follows:

1. How does figurative language discursively construct the nature of Lapland as a touristic product?
2. How do the nature discourses shape the destination image of Lapland?
3. How does figurative language contribute to mediating tourist gaze?

It is important to note here that the research focus was mainly data-driven. This means that when examining the chosen material for the first time, it became noticeable that nature and nature-based activities were prevailing themes in the articles. Hence,

nature as a touristic product became the main focus of the analysis. Additionally, metaphor, simile, and personification appeared to be the prevailing figurative devices used in the magazine. Hence, this study focuses on analyzing only these three figures of speech.

## 4.2 Methodological framework

The methodological approaches in studies of tourism discourse are diverse. Various qualitative methods have been employed, such as discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, ethnographic fieldwork, and interviews (see e.g., Jaworski and Pritchard 2005). In addition to qualitative methods, some studies have combined elements of qualitative and quantitative research, such as corpus-assisted analysis or statistical analysis. The methodological framework adopted for the present study draws on two qualitative analysis methods, qualitative content analysis (QCA) and descriptive discourse analysis (DA). Schreier (2012: 47–49) explains that although QCA and DA are essentially dissimilar, they can be combined by conducting a discourse analysis and applying QCA as a method that “is used in subordinate function”. Additionally, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018: 103) support this stance by proposing that QCA provides a theoretical and methodological framework that is possible to combine with other qualitative methods. In this study, QCA provides the methods and steps to systematically identify the figurative expressions and categorize them thematically. DA, on the other hand, provides “the attitude” toward the final analysis, as proposed by Schreier (2012: 49). The reason for choosing to combine QCA with DA is based on the idea that micro-level language analysis is beneficial to make further, macro-level analysis.

To begin with QCA, it is regarded as “a systematic and flexible method of qualitative data analysis which reduces and summarizes your material” according to the research question (Schreier 2012: 28). That is, the research question itself narrows the material examined. Hence, QCA is an applicable method if there is a specific aspect of the data that the researcher is interested in (Schreier 2012: 29), such as a specific linguistic phenomenon as in this study. QCA, however, has its limitations. While QCA allows to examine and interpret qualitative data systematically, it does not deal with questions such as how language constructs and shapes social reality (Schreier 2012: 47). This means that ultimately QCA is useful to only describe the content of the material but not how it represents the world socially. From this perspective, DA can be considered a useful addition to QCA in this study because a discourse-analytic approach to QCA allows analyzing the material more comprehensively.

Descriptive discourse analysis does not refer to a single method of analysis. It can be considered “a theoretical framework for explaining how language ‘works’ in everyday use, and a collection of methods for investigating the social workings of language” (Thurlow and Jaworski 2010: 10). Although there are different ways to

approach DA, in essence, the outlook is similar. All discourse analysis starts with the assumption that “language [...] contributes to the construction of reality” (Schreier 2012: 45). Hence, DA is particularly interested in the “language above sentence” (Litosseliti 2010: 120). That is, while DA is also interested in the language used in a specific context, its main aim is to analyze the macro-levels of language (Litosseliti 2010: 126). In other words, how language constructs and transmits meanings beyond word and sentence level, and how language represents different aspects of the world (Fairclough 2003). As Thurlow and Jaworski (2010: 10) explain, DA examines “how micro-level phenomena, such as specific textual practices [...] help explain macro-level social structures and processes”. DA has proved to be a useful method of analysis within tourism discourse since it enables to answer various questions of language use. DA, however, has received criticism because of its interpretative nature (Taylor 2015: 85). In studies of tourism discourse it has been used, for example, to analyze identity representations of tourists, destinations, and local people because it is the language of tourism that produces and mediates these presentations. Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (2010: 6) explain that like people, destinations can construct an identity, which is more commonly known as the destination image.

Figurative devices such as metaphor and simile are interesting from a discourse analysis perspective. According to Baker and Ellece (2011: 132), “they involve ways of representing things which can indicate traces of particular discourses”. By the same token, Fairclough (2003: 132) states that metaphor is one linguistic strategy to create different representations of the world and adds, “but it is perhaps the particular combination of different metaphors that differentiate discourses”. Notwithstanding the practicality of figurative language in identifying discourses, the identification and analysis of it may pose challenges. This is the case with, for example, metaphors because the boundary between nonliteral and literal language is not always clear-cut (Gibbs 2010). Some studies have used metaphor identification tools and guidelines, such as the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) (see e.g., Jaworska 2017) to assist in the identification process. This study did not rely on any specific guidelines. Metaphors and other figures of speech were collected manually, which means that the identification procedure is subjective to the researcher.

In sum, I regard QCA as a useful tool to reduce the material according to the research question. In addition, by taking a discourse-analytic approach, the present study assumes that the use of figurative language can reveal traces of particular discourses, and hence, contribute to the touristic representation of the nature of Lapland.

Next, I will present and discuss the data selection and collection procedure.

### 4.3 Data selection and collection

The first part of the analysis, namely the data selection and collection broadly followed the steps of qualitative content analysis, as introduced by Schreier (2012). *In the Far North* magazine was chosen as the data simply because it is the only English-language travel magazine in Finland that specifically focuses on promoting Lapland to international tourism markets. The magazine is published online on a digital platform. It is freely available to the public. Altogether, there are six issues of the magazine. All issues were chosen for a closer analysis. This assured as comprehensive understanding of the use of figurative language as possible. Six issues also provided a larger amount of data to discover discursive patterns in figurative language use. Even though all six issues were examined, the material selection still required controlling the amount of data. That is, I needed to draw boundaries on what to include and what not to include in the final analysis. In QCA, the research question itself poses limitations and requires making selections on what is relevant regarding the research question. This process is referred to as the process of segmentation which aims to limit the data into units of analysis based on the research question (Schreier 2012: 8). As indicated by my research question, only the utterances that included figurative language when describing the nature of Lapland were regarded as relevant data. This meant that visual content was completely disregarded. Furthermore, only the feature articles were considered relevant textual data. That is, content that was purely for advertisement purposes, such as printed advertisements, was not taken into account even though some of them contained figurative language. Altogether 48 feature articles were examined.

After the process of segmentation was finished, the data collection proceeded in the following ways. During the first step, the articles were read thoroughly to establish a general understanding of how figurative language was employed to describe the nature of Lapland. According to Schreier (2012: 32), QCA is almost always cyclic. This means that the articles were re-read multiple times to collect and record the utterances that were considered relevant. The collection process was carried out manually. The utterances were then regarded as the units of coding which helped to outline the collected data into thematic categories (Schreier 2012). Then, the process of categorizing took place in which the excerpts with shared themes were categorized into theme groups. Lastly, the thematic categories were then treated as discourses to answer the research question of how figurative language is used in constructing the discourses of the nature of Lapland.

I will present the discourse analysis in the next chapter.

## 5 ANALYSIS

As discussed in the previous chapter, the present study takes a discourse-analytic approach in the final analysis of the data. This chapter focuses on discussing five salient discourses that the figurative expressions found in the *In the Far North* magazine constructed discursively. The discourses were found to revolve around the theme of nature and hence they are treated as nature discourses. They were found to construct different touristic representations of the nature of Lapland, which is a major touristic pull factor of Lapland.

The discourses that emerged from the magazine are named as follows: 1) The nature of Lapland is living art, 2) The nature of Lapland is a winter wonderland, 3) The nature of Lapland is a glistening gem, 4) The nature of Lapland is a living creature, and, last, 5) The nature of Lapland is a paradise. On a micro discourse level, metaphors, similes, and personifications were found to be the figures of speech that acted as discursive devices and embodied the nature discourses. Each discourse was found to highlight different aspects of nature. They thus contribute to the formation of the destination image of Lapland. The discourses mediate an image of Lapland especially as an ideal nature tourism destination. I will now move on discussing the discourses in more detail.

### 5.1 The nature of Lapland is living art

The first salient discourse that emerged from *In the Far North* magazine is ‘the nature of Lapland is living art’. The art discourse, in essence, entails the idea of nature that resembles an artwork. Previous research has also found that touristic representations of nature revolve around the theme of art. Trčková (2016), for example, found that ecotourism advertisements portray nature as artwork by placing emphasis especially on colors. In this study, nature is conceptualized as art that is manifested in

different forms. The Lappish nature is seen as the stage for music, drama, and visual arts as example one illustrates:

- 1) *it's no wonder that the Laplanders regard nature as **their opera, theater, and art gallery**;*
- 2) *when the Northern Lights rise on the arctic sky, the fells are **like a huge theatre**; greatest **show** on earth; this magnificent **show** of nature; watching them [Northern lights] '**curtain up**' and dance*

Example two illustrates how the Lappish nature and its natural phenomena are likened to a theatrical performance. The extracts make copious use of theatre vocabulary to figuratively conceptualize and describe them. Simile is used to liken the fells to "*a huge theater*" that serves as a space for the performance of the northern lights. This performance is conceptualized as the "*magnificent show of nature*". Such metaphorical conceptualization of the northern lights gives the impression of an exceptionally beautiful natural phenomenon. Theatre term is also applied to describe how the lights appear in the sky. The metaphorical expression "*curtain up*" is used to make sense of the appearance of the lights in terms of a curtain that is drawn aside when a theatre show starts. This creates an image of a sky that opens for the northern lights to step into the spotlight. Such vocabulary used in a figurative sense intensifies the relation between nature and drama.

It is particularly noticeable that the discourse of art evolves heavily around the northern lights, a natural phenomenon that can be considered one of the main natural attractions that tourists wish to witness in Lapland. By employing figurative devices of personification, metaphor, and simile, the northern lights are portrayed in the following ways:

- 3) *the Northern lights can be spotted **dancing** in the sky; you will see some lights **dancing** in the sky; we hope that you will be able to witness the **dance** of the Northern lights in the sky; the Aurora starts **dancing** in the sky; **the dance of a thousand colourful flames** across the dark Lappish skies fascinates visitors from autumn through early spring;*

The excerpts provided above liken the movement of the northern lights to a dancing show repeatedly in the articles. By employing such figurative devices, the expressions suggest that there is something similar between dance and the movement of the northern lights. In tourism discourse, metaphor is known to be a useful figurative device because it is likely to "minimize the effects of unfamiliarity" (Dann 1996: 173). Since the northern lights cannot be seen all around the world and they are not visible year-round, they might be an unfamiliar phenomenon for many tourists visiting Lapland. Hence, when the movement of the northern lights are comprehended in terms of dance, the use of a metaphorical personification can be considered a useful way to describe an unfamiliar phenomenon in more familiar terms. In addition, the expression "*the dance of thousand colourful flames*" metaphorically

comprehends the lights in terms of dancing flames. The metaphorical references to dance and flames might help tourists to envisage the northern lights. Furthermore, the metaphorical conceptualization of dance involves personification. That is, a natural phenomenon and its movement is understood in human terms and given human-like qualities. They are depicted human-like as if they were living creatures dancing in the sky. In some cases, the lights are referred to as "*The Aurora*" which gives an illusion of a female creature offering a dance show in the sky for the tourists to watch. In this context, the personification of natural phenomena emphasizes the power of nature and reminds that such natural phenomena like the northern lights do not come into existence by themselves but because of the power of nature. Thus, the personification of nature portrays nature as a powerful creator.

Art, whether it is drama, music or visual arts, usually has an audience. In this context, nature is seen both as the stage for art and as the actor, and tourists are seen as the audience. Example 3 illustrates this human-nature, actor-audience relationship the best. Expressions such as "*you will see some lights dancing in the sky*" and "*we hope that you will be able to witness the dance of the northern lights*" utilize ego-targeting to emphasize the role of tourists as the viewer, i.e., the audience, and the northern lights as the actors, i.e., the art. This mediates the 'tourist gaze'.

In addition to likening nature to a stage for drama and dance, the Lappish nature is also figuratively conceptualized as visual arts as illustrated in example four:

- 4) *Marvel at the magically colourful art display on the sky canvases; The blue moment at the beginning and end of winter days paints the sky with various shades of pink, violet, and blue; the silhouette of snowcapped fells draws a sharp line against the deep blue sky*

The sky is metaphorically conceptualized as a canvas that serves as the surface for the northern lights that are conceptualized as an "*art display*". Again, personification is used to give non-human objects human-like qualities. In "*the blue moment at the beginning and end of winter days paints the sky with various shades*", the blue moment is figuratively described as a painter and in "*snowcapped fells draw a sharp line...*" the fells are figuratively described as a drawer. The use of personification portrays nature as the creator of phenomena such as the blue moment and further intensifies the idea of a powerful nature that creates different art-like phenomena. Moreover, emphasis is also placed on colors which illustrates that especially during winter, the nature of Lapland is like a painting that changes its colors throughout the day. These metaphorical expressions thus convey the idea of nature as a living, colorful painting.

To summarize, on a micro-language level, 'the nature of Lapland is living art' discourse is constructed via three figurative devices, namely metaphor, simile, and personification. By portraying nature as drama, dance, and visual arts, the art discourse emphasizes the diversity of the Lappish nature, especially in terms of its visuality. On a macro-level, the discourse of art evolves heavily around the northern

lights, and hence, can be considered an act of promoting northern lights tourism. The art discourse places great emphasis on the visual characteristics of nature and natural phenomena in Lapland. Attention is paid to the colors of nature to emphasize its visual aspects and to further evoke the sense of sight. This, in essence, brings forward an illusion of nature that serves as an artistic touristic space that tourists are encouraged to consume, first and foremost, by using the visual sense. Nature is portrayed as the object of the 'tourist gaze'.

## 5.2 The nature of Lapland is a winter wonderland

The second dominant discourse found in the travel magazine is "the nature of Lapland is a winter wonderland". Essentially, this discourse mystifies the nature of Lapland by depicting it as a fairy tale kind destination. Dann (2002: 173) suggests that tourism is about fulfilling the dreams of tourists and therefore "dreamlike" destination images are so extensively employed in tourism discourse, no matter the destination. Furthermore, Dann (1996: 125) proposes that such dreamlike destination images can evoke "childlike enthusiasm" in tourists. In addition to Dann's point of view, Isakova, Kryukova, and Aleksandrova (2021: 3) propose that fantasy- and dreamlike destination images build the feeling of "detaching from reality and ordinariness".

In the present study, the wonderland discourse employs metaphor and simile as the main discursive devices. These figures of speech are used to figuratively comprehend the nature of Lapland in terms of a dream world. By making copious use of the wonderland metaphor, the figurative expressions make readers draw mental links between the Lappish nature and an imaginary, magic place. Example five illustrates how this is manifested in the magazine:

- 5) *typically known as a winter **wonderland**; out to the winter **wonderland**; to enjoy Lapland's winter **wonderland**; with guaranteed snowfall every year, it [Lapland] is a charming **wonderland**; through **fairy tale kind** Lappish nature; the dark winter season when the world is like a **fairy tale**; the*

What is immediately striking about the excerpts in example four, is that the majority of them employ the "winter wonderland" metaphor. By highlighting the season of winter and snow-related nature, this discourse especially promotes the Lappish nature as a dreamy and charming winter destination that is beyond the "ordinary" world and can be considered to resemble a fairy tale world. Trčková (2016: 84) suggests that such nature representations create an illusion of nature that is "part of a different world". It is not surprising nor novel that the wintry and snowy Lapland is metaphorically described in terms of a wonderland, because, for example, Räsänen (2021) has also found that in a Swiss travel catalog Lapland has been described as a "winter dream" destination.



- 6) *trees are crowned with snow making them look like fairytale figures; the world in Inari region looks like a fairytale; the full moon lights up the nature and makes the snow-covered forest look ever more like a wonderland*

Simile is also employed to figuratively compare snow-related nature to a fairy tale and fairy tale figures as example six illustrates. Figurative language is employed to describe something that otherwise would be difficult to describe using non-figurative language. Hence, figurative language is used to fire the imagination. For example, snowy trees are likened to characters of fairy tales as in "*trees are crowned with snow making them look like fairytale figures*". The snow cover is also described as a crown that not only draws links to fairy tales but also associates snowy nature with royalty and glory. This implies that snow is regarded as valuable. Again, by concentrating on wintry conditions, this discourse essentially conveys the message that especially during the winter season, the nature of Lapland as a touristic space creates a magical atmosphere that is something beyond the ordinary. Generally speaking, tourism discourse employs fantasy and magic notions to fire the imagination of tourists simply by relying on "the power of magic itself" (Dann 1996: 55, 62). In the present study, the magazine also explicitly compares the winter season in Lapland to magic by stating that "*this season surely is pure magic*". In addition, the darkness of night-time scenery, which can be intimidating for some tourists, is romanticized by presenting it as a dreamy landscape, as in "*the full moon lights up the nature and makes the snow-covered forest look ever more like a wonderland*". This might encourage tourists to explore the Lappish nature also at nighttime because a landscape that might be scary to some tourists is portrayed in a positive light. However, even though such figurative conceptualizations of nature can be considered persuasive and alluring to tourists, Trčková (2016) proposes that such fairy tale kind attributes attached to nature might potentially strengthen the nature-human dichotomy and thus "distance nature from human beings".

In addition, the excerpts in example six showcase how the discourse emphasizes tourists to consume nature through the sense of vision. Wintry Lapland is portrayed as the object of the 'tourist gaze' to enhance the visualism of nature. To illustrate this, for instance, the figurative expressions employing simile are dominated by the verb 'look', which is a verb of visual perception. Such figurative expressions can be regarded as linguistic tools to emphasize and encourage the visual consumption of nature. Moreover, the figurative language in this discourse conveys the message that the snowy nature of Lapland is a dreamy landscape to be gazed and admired. That is, nature is framed by a magical tourist gaze. Hence, the wonderland discourse essentially evolves around figurative conceptualizations that are employed to describe the visual attributes of the nature of Lapland.

To summarize, on a micro-language level, the wonderland discourse is constructed via the use of metaphors and similes. Even though the notions of wonderland and fairy tale may stir desire and persuade tourists to spend their holiday in a dreamy

destination that provides contrast with the ordinariness of everyday life, such figurative conceptualizations of nature do not necessarily communicate any specific attributes. In other words, they can be regarded as notions that evoke feelings rather than establish clear visual images of the destination in tourists' minds (Dann 2002: 183). In fact, as Djafarova and Andersen (2010: 35) discuss, such notions are used to communicate the intangible properties of tourism destinations and services, such as the feelings and emotions that a destination might evoke in tourists. On a macro-level, the wonderland discourse evolves heavily around the season of winter and thus promotes Lapland as an ideal winter tourism destination. The nature of Lapland is portrayed as a touristic space that embodies and recreates the magical wintry landscape that fairy tales narrate. Hence, Lapland is promised to fulfill the dreams of tourists who have been exposed to such fairy tales. The Lappish nature is depicted as an unreal touristic space in which tourists can encounter magical reality and visually experience something extraordinary that might stir childlike enthusiasm also in adult tourists. Nature is portrayed as a myth grounded in imagination that is a contrasting world to everyday life. This discourse thus offers an imaginative way of conceptualizing nature.

### 5.3 The nature of Lapland is a glistening gem

The third salient discourse is 'the nature of Lapland is a glistening gem'. This discourse creates an illusion of a luxurious landscape in which different natural elements such as snow and river and lake system figuratively resemble gemstones and precious metals such as diamonds and gold. Generally speaking, figurative language that draws links between precious stones and tourist destinations is regularly applied to the language of tourism (Francesconi 2008: 280, as quoted by Maci 2018: 30). For example, Jaworska (2017: 170) proposes that figurative language referring to gemstones "lift [destinations] ... metaphorically to the level of luxury". That is, figurative references to luxurious and precious gems may present tourism destinations as more luxurious than they are.

In *In the Far North* magazine, figurative language referring to gems embodies the discourse as follows:

- 7) *the bright sun reflecting off the snow, making it sparkle like a thousand diamonds; trees are crowned with snow; In the late hours of a May night, the floating ice glows like a blue diamond as River Ivalo prepares to cover itself with sheets of ice; The April sun glistens on the snow like a thousand diamonds; the thrill of speed and glistening snowscapes beckon visitors to Lapland to try snowmobiling; fish from crystal-clear lakes and rivers*

The illusion of a lustrous Lappish nature is conceptualized via the use of similes and metaphors which are employed to liken the Lappish nature and especially the snowy conditions to glistening and sparkling diamonds. Borrowing Jaworska's (2017)

term, this lifts them metaphorically to the level of luxury. Expressions such as “*the bright sun reflecting off the snow, making it sparkle like a thousand diamonds*” and “*the April sun glistens on the snow like a thousand diamonds*” figuratively compare the snow cover to sparkling and glistening diamonds. In addition, lakes and rivers are described as “*crystal-clear*” which creates an illusion of a pure and limpid water and lake system. Such luxurious comparisons create illusions of a valuable and precious nature and its elements that can be likened to valuable and precious jewels. In addition, such figurative language used, for example, with reference to snow, might make tourists view snow as a valuable element. It is particularly noticeable that, like the wonderland discourse, also the gem discourse makes copious references to snowy nature and wintery Lapland. Hence, the gem discourse, again quoting Jaworska (2017), lifts especially the winter season to the level of luxury.

In addition, such figurative comparisons might help tourists to envisage the wintery landscape in their minds because figurative language can help to create mental sensory illusions of concepts. In this context, figurative comparisons encourage tourists to envisage snow sparkling like it was a lustrous diamond cover. The metaphoric use of verbs such as *sparkle* and *glisten* with reference to snow again stimulates the sense of vision and invites tourists to envisage a luxurious wintery landscape. In stimulating the sense of vision, however, such descriptions indirectly suggest experiencing nature, first and foremost, through the sense of vision. Therefore, the gem discourse portrays the nature of Lapland as a touristic space that is pleasing to gaze at. That is, nature is objectified.

Excerpts provided in example seven further illustrate how the nature of Lapland is figuratively likened to jewels. In these examples, the watery nature of Lapland is figuratively conceptualized in terms of gold:

- 8) *mighty lakes and golden rivers; the golden river Lemmenjoki; the river banks are full of exceptional campsites on golden sandbeaches; the sun never sets, lending its golden glow to the nights*

The figurative expressions in example eight compare the sun and parts of water-related nature such as rivers and beaches to the element of gold and the color of gold. This further suggests and reinforces the illusion of a valuable, luxurious, and precious nature. For instance, the sunlight during midsummer is referred to as the “*golden glow*”, the beaches in Lapland as “*golden sandbeaches*” and rivers as “*golden rivers*”. Such figurative references add glory to the nature of Lapland. Generally speaking, in tourism discourse, references to gold and golden are applied especially when describing beaches to add more value to them (e.g., Jaworska 2017). Lapland is not necessarily known as a beach destination, but rather as a winter destination. Hence, the portrayal of the beaches of Lapland as golden might make tourists see Lapland in a new light. While it is particularly noticeable that the gem discourse makes several references to snow and winter, example seven illustrates that references are made to

water-related nature as well. Hence, the gem discourse does not only lift the winter season but also the summer season to the level of luxury.

Previous research (e.g., Krisnawati et al. 2021, Trčková 2016) suggests that figurative expressions with reference to nature may act as indirect guidance for tourists in treating nature with respect for it to be preserved for future generations. Gemstones and precious metals such as diamond and gold are attached with connotations such as precious, valuable, and rare. By figuratively likening nature to such precious elements, the gem discourse attaches such connotations to the nature of Lapland. It creates an image of a precious and rare nature that remains long only if it is treated as gently and with utmost care as diamonds. That is, the figures of speech thus become vehicles for indirectly guiding tourists in how to interact with nature.

In sum, on a micro-language level, metaphors and similes figuratively construct a glorified image of the nature of Lapland as a luxurious touristic space. On a macro-language level, similarly to the other two discourses presented above, also this discourse portrays the nature of Lapland as the object the 'tourist gaze' by emphasizing its visual aspects. Sparkling diamonds and golden jewelry are glorious and pleasing to the eye. By metaphorically comparing nature to such elements the Lappish nature and its landscape is framed by a luxury tourist gaze.

#### 5.4 The nature of Lapland is a living creature

The fourth dominant discourse that emerged from the articles of *In the Far North* magazine is 'the nature of Lapland is a living creature'. This discourse, in essence, personifies the nature of Lapland by giving it human-like qualities which make it resemble a person. Generally speaking, it is not necessarily novel that nature is presented as human-like within the language of tourism. Personifications of nature have been found, for instance, to add mythical effects on the language of tourism (Isakova, Kryukova, and Aleksandrova 2021: 4) and to implicitly communicate to tourists how nature should be treated (Krisnawati et al. 2021: 2477).

The examples provided below are manifestations of how nature and its attributes are seen to be human-like.

- 9) *The wind **whispers** in the fells and **dances** with the waters in the lakes and rivers; the wind **whispers** amidst the trees and **plays** with the snow on skiing tracks; why not hike to the top of a fell to admire the sun that just grazes the horizon before **climbing up** in the sky again*

This discourse is characterized by the copious use of personification which is employed to comprehend nature and natural phenomena in human terms. Excerpts such as "*the wind whispers in the fells and dances with the waters in the lakes and rivers*" and "*the wind whispers amidst the trees and plays with the snow on skiing tracks*" depict

nature as a creature that is able to whisper, dance and play. The sound that moving air creates is referred to as whispering, the movement of air and snow as dancing and playing. Here, the use of personification does not only comprehend nature in human terms but also romanticizes it by explaining and describing normal weather phenomena by using language that creates a poetical effect. Moreover, the figurative expression "*wind whispers*" creates an illusion of silent nature in which only audible sounds are created by nature. That is, the nature of Lapland is presented as a space for peace and tranquility. By employing the verb 'whisper', which is a sensory verb related to hearing, such figurative conceptualization of nature appeals to the auditory sense. Hence, it emphasizes tourists to sense nature using the sense of hearing.

Next, example ten provides further excerpts that strengthen the illusion of nature as a living creature.

10) *the skiing season of Northern Lapland is **kind** to skiers; the stream [in Lemmenjoki river] is **gentle**; in dark polar nights the sun **refuses** to rise above the horizon; in summer, the northern sky **bathes** in sunlight all day round; nature **heals***

Above nature is described in human terms, namely by using attributes such as kindness, as in the excerpt "*the skiing season of Northern Lapland is kind to skiers*". Here, kindness potentially refers to a skiing season that is long and snowy with comfortable temperature and thus provides ideal skiing conditions. By describing the skiing season with a term that carries a positive meaning, the tourists are made to focus on positive aspects. Furthermore, in the example "*the stream is gentle*", a river is given the quality of gentleness which refers metaphorically to a river that is suitable also for first-time waterway adventurers. Another interesting expression that was found in the magazine is that of "*the sun refuses to rise above the horizon*". It is used to figuratively describe the polar night phenomenon, during which the sun does not rise above the horizon in midwinter which can last up to 50 days in the northernmost region of Lapland. The use of the verb 'refuse' with reference to the sun expresses unwillingness to do something, which can be thought of as an attribute usually associated with humans. In this context, such personification of the sun portrays it as a strong and powerful object. In addition, sunshine, which is a common attribute in tourism discourse (Dann 1996), is further described as a bath in which the sky bathes as in "*the sky bathes in sunlight all day round*". That is, the natural phenomenon of the midnight sun is described poetically. Lastly, nature is also given healing powers as in the expression "*nature heals*". In this, the Lappish nature is seen and recognized as a source of well-being and as an embodied experience which might make tourists rethink their relationship with nature. A similar approach to Lapland and its nature has been found by Räsänen (2021). She found that in a French-language winter travel catalogue Lapland is depicted as a wellness tourism destination and nature is seen as the main contributor.

Next, in example eleven, some excerpts are provided in which the natural phenomena of the northern lights are described as human-like.

11) *“the children of the night” – ever playful, bright, cheerful, and full of boundless energy and enthusiasm; the Aurora starts **dancing** in the sky*

Here, the northern lights are referred to as *“the children of the night”*. This metaphorical reference highlights that the lights are seen most likely at night. Moreover, in describing the lights as children, they are connected to attributes such as playfulness and energetic. Such personification brings an inanimate natural phenomenon to life and gives it character. In this context, such human-like attributes attached to a natural phenomenon are potentially used to describe the movement of the northern lights. The lights are also sometimes referred to as *“the Aurora”*, as already pointed out in subchapter 5.1, which further strengthens the personification of nature. Furthermore, this natural phenomenon is feminized, and hence linked to attributes such as feminine beauty which further accentuates the visual aspects of nature.

12) *The midnight sun **welcomes** visitors to the land of light; **call** of the northern snow; nature **invites** you to enjoy the winter sports of the North*

The excerpts in example twelve are manifestations of how nature is given pulling power. In the excerpts *“the midnight sun welcomes visitors to the land of light”* and *“nature invites you to enjoy the winter sports of the North”* not only personify nature but also depict nature and natural phenomena as touristic pull factors that make tourists visit Lapland. In addition, in the excerpt *“call of the northern snow”*, snow is depicted as it was able to speak to tourists and allure them to enjoy the northern nature. Such personifications of nature further strengthen the idea of nature as the driving force for tourism in Lapland.

Next, example thirteen illustrates how the magazine contains metaphorical references to the primary organ, the heart:

13) *the special thing about Lemmenjoki is that, while it may seem deep in the **heart** of the wilderness, it is easily accessible by a scheduled riverboat; the [nature] trail takes you right into the **heart** of nature – The Urho Kekkonen National Park; The **heart** of the park is formed by the continuous Raututunturi-Saariselkä fell area; riverboats take hikers and campers, gold prospectors, and other passersby, to the gold prospecting areas and the **heart** of the park; at the very **heart** of the winter, from late November to mid-January, the sun does not rise above the horizon;*

The articles are rich in metaphorical references to the heart, especially when referring to national parks. In this context, such metaphorical conceptualization carries the meaning of something located deep in nature or in a central position, as in *“deep*

*in the heart of the wilderness*” or *“the heart of the park”*. In addition, the metaphor of heart is used when referring to the season of winter as in the metaphor *“at the very heart of the winter”*. That is, the heart is a metaphorical reference to midwinter. Such metaphors are manifestations of attributes such as importance and centrality. As the heart is one of the vital organs for being alive, the heart metaphors give an impression of something that is of great importance for tourism in Lapland. For example, in the excerpt *“the trail takes you right into the heart of nature – The Urho Kekkonen National Park”* the metaphorical reference to the heart connotes the importance of the Urho Kekkonen National Park. Earlier research has also found that such metaphorical references to the heart are employed in the language of tourism. For instance, Jaworska (2017: 170) discusses that because the heart metaphor carries the connotation of centrality it might thus carry persuasive power in it and thus potentially allure tourists.

To summarize, on a micro-level of language, personification as the salient discursive device is used to make sense of nature and natural phenomena in human terms and to empower it. On a macro-level of language, this discourse goes beyond the objectification of nature. It does not depict nature solely as the object of the ‘tourist gaze’ but rather as a forceful and empowered actor that has not only the power to call and persuade tourists to visit Lapland but also to mold their experiences with the power that it holds. Hence, nature is presented to actively contribute to the tourism experience in Lapland. By employing terms such as kind and gentle, this discourse brings forward a positive and thus alluring image of nature that has a central role to the tourism in Lapland. It is noticeable that discourse shares similarities between the wonderland discourse, discussed in subchapter 5.2, because copious references are made to winter and snow. Hence, also this discourse can be seen as a manifestation to promote the winter season in Lapland.

## **5.5 The nature of Lapland is a paradise**

The fifth and last dominant discourse that emerged from the magazine is *“The nature of Lapland is a paradise”*. Essentially, this nature discourse revolves around the metaphor of paradise. Such metaphor has been a recurring concept and marketing strategy in tourism discourse and tourism advertising, especially in Western societies for a long time (e.g., Dann 1996; Waade 2010). Previously in tourism discourse, the metaphor of paradise has been associated with and applied to mainly tropical destinations. To a growing extent, however, the metaphorical concept of a paradisiac destination has also been employed to destinations other than tropical (Cohen 2000: 426). Moreover, Waade (2010) illustrates that the concept of paradise is commonly used to promote natural sites in the Western world.

Next, examples 14 and 15 showcase how the paradisiac discourse is constructed in the magazine:

14) *photographers' **paradise** all year round; The Urho Kekkonen National Park is one of Finland's most popular hiking areas. It is a true wilderness hiker's **paradise**; Inari is a **paradise** for people who love the northern nature; they [national parks] are a **paradise** for the outdoor adventurer*

15) *Flowing into Lake Inarijärvi, River Ivalojoiki forms a great estuary and a local bird **paradise**; Thanks to the numerous national parks and wilderness areas, the bird populations of Northern Lapland are very wide, which makes the region a real **paradise** for birdwatchers;*

Unlike the other nature discourses found in the magazine, the paradisiac discourse employs metaphor as the only figurative, discursive device. In this context, metaphor is used to describe the positive and attractive qualities of the Lappish nature that can be considered paradisiac. The nature of Lapland is given qualities of paradise which transmits the idea of nature that fulfills the wishes and requirements of tourists. For example, in *"Inari is a paradise for people who love the northern nature"* it is promised that the Lappish nature fulfills the dreams of the lovers of nature. In addition, it transmits the idea that Lapland is an idyllic place for those nature lovers who are interested in different nature-related activities, as in *"paradise for the outdoor adventurer"*.

In tourism discourse, the paradise metaphor is considered a metaphorical conceptualization that, in essence, "stir[s] desire" in tourists (Sulaiman and Wilson 2019: 92). Additionally, it is commonly associated with qualities such as pristine beauty, simplicity, unlimited wish fulfillment, and enjoyment (Cohen 2000: 426). In this context, the metaphorical reference to paradise with reference to nature and nature-related activities might potentially stir desire in three types of tourists. Firstly, it might stir desire in tourists who wish to spend an active holiday and spend time in nature by hiking. The expression *"true wilderness hiker's paradise"* conveys an image of diverse hiking routes that are able to fulfill the requirements of even demanding hikers and especially those who want to hike in the wilderness. The emphasis on wilderness also promotes the quiet, untouched, and pristine nature of Lapland. Secondly, it might potentially stir desire in tourists who are seeking to photograph beautiful landscapes. Since the notion of paradise is associated with qualities such as beauty, the expression *"photographers' paradise all year round"* transmits the idea of a beautiful and diverse landscape that allures tourists to capture it year-round. Finally, the paradise metaphor might potentially stir desire in birdwatching tourists. For example, the nature of Lapland is considered *"a real paradise for birdwatchers"*. One can comprehend this so that the nature of Lapland is home to many species of birds and that birdwatchers are most likely to observe them while adventuring in the Lappish nature. Thus, the paradise metaphor employed in different contexts accentuates different aspects of the nature of Lapland.



Moreover, the paradisiac discourse promotes two touristic consumptions of nature. It conjoins two dimensions of tourism: activity and passivity, seeing and doing. That is, the paradisiac discourse creates an image of the nature of Lapland both as a landscape and, quoting Sulaiman and Wilson (2019), as a 'performancescape'. As a landscape, the paradisiac discourse portrays the nature of Lapland and its avifauna as an idyllic and heavenly object for the 'tourist gaze'. The discourse emphasizes seeing and observing the aesthetic, paradise-like nature, and invites tourists to sense nature through the sense of sight. That is, to experience nature more passively. On the other hand, the paradisiac discourse portrays the Lappish nature as a 'performancescape' in which the activity dimension of tourism can take place. That is, the paradisiac discourse portrays nature as an ideal and idyllic space to perform bodily actions such as hiking and adventuring. This promotes embodied experiencing of nature and embodied nature-based tourism in which nature is not only the object of the tourist gaze but also serves as a space for bodily recreational activities.

The metaphor of paradise can be considered an abstract, concept-based metaphor (e.g., Djafarova and Andersen 2010). Even though it is a recurring theme and therefore sometimes regarded as a cliché in tourism discourse, it is not always considered very descriptive. It does not necessarily communicate any specific qualities of a destination due to its abstract nature (Djafarova and Andersen 2010: 40). Consequently, even though the paradisiac discourse brings forward the promise of paradise and such qualities to be found in Lapland, more information is needed to find out what are the qualities and attributes that make the nature of Lapland paradise-like. For example, "*hiker's paradise*" expression brings forward the promise of ideal hiking routes. More information, however, is needed to know what makes the routes paradisiac. In addition, Waade (2010) views paradise as an imaginative concept that is cultural but also subjective. Thus, one can regard the paradisiac discourse to kindle the imagination of tourists and evoke feelings that are subjective to each tourist. Waade (2010: 18) also views the concept of paradise as a "visual matrix [...] that typically includes the beach, palm trees, sunshine [and] the blue sky". In this context, paradise is associated with nature that is the opposite of a tropical paradise. It can be seen to challenge the way paradise is typically represented in tourism discourse, i.e., the tropical paradise visual matrix, and hence offer new interpretations. It also might challenge tourists to use their imagination since Lapland does not embody the typical visual matrix of a paradise.

To summarize, on a micro-level of language, metaphor is the only figurative device to construct the paradisiac discourse that compares the Lappish nature to an earthly paradise. On a macro-level of language, this discourse recognizes nature as an embodied experience and promotes sensing it also through movement in addition to the 'tourist gaze'. It emphasizes nature-based activities since it evolves around activities such as hiking, adventuring, birdwatching, and nature photography. It promotes Lapland as an ideal destination for such activities and hence mediates the

destination image of Lapland. Furthermore, it can also be seen as a way to influence tourists to choose specific activities when visiting Lapland. In other words, to control tourists via language and thematic choices. The utilization of the paradise metaphor per se can also be regarded as a language of social control since paradise can be regarded as a key word that responds to tourists' demands. The term 'paradise' is associated with positive and pleasant attributes, and by using it in reference to the Lappish nature it is presented in a favorable light. Paradise includes the idea of "a timeless world, where only peace, prosperity and happiness exist" (Waade 2010: 19). In depicting the Lappish nature as a paradise, tourists are made to believe that in Lapland this state of mind can be reached. Nature as a paradise as a communicative strategy thus essentially brings forward an emotional condition.

## 6 DISCUSSION

Five salient nature discourses were identified from *In the Far North* magazine: “The nature of Lapland is living art”, “The nature of Lapland is a winter wonderland”, “The nature of Lapland is a glistening gem”, “The nature of Lapland is a living creature”, and “The nature of Lapland is a paradise”. In each discourse figures of speech were identified to operate as micro-level discursive devices that on a macro-level of language construct different touristic images of the Lappish nature. It was discovered that such figurative devices were used to portray nature in a positive and attractive light, which is typical of tourism discourse because its main aim is to persuade. Also, it was found that figurative language was used concerning the northern lights and wintry Lappish nature which both can be considered attributes of Lapland that attract tourists the most. Hence, the findings of the present study support, for example, Djafarova and Andersen’s (2008: 299–300) point of view which suggests that especially metaphors are used to describe the attractive qualities of a destination.

Metaphor, personification, and simile were found to act as the main discursive devices that accentuated different representations of the nature of Lapland. Therefore, the findings of this study are compatible, for instance, with Fairclough’s (2003: 132) idea which suggests that different metaphorical conceptualizations can create different representations of the world and thus create different discourses. While the figures of speech that were found in the articles are treated as discursive devices, they can be considered to have additional functions inside the discourses. To begin with, the findings of this study show that metaphors and similes were applied to reduce unfamiliarity, as suggested by Dann (1996). For example, the northern lights, which might be unfamiliar to some tourists, were metaphorically conceptualized in terms of dancing and burning flames to conceptualize them in more familiar terms. In addition, it was found that metaphors and similes were applied when describing, for example, the wintry landscape in Lapland or the appearance of the northern lights. In these contexts, figurative language was used to help the reader to visualize these beforehand and to evoke the imagination.

Although figurative devices are considered useful in tourism discourse, one can agree, for example, with Djafarova and Andersen (2010). They suggest that figurative language might not necessarily be the most convenient on every occasion because it does not always provide much actual information about the destination. For instance, in the present study, the wonderland and paradise discourses did not necessarily provide any actual information about the nature of Lapland but rather evoke the imagination and stir desire among tourists.

The nature discourses can be seen to provoke particular kinds of touristic engaging with nature. Of additional significance is that all five discourses portray the nature of Lapland as a sensory experience. The majority of the discourses, however, were found to encourage tourists to sense nature by using the sense of sight. This is manifested in figurative expressions that primarily evoke the sense of sight, for example, by employing a verb of visual perception. Hence, the majority of the nature discourses, I argue, objectify nature and depict and confine it as an object of the 'tourist gaze'. In other words, visual attributes of the nature of Lapland are emphasized, and, in essence, nature is portrayed as a visual phenomenon. This finding is comparable with Trčková's (2016) findings which suggest that nature is portrayed as the object of the 'tourist gaze' also in ecotourism advertisements. The privileging of visualism confirms the perception of Urry (2002) who places great emphasis on the visual sense in the tourist experience. Further, in this study nature is also presented as an aesthetic experience. It is portrayed as a visually pleasing touristic landscape that should be looked at and admired, either via the naked eye or through the lens (photographing). As Halla (2003: 85) notes, nature can exist without humans, but a landscape cannot exist without someone who observes and senses it. Here the language of tourism creates a certain representation of the landscape in Lapland which raises the expectations of tourists. By highlighting certain visual aspects, such as the northern lights, the figurative language guides the tourists to direct their gaze to certain things in the landscape. That is, the figurative language guides and controls the tourist.

Even though the sense of vision is the primacy sense that is evoked by the discourses, "the nature of Lapland is a paradise" discourse depicts the Lappish nature also as a bodily experience. That is, nature is depicted both as an idyllic object of the 'tourist gaze' and as a paradise-like 'performancespace'. The paradisiac discourse recognizes nature not only as a visual phenomenon but also as a space to perform embodied practices such as hiking and adventuring. In other words, it produces a more embodied account of nature as a touristic product. As Franklin (2003: 91) discusses, to a greater degree, tourists ask for more embodied experiences instead of being passive observers although the 'tourist gaze' remains important in the touristic experience (ibid.: 193). In sum, nature discourses do not evoke all the five senses sense which might be due to the overemphasis on the ocular-centric nature experience. This finding is different from earlier research that has found that figurative conceptualizations of tourism destinations also evoke, for example, the sense of taste

and touch (e.g., Krisnawati et al. 2021; Jaworska 2017). Given that tourism is a multisensory experience (e.g., Dann 2002), language that appeals to all five senses could make the message more successful.

Nature is also given human-like attributes and such personifications of nature can be seen to strengthen the power that it possesses. Instead of seeing nature solely as the object of the 'tourist gaze', it is also as seen as a gentle, human-like creature that has agency and pulling power to attract tourists as in the "the nature of Lapland is a living creature" discourse. This suggests that nature is seen central to the tourism in Lapland. This study found that the Lappish nature was portrayed only in a positive light by applying figures of speech that carry positive and even luxurious connotations. Previous research suggests (e.g., Krisnawati et al. 2021) that positive images of nature can encourage tourists to explore it. One could, however, ask if such highly positive depictions of nature embellish reality too much and thus do not portray nature truthfully. For example, the gem discourse can be seen to glorify nature and portray it perhaps as more luxurious than it is. Metaphorical conceptualizations of nature, of course, highlight only certain and selected aspects, but they might influence tourists to concentrate only on the positive aspects. That is, in this study figurative conceptualizations of nature can be regarded as a manifestation of the manipulation of the minds of tourists. Words such as 'paradise', 'wonderland', 'kind' and 'gentle', which are used in a figurative sense, can be regarded as key words that communicate a narrative that appeals to tourists by communicating what they want to hear.

It has also been suggested (e.g., Trčková 2016) that figures of speech can also implicitly guide tourists to respect nature. The findings of this study support this. The gem discourse can be seen to implicitly guide tourists to treat nature with respect and utmost care because it is likened to gemstones. That is, nature is associated with qualities such as preciousness and fragileness. Tourism has obvious impacts on nature, and in the era of climate change it is highly important to inform tourists of the effects. Implicit guidance through figurative language, however, is not always enough because the interpretation of figurative conceptualizations is always subjective. Therefore, more explicit verbal guidance is needed if the language of tourism language aims to influence tourists' behavior towards nature and raise awareness of more responsible nature-based tourism.

I argue that the nature discourses that were identified cannot be considered profoundly surprising. That is, each discourse circles around themes that can commonly be found in the language of tourism. For instance, the nature of Lapland was conceptualized via concepts such as wonderland, paradise, and jewels. Interestingly, these concepts are similar to those found by Trčková (2016) and Jaworska (2017). In addition, in this study, the discourse of "the nature of Lapland is a winter wonderland" portrays Lapland as a winter destination whose nature resembles a fairy tale that is beyond the ordinariness of everyday life. Similarly, Räsänen (2021) has found that a Swiss tour

operator employs such metaphors when promoting Lapland. These findings might suggest that the language of tourism may employ and rely on similar conceptualizations when promoting tourism destinations, regardless of the language. Because the discourses identified in this study employ similar themes discovered in earlier research, they can be considered to represent stereotypical tourism discourse.

All things considered, the nature discourses shape the destination image of Lapland by emphasizing different aspects of its nature and its seasonal changes. The nature discourses together build an image of Lapland as an idyllic nature tourism destination. They revolve around topics that can be considered to promote different sub-types of nature-based tourism such as northern lights tourism, winter tourism, and adventure tourism. Lapland as a tourism destination is typically associated with attributes such as snow, winter, and the northern lights. Hence, it is not surprising that some of the nature discourses were found to promote Lapland as an ideal winter tourism or northern lights tourism destination. The Lappish nature is, however, portrayed as a touristic product that is, first and foremost, an ideal object for the 'tourist gaze'. Hence, the nature discourses can be regarded as a vehicle to guide the 'tourist gaze' and thus implicitly control the tourist. Hence, I argue that the nature discourses exercise social control on the level of language at least to some extent. They can be seen to guide the direction of the 'tourist gaze' by only highlighting certain attributes of the nature of Lapland. Further, they accentuate only certain nature-based activities while some are neglected which guides tourists to choose certain activities. That might also leave the impression that Lapland is an ideal destination only for certain activities which means that the act of promotion that the magazine aims to exercise might appeal only to a specific tourism customer segment. In shaping the destination image of Lapland, the nature discourses may shape tourists' perception of Lapland, and hence influence the touristic practices that take place in Lapland. The findings of this study thus support, for example, Cappelli's point of view which suggests that "the language of tourism can become a powerful tool in the hands of the professionals in the tourism industry" (Cappelli 2006: 39).

## 7 CONCLUSION

Contributing to the existing research and in response to the research gap, this study has aimed to investigate how figurative language is used as a discursive device in a Finnish travel magazine *In the Far North*. Figurative language is a topic that has received attention in tourism discourse studies. This study, however, recognized that research concerning the relationship between figurative language and the representation of nature as a touristic product is still scarce. The present study specifically sought to examine how figures of speech construct discourses of the nature of Lapland as a touristic destination, and hence shape the destination image of Lapland as a nature tourism destination. This has been done by combining qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis to answer the research questions.

The chosen theoretical and methodological framework proved to be applicable in this study. The present study was able to identify five nature discourses: 1) The nature of Lapland is living art, 2) The nature of Lapland is a winter wonderland, 3) The nature of Lapland is a glistening gem, 4) The nature of Lapland is a living creature, 5) The nature of Lapland is a paradise. The Lappish nature was thus mystified, glorified and personified. In each discourse metaphors, similes and personifications acted as discursive devices that constructed different representations of the nature of Lapland as a touristic product. First and foremost, the Lappish nature was portrayed as an ocular-centric sensual experience.

Obviously, the present study has some limitations. The research approach can be considered restricted at least for two reasons. Firstly, this study concentrated only on one specific linguistic feature, that is, figures of speech. Therefore, other linguistic features were ignored which clearly affects the findings. Secondly, this study focused only on nature representations, and hence other attributes of Lapland were neglected. This decision, however, was partly data-driven. Hence, this study does not give an exhaustive account of how discourses of the Lappish nature or Lapland as a whole are constructed in *In the Far North* magazine. To reach a more comprehensive analysis of how the magazine constructs representations of Lapland, a more exhaustive linguistic

analysis is needed. Notwithstanding the limitations, it is hoped that this study has both supported and increased the current understanding of the role of figurative language in building destination images.

There is much opportunity for future research in respect of the magazine that provided the data for the present study. As discussed in chapter 3.2, the magazine has Finnish- and German-language versions in addition to the English-version. They could provide fruitful opportunities to approach the magazine from a cross-linguistic perspective. For example, it would be interesting to broaden the analysis of this study in a comparative fashion and to examine whether the Finnish- and German-language versions employ figurative devices in the same way the English-language version does when describing nature.

Tourism discourse itself can be approached from a variety of perspectives. A few suggestions for future research are considered here. Firstly, figures of speech are employed frequently in tourism discourse. However, the preponderance of research concerning figurative language in tourism discourse has largely concentrated on metaphors. For this reason, the understanding of the role of other figurative expressions is, at least to a certain extent, not inclusive. Therefore, more research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the use of figurative language in the language of tourism and, for example, how they contribute to the creation of destination images. Secondly, the present study recognized a research gap in examining nature discourses generally in tourism texts. Further research is needed to gain a deeper knowledge of the ways how nature *per se* is promoted in tourism discourse. Last, the multimodal nature of tourism discourse provides interesting and fruitful opportunities for multimodal analysis. As Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (2010: 91) put it, “the linguistic text of tourism [...] tells only part of the story”. That is, to examine the whole meaning-making process of the language of tourism, we need to look beyond the linguistic techniques and approach tourism discourse from multimodal perspectives to analyze the interaction of verbal and visual communication.

In sum, the concentration on one specific technique of the language of tourism can be seen as fruitful for the purpose of this study. In approaching the data from a specific and selected angle, the present study did not provide nor aimed for a comprehensive and holistic sense of the material. On the contrary, this study aimed to provide a more limited and detailed analysis of how figurative expressions alone can serve as discursive devices and thus create representations of tourism destinations. The results of this study show that figurative language shapes the touristic image of the nature of Lapland by emphasizing certain aspects of it. That is, the findings of the present study suggest that figurative devices alone can be powerful devices in building destination images and thus worth examining further. The findings of the present study can be considered beneficial from a theoretical and practical perspective. The writers of tourism-related materials should pay more attention to how figurative language is employed when promoting tourism destinations and creating destination images.



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