

# **“WILD CRAFTED, SUSTAINABLE, NORDIC BEAUTY”:**

Lumene’s brand identity construction on the brand’s international website

Master’s thesis

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Tiivistelmä - Abstract  <p>Vuonna 2016 suomalainen kosmetiikkabrändi Lumene kävi läpi laajan uudelleenbrändäyksen, jonka johdosta niin brändin ulkonäkö ja tuotteet kuin identiteettikin uudistuivat. Lumene oli säilynyt lähes ennallaan useamman vuosikymmenen ja miellettiin enimmäkseen keski-ikäisten naisten brändiksi. Brändin uuden ilmeen myötä kuitenkin myös nuorten naisten mielenkiinto heräsi niin Suomessa kuin maailmallakin.</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena oli tutkia Lumenen brändi-identiteetin rakentumista brändin kansainvälisillä nettisivuilla erityisesti kansainvälisen yleisön näkökulmasta. Tavoitteena oli saada selville, millaisia diskursseja Lumenen nettisivuilla esiintyy, kuinka Lumenen brändi-identiteetti rakentuu multimodaalisin keinoin ja millainen rooli Lumenen suomalaisilla juurilla on brändi-identiteetin rakentumisessa. Tutkimuksen aineisto koostui Lumenen nettisivuilta kerätyistä kuvankaappauksista, joita tutkittiin multimodaalisen diskurssianalyysin näkökulmasta keskittyen kirjoitettuun tekstiin, kuviin, väreihin ja videoihin. Tämän lisäksi koko nettisivusta laadittiin korpus, joka antoi yleisnäköyksen sivuston kielenkäytöstä sekä sivustolla esiintyvistä teemoista.</p> <p>Lumenen nettisivuilta tunnistettiin kolme keskeisintä diskurssia: "Pohjoismainen kauneus" diskurssi, "suomalainen eksotiikka" diskurssi sekä "ympäristöä säästävä ja luonnollinen" diskurssi. Nämä diskurssit toimivat vahvasti myös Lumenen brändi-identiteetin pohjalla. Tutkimuksessa kävi ilmi, että useita semioottisia resursseja, kuten tekstiä, kuvia ja värejä, käytettiin sekä diskurssien että Lumenen brändi-identiteetin rakentamiseen, usein myös samanaikaisesti. Havaintojen perusteella voitiin todeta Lumenen korostavan suomalaisia juuriaan ylpäesti, samanaikaisesti hyödyntäen yhteyttään Pohjoismaihin paremman näkyvyyden kannalta. Tutkimus myös osoitti, että erityisesti "Pohjoismainen kauneus" ja "suomalainen eksotiikka" diskursseja korostettiin Lumenen kansainvälisillä nettisivuilla, mikä voi viitata siihen, että Lumene viestii erilaisia identiteettejä eri yleisöille.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the Finnish leading cosmetics brand Lumene went through an extensive rebranding: the brand changed its logo, packaging, products, and formulas. Lumene also took a new approach to marketing its products to an international audience with an increased focus on nature, the brand's Nordic and Finnish roots, and the concept of "Nordic beauty". A brand that was previously mostly known only in Finland began gaining more attention also abroad. It seemed like Lumene had created a whole new identity. Rebranding of this scale may not be a very common occurrence, but sometimes it is necessary. As Kapferer (2012: 151) points out, brands are living systems and must, therefore, have freedom to change to match the modern market.

In this thesis, I will study how the brand identity of Lumene is constructed on the brand's international website (<https://www.lumene.com/>). I am studying the international version of their website because I am specifically interested how Lumene communicates its brand identity to the international audience. In order to understand Lumene's brand identity construction, I aim to first identify what types of discourses are present on the website with the focus on Gee's (2010) and Fairclough's (2003) notions of discourse. Second, by using multimodal discourse analysis, I aim to discover how Lumene's brand identity is constructed multimodally. When analyzing images, I will draw on the theory of grammar of the visual design by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). I also want to take a closer look at how Lumene uses its Finnish origin in its marketing communication and what kind of role it plays in the identity construction. Because branding and brand identity are well researched topics in the marketing field (e.g. Da Silveira, Lages & Simões 2013; Coleman, de Chernatony & Christodoulides 2015; Black & Veloutsou 2017; Kornum et al. 2017), I will utilize marketing theories about brand identity and nation branding. Hence, the study will be multidisciplinary, drawing on both the discourse analytical field and the marketing field. I will also have mix-method approach to my analysis. Because

of the multimodal nature of websites, the main method of analysis is multimodal discourse analysis, which allows me to study both linguistic as well as visual features, such as images, videos, and colors. The other method is corpus linguistic analysis, which is used to get a more general view of the language use on the website.

Even though brand identity is a rather popular topic in the marketing field, there is only little research done on it from a discourse analytical point of view. Research on brand identity in the business field focus mostly on marketing strategies and present strong brand identity as a tool for profit. However, I think it is important to take a multimodal point of view on the topic and dig deeper all the way down to details in the language, images, and colors of the website to understand how the brand tries to communicate its identity to the customers. I believe my research will show that brand identities online are constructed through various semiotic resources, and that even little details on websites, such as word choices, images, and colors, can hold a lot more meaning than we realize. This study may also shed more light to how brands use their national origin as a marketing tool and as a part of their identity, especially when aiming to attract international audience, making this study useful for both the discourse analytical field as well as the marketing field.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I will define and explain some of the key terms of the study, such as brand, brand identity and nation branding. I am also discussing digital marketing, the characteristics of websites as a genre and the role of company websites in marketing as well as previous research done on company websites and brand identity.

### 2.1 Brand and brand identity

#### 2.1.1 What is a brand?

Branding has been used for centuries as a way to signify ownership of property and distinguish goods from different producers (Keller, Aperia & Georgson 2011: 4; Slade 2016: 12). In fact, the word *brand* stems from the Old Norse word *brandr*, which means to burn, as burning was used to stamp ownership on livestock (Blackett 2004: 13). The use of brands began to expand at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the industrial revolution, bringing us many of the brands we know today, such as Coca-Cola (Blackett 2004: 15). However, the period since the Second World War is when the use of brands and branding truly exploded (*ibid.*), making branding the phenomenon we know today.

According to Blackett (2003: 15-16), one of the characteristics of a brand is to be intrinsically striking, meaning brands should be visually distinctive through the combination of different elements, such as name, symbol, color, slogan, or specific typeface. He argues that the name is the most important element of the brand and should never change, whereas all the other elements, such as the logo, can – and often do – change over time. However, these elements alone are not necessarily enough to differentiate a brand from its competitors. In order to succeed in the modern world, brands must connect to the consumers emotionally. Brands are not simply visual but can be perceived with different senses; they can be seen, touched, and heard (Wheeler 2012:

4). We may even associate certain tastes and smells with a brand, for example the familiar taste of Coca-Cola or the nostalgic smell of Nivea cream, which helps build a symbolic and emotional connection with the brand. Brand names also often hold much deeper information, an added symbolic value that stems from the feelings and experiences consumers have with the brand (Oswald 2011: 17; Percy 2003: 13). A brand can also be seen as an “unwritten contract” that promises to provide consistent quality and satisfaction to consumers (Slade 2016: 12). People learn to trust and love brands and believe they are superior to others (Wheeler 2012: 2). Therefore, people often opt for branded products instead of unbranded ones or those of a less known brand, because they expect to receive the quality they are promised. Hence, the success of a brand relies strongly on the consumers’ positive experiences and perceptions and it evolves and grows over time. Brands are, therefore, very symbolic and exist in the minds of the consumers as a cluster of meaning - without the consumers and their perceptions, brands would just be products and services without any added value and meanings (Batey 2014: 22).

### **2.1.2 Brand identity**

As discussed above, one of the main characteristic of a brand is distinctiveness. What helps brands stand out from their competitors and be recognized by consumers is a unique identity. On a surface level, brand identity could be seen as the brand’s visual and verbal features, such as the logotypes, symbols, colors for visual and the name of the brand, naming system for products, taglines, and stories for verbal (Allen & Simmons 2003: 114-115). However, brand identity is not simply the brand’s appearance and language. Brand identity, just like a person’s identity, provides direction, purpose and meaning (Aaker 1996: Ch3)<sup>1</sup> and includes the vision, key believes and core values of the

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<sup>1</sup> E-book, page numbers not accessible.



brand (Kapferer 2012: 149). Hence, brand identity consists of both tangible and intangible features, without which the brand would not be the same (Kapferer 2012: 154).

Kapferer (2012: 150) argues that the following questions need to be answered in order to define brand identity:

- What is the brand's particular vision and aim?
- What makes it different?
- What need is the brand fulfilling?
- What is its permanent crusade?
- What are its value or values?
- What is its field of competence? Of legitimacy?
- What are the signs which make the brand recognizable?

Kapferer (2012: 150) stresses the importance of establishing a strong intrinsic identity with key message that the brand wants to communicate before focusing on visual recognition. The values of a brand should also be apparent on the first glance in the external signs of recognition. Not having a clearly established identity before formulating a graphic charter may lead to firms constraining their brands. A clear brand identity also gives freedom to the brand and identifies "what must stay and what is free to change" (Kapferer 2012: 151).

When developing a brand identity, it is useful to look at the brand's image, the perception the consumers and others have of the brand (Aaker 1996; Kapferer 2012: 151). Brand image does not always match the brand's identity, as the image is created by the consumers. The brand image is often passive and based on the consumer's past experiences, whereas brand identity aims to be active and future-oriented, reflecting the aspired associations. According to Aaker (1996: Ch3), in addition to figuring out the needs of the consumers, brand identity should reflect "the soul and the vision" of the brand.

Kapferer (2012: 158) divides brand identity into six facets that are represented by a hexagonal prism (Figure 1). According to this prism, brand identity consists of brand's physique, personality, culture, relationship, and the customer reflection and self-image. Brand's physique is made of its concrete being, function, and appearance. Brand's personality refers to the brand's character and human personality traits, which consumers can either identify with or project themselves into. Above the physique and personality, brand is a culture and an ideology, which is, according to Kapferer (2012: 159), the most important facet of brand identity, as brands are not only driven by culture but convey their own culture. The relationship facet of brand identity refers to the way brand acts and relates to its customers. A brand identity is also customer reflection, which describes the brand's perceived customer, i.e. how the customers want to be seen as in relation to the brand. Customer reflection often gets confused with target customer, which is the brand's potential user, whereas customer reflection offers a model, an "outward mirror", with which to identify. The sixth facet, self-image, refers to the target's "internal mirror", how they see themselves in relation to a brand, and can be developed through the target's attitude towards certain brands.

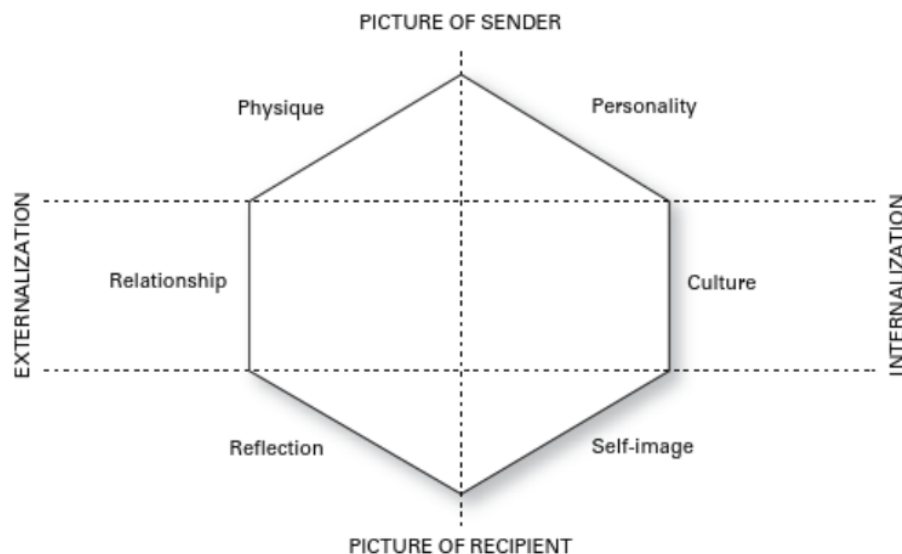


Figure 1. Brand identity prism (Kapferer 2012: 158)

In comparison to Kapferer's brand identity prism, Aaker's (1996) brand identity model (Figure 2) presents brand identity as an entity constructed by a core identity and an extended identity, which consists of four different perspectives: *brand as a product*, *brand as an organization*, *brand as a person*, *brand as a symbol*. According to Aaker (1996), the core identity is more resistant to change; it is the essence of a brand and consists of the soul of the brand, the fundamental beliefs and values of the brand, and the competencies and principles of the organization behind the brand. The extended identity adds details and texture to the brand identity. The perspectives of the extended identity are distinct from each other and are supposed to help clarify, enrich, and differentiate brand identity (Aaker 1996). The perspective of brand as a product focuses on product-related associations, such as the quality and value of the product, its uses and users, and country of origin, whereas the brand as an organization perspective focuses on the attributes of the organization that are created by the people, culture, values, and programs of the organization. Organizational attributes can be, for example, innovation, drive for quality, or concern for the environment. Both product attributes and organizational attributes can contribute to a value proposition and set the brand apart from others (Aaker 1996). Brands can also be perceived as a person with certain personality traits. Brand personality allows a brand to be more self-expressive, which can lead to the consumer expressing his or her own personality by using the brand. Brand personality also helps create brand-customer relationships that further shape the brand identity. Lastly, symbols, such as visual imagery, metaphors, and the brand heritage, are an important part of the brand identity and can help gain recognition and provide cohesion and structure to the identity. According to Aaker (1996), it is not necessary for every brand identity to employ all four perspectives, but every brand should at least consider all of them.

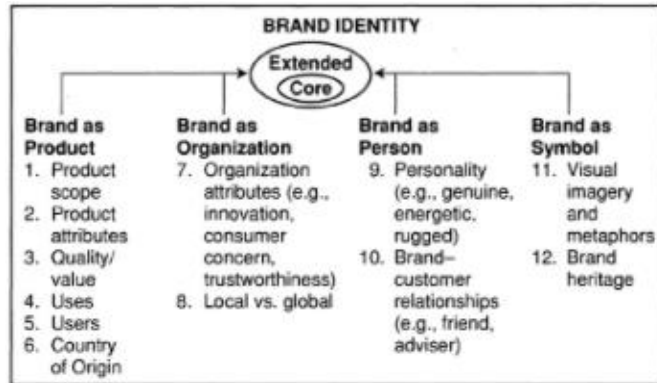


Figure 2. Four brand identity perspectives (Aaker 1996).

Aaker (1996) also points out that sometimes one brand identity does not work in all markets and has to be adapted. Therefore, brands can have multiple identities. However, if a brand has multiple identities, it is important that they share a common set of associations and identity elements (Aaker 1996). The different identities can, thus, have different details to them but the core identity should remain the same.

The main features of brand identity are rather similar in Kapferer's (2012) and Aaker's (1996) models. Both models see brand identity as a construction of physical traits (e.g. the products of the brand, the physical appearance), personality, consumer relationship, and culture. However, the facets of the two models are not exactly equivalent and there is some overlap between them. For instance, Aaker's (1996) *brand as product* or *brand as person* perspectives are not directly comparable with Kapferer's (2012) brand physique and brand personality facets, even though they are similar. Instead, the facets of Kapferer's brand identity prism contain features from the different perspectives presented on Aaker's (1996) model. For example, *visual imagery* under Aaker's *brand as symbol* perspective would fit into Kapferer's brand physique facet, whereas brand heritage would go under the culture facet of the prism. Kapferer (2012: 159) also argues that Aaker's brand personality traits do not exactly describe brand's personality and are related to other facets of brand identity, such as the physical or cultural facet. Another major difference between the models is that Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism

includes the sender/recipient perspective as well as the internal/external perspective, whereas Aaker's (1996) model focuses mostly on the brand and its attributes. Hence, the consumers and their relationship with the brand are in a bigger role in Kapferer's model compared to Aaker's.

For the purpose of this study, I will be mixing these two models, because I think they complement each other nicely. The main focus will be on Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism because it presents a comprehensive view on brand identity construction, but I will bring in some of Aaker's (1996) perspectives as well in order to expand and deepen the definition of Lumene's brand identity. However, because this study focuses on how the brand presents itself on its website and does not include any consumer experiences or attitudes towards the brand, I will leave out the consumer self-image facet of the prism, which focuses on how consumers view themselves in relation to the brand.

## **2.2 Nation branding and country-of-origin effect**

As discussed in chapter 2.1.1, brands exist in the minds of the consumers and are highly symbolic and perceptual. This is why branding is not limited to only physical items or services, but instead products can be defined more broadly to include even people, ideas, or places (Keller et al. 2011: 18).

Consumers hold different interpretations and associations towards different countries. For instance, the United States is often associated with freedom, success, and independence, Germany with precision engineering and quality, and France with luxury (Temporal 2015: 51-52). Country associations also influence the consumer's perceptions of the quality of products and services made in certain countries (Keller et al. 2011: 15), and therefore consumers often opt for products made in countries that are commonly believed to produce high quality products. Thus, it is easier for companies and industries that come from well-respected countries to succeed on international markets (Temporal

2015: 51). This phenomenon is called country-of-origin (COO) effect, which is a widely researched topic in the marketing field (e.g. Aichner 2014; Beverland & Lindgreen 2002; Kim & Chun 2015; Kotler & Gertner 2002; Lim et al. 2015; Ryan 2008). COO effect is used to reinforce positive perceptions of company's products, and a strong COO can be a competitive advantage for companies depending on the product category, the target market, and the country image (Aichner 2014). For instance, Finnish companies often aim to be associated with superior design, quality, and innovation, and some have created successful brands that have "a strong Finnish flavour, conveying an image of Nordic life that is progressive, responsible and technologically advanced" (Ryan 2008: 13).

According to Aichner (2014), there are different strategies, both explicit and implicit, that companies use to present COO of their products. For instance, the use of the phrase "Made in ..." is a common and easy way to emphasize the origin of a brand or product, but its effect depends largely on the reputation of the country (Aichner 2014: 84-85). Some of the other strategies are using quality and origin labels, embedding COO or words from the country in the company name, using the COO language, flags, or symbols, or using famous or stereotypical people, landscapes, or buildings from COO.

Kelly-Holmes (2016: 54) also argues that language indexes country of origin and builds associations; language is often used by brands and companies to link a brand to certain place while exploiting associated meanings linked to these places. Kelly-Holmes (2016: 55) refers to the phenomenon as "linguistic fetish", which emphasizes the symbolic value of a language over its communicative value. For example, foreign languages are often used in advertisements for their symbolic function or accent rather than their communicative function, and thus foreign language can be seen to have a "decorative" effect, whereas the dominant domestic language is used to provide important information (Kelly-Holmes 2016: 55). The sound and look of the foreign word as well as the second- and third-order associations of the word often determine the linguistic choices in advertisement texts (Kelly-Holmes 2016: 56). Kelly-Holmes (2016: 56) argues

that “foreign language fetish is a variety and the key-way of indexing foreignness mainly as a result of advertising and other media discourses, and it is available as a semiotic resource for advertisers to use”.

COO effect and nation branding can also be used for regions instead of certain countries. For instance, the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland are often merged together and referred to as the Nordics. The Nordic countries have been participating in active regional cooperation since 1971 in order to achieve a greater impact in a larger scale than what the countries would be able to achieve on their own (Magnus 2016: 195-196). When it comes to branding and marketing, Nordic countries often exploit their “Nordicness” in addition to branding themselves and their own national identity, because the Nordics are commonly regarded as a unit, which creates greater visibility and influence (Magnus 2016: 197-198). According to Ryan (2008: 17), Finnish marketers, for instance, aim to be associated with the Nordic lifestyle, which is viewed as “highly modern, egalitarian, progressive and highly responsible”.

## **2.3 Digital marketing and websites**

### **2.3.1 Defining digital marketing**

Digital media and technology have been around already for some decades and are essential part of everyone’s daily lives and communication. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019: 5), over 3 billion people around the world use online services for multitude of things, from purchasing products to being entertained to finding romance. Thus, businesses and their marketing strategies have also moved online and are constantly utilizing more new ways to communicate with their customers.

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019: 9) define digital marketing simply as “achieving marketing objectives through applying digital media, data and technology”, which

practically means managing different forms of online company presence (e.g., website, apps, social media) integrated with online communications techniques, such as search engine marketing, social media marketing, online advertising, email marketing and partnership with other websites. Digital media refers to content and interactive services that are provided by different digital technology platforms, such as the Internet, web, mobile phone, TV, and digital signage (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick 2019: 9). Compared to television and mass media, the complex and interactive communication possibilities provided by the Internet make it easier for businesses to establish and enhance relationships with their customers (Hofacker 2018: 6). Thus, digital marketing has an increased focus on the customer engagement, and the control is gradually shifting more to the customer rather than the marketer. In fact, according to Zahay (2015: 5), the end goal of digital marketing is to facilitate customer interaction and engagement. Engagement refers to customers being involved with the brand and creating their own content around the brand (Zahay 2015: 5-6). However, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019: 10) point out that the more modern digital marketing techniques still need to be integrated with traditional media, such as print, TV, direct mail and human sales and support for digital marketing to be successful.

### **2.3.2 Website as a genre**

Before exploring websites as a genre more in depth, it is important to clarify the differences between *website*, *webpage*, and *homepage*. *Website* could be defined as a group or a collection of *webpages*, which all exist within the same WWW domain. Webpages are documents that can be accessed through a web browser and allows the user to navigate to other webpages through hyperlinks (Marzá 2007: 55; Djonov & Knox 2014: 173). Hence, webpages are the building blocks of websites. One of the webpages must be assigned as the *homepage* of the website, i.e., the introductory page of the website that is accessed through only the domain address of the website (Djonov & Knox 2014: 172-173).



The concept of 'genre' is present in various disciplines from linguistics to visual and musical communication (van Leeuwen 2005: 74). In the most general sense, the term *genre* is used to refer to text types. However, in systemic-functional linguistics, the focus is on the function of the genres as "resources of communicative action that can be combined in different ways" (van Leeuwen 2005: 74). Ever since the emergence of the internet and world wide web in the early 1990's, websites have established new meaning-making practices that have become a significant part of everyone's everyday life. The Internet, as well as other new technologies, have also challenged and extended the traditional concepts of literary genres, creating new concepts such as digital genre and cyber genre (Marzá 2007).

According to Askehave and Nielsen (2005: 130), the homepage compresses the most important information of the website into a brief introduction that is easy and quick to scan through. The homepage does not give a complete overview of the website but instead presents a selection of topics that would satisfy the immediate information need of the reader. The secondary purposes of a homepage are to create an image of the sender and present news. The image of the sender is created through the choice of information as well as design and layout. Similar to a newspaper frontpage, the homepage highlights certain content of the website, some of which can be permanent (e.g. the main content categories), and some of which change regularly to provide the reader with the main news of the organization/company (Askehave and Nielsen 2005: 130).

Bateman et al. (2017: 347) state that some websites do not differ significantly from older media channels and are simply re-creations of previous forms of communication, e.g. online newspapers resemble printed newspaper in their layout, and therefore they do not offer new artefacts to consider. However, Askehave and Nielsen (2005: 125) point out that even though web genres can have printed counterparts they still have unique properties when it comes to production, function, and reception. For example, online newspapers, even if similar in layout and style as printed newspapers, have hyperlinks, comment

sections, videos, etc., which enable different kind of interaction and communication than a printed newspaper would.

### **2.3.3 Company website as a marketing tool**

Websites are widely used by companies as commercial and communicational tools. In fact, despite the rise of social media and social commerce, for many businesses the website is still the core of online communications and e-commerce transactions (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 296). Websites offer a variety of different functions suited for different needs, and therefore any kind of company can - and should - have their own website regardless of their field of business. Well-designed and effective website is essential in digital marketing. A company website should be easy for the customers to navigate, it should make the customers want to return to the website, and it should help the customers achieve their goals, whether it is finding information or purchase a product (Zahay 2015: 27-28). In today's technology-driven and connected world, companies also have to consider how their website will perform on other devices and platforms, such as smartphones and tablets.

The website development should begin by defining the objectives of the website and the target audience of the company, for they affect the content required for the website, which then affects the design (Zahay 2015; Chaffey & Smith 2017). The design and content of company websites can vary largely depending on what the company's objectives are for the website; one may aim for increasing their sales and revenue, while another may be more focused on gaining visibility (Zahay 2015: 33). Generally, company websites have two most common functions, informational and transactional (Zahay 2015: 27). Informational websites are used to provide information, but do not have products or services for purchase, whereas transactional websites are for e-commerce, allowing the consumers to purchase products and services on the website. The website objectives should stem from the company's strategies and be driven by both the business goals and

the target market. Therefore, a company must also define their target market clearly in order to design the website that caters to the needs of their customers.

However, carefully curated content and clear objectives alone are not enough to create an effective and attractive website. In the words of Hofacker (2018: 75-76):

“You can think of the screen in front of the consumer as being like a forest or a meadow. The consumer has given you part or all of some visual display. The screen real estate they give you is valuable and should never be wasted! Like a flower in the meadow, your pages must attract that consumer.”

High quality visual design helps the company achieve the objective of their website, whether it is to enhance customer-firm relationship or to persuade customers to purchase products on the site (Hofacker 2018: 76). In addition to the objectives and functions, branding has to be also considered when creating the visual design. The visuals (colors, graphical elements, fonts) should match the brand’s aesthetic (Hofacker 2018: 80). Without visual design that does not match the brand, or the consumers’ expectations of the brand, the experience of the brand or the website might not be memorable or positive (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 297).

Website aesthetics include graphics, color, style and layout and typography, which can help communicate a brand’s values and create a personality for the website (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 324). Website personality can be described similarly to how we describe people, such as formal, fun, or engaging. The visual design of a website also affects the first impression the user gets of the brand and their site, and therefore is important for establishing trust (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 327). All the visual elements should contribute to the overall look and the feel of the website (Hofacker 2018: 80), and thus should complement each other and create a cohesive design.

Using the appropriate combination of colors is important for creating the desired feeling about the site and the brand (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 328) and are usually one of the first

features the user notices when they enter the website. The colors should be appropriate not only for the brand's color scheme, but also for a personality that fits the target audience as well as for usability and accessibility. Colors and color temperatures hold a lot of meaning, feelings, and symbolism. However, the meaning and symbolism attached to a color can differ between cultures, and therefore companies should consider local interpretations of different colors (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 328). It is also important to make sure the color combinations are accessible for all users. For instance, high contrast between the text and the background color is considered positive for accessibility; tinted background boxes also highlight content that is wanted to be noticed and read by the user (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 328). Comprehension should also be considered when choosing images and other visual elements; they should be understood by the audience and be appropriate to the culture of the audience (Hofacker 2018: 80).

Even though often underestimated, typography can also be effective in adding to the visual appeal and persuasive power of a website (Chaffey & Smith 2017: 329). Effective typography should be, for instance, easy to read, consistent in terms of font type and size (although differences in font size, e.g., between headings, can help create a distinctive effect on design), and function well with the page layout. The page layout, in turn, should be balanced, as the human eye expects balance and symmetry from any type of visual display (Hofacker 2018: 77). This does not mean, however, that the different sections of the page, e.g., the banner, menu, or body, should take the equal amount of space, but rather should balance in terms of their perceptual weight, i.e., how "strong" they appear (Hofacker 2018: 77).

## **2.4 Previous research on brand identity**

While branding and brand identity are researched extensively in the marketing field, not much research can be found on brand identity construction from a discourse analytical

point of view. Research done on branding and brand identities on the marketing field are also often more focused on marketing strategies rather than analyzing brand identity construction more in depth. Nation branding is also an important focus of the present study. Most studies on nation branding are found, again, on the marketing field, and even though there are some studies that look at country of origin in relation to brand identity, the focus is often on tourism and nation branding campaigns (e.g. Branka & Velimir 2017; Konecnik Ruzzier & de Chernatony 2013; Nas 2017). The aim of the present study, however, is to learn how the country of origin of a brand outside of the tourism field can be part of the brand identity.

I have looked at studies that focus on brand/corporate identity and country representation in branding and use an online platform as the data, mainly company websites. Company websites are quite common data for research about online branding and brand identity, but again, they are often done from the marketing point of view. I managed to find some studies on branding and brand/corporate identities with a multimodal discourse analytical approach, which I am going to discuss next.

Cheng (2016) studied how the brand identities of two luxury hotels were represented on their websites. Her approach was multimodal, using visual analysis to study the images on the websites and corpus analysis to analyze the written language and identify the main themes. The image analysis was based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar framework, focusing mainly on representational and interactive meanings. She found out that both hotels used verbal descriptions of serene and enchanting geographical locations and visual representation of relaxation activities and services offered by the hotels as well as of the impressive architecture of the hotels. Even though the two hotels shared some similarities in their communication strategies, the identities of the hotel firms were still quite different: one of the hotels was communicating a sensual and romantic setting, while the other focused on simplicity, tranquility, and plainness. Cheng (2016) concludes that a unique image is a crucial part of constructing brand

identities, since it can help brands differentiate themselves from competitors and capture consumers' attention.

Chen and Eriksson (2019) studied how snack brands use corporate stories on their websites to represent themselves as producers of healthy food. Using social semiotics and multimodal critical discourse analysis, they analyzed the corporate stories of 22 snack companies that promote themselves as "healthy". Chen and Eriksson (2019: 3) focused mainly on written texts and images on the corporate story pages, but also other pages and semiotic materials of the website that acted as a part of the corporate story were considered. The findings of the study show that healthy snacks companies construct their stories and create a moral discourse through textual and visual means, presenting themselves as responsible and good for the nature and the consumer, making the consumer feel they are making better and more ethical choices. The moral discourse is further reinforced by recontextualizing the companies' businesses as something authentic, uncomplicated, and friendly. This also differentiates them from the big corporate food industry, allowing the consumer to see the brands as "real people", someone relatable. However, Chen and Eriksson (2019: 9) point out that the companies were using similar persuasive communicating strategies as in advertising, and that their concepts of "healthy" are abstract, symbolic, and commercialized, lacking genuine moral content and meaningful indication of healthiness of the products.

Schnurr et al. (2016) studied the corporate identity construction of Innocent, a UK producer of fruit juices and smoothies. Like the companies in Chen and Eriksson's (2019) study, Innocent also portrays itself as responsible, ethical, and sustainable. Schnurr et al. (2016: 296-297) did a mix-methods analysis on the UK website of Innocent by combining corpus analysis and discourse analysis. For the corpus analysis, Schnurr et al. (2016: 298-301) collected the most frequent words and six-word n-grams as well as keywords, which allowed them to identify and examine the patterns and most salient feature of language use on the website. They then took a discourse analytical approach to study their observations of the language use more in depth in order to discover how Innocent

constructs its identity through discursive and linguistic strategies. Schnurr et al. (2016) found out that Innocent constructs and articulates its professional and social identities through discursive, visual, and interactive processes.

Lehtikangas (2019) studied in her MA thesis the brand identity construction of the Swedish oat product company Oatly using the brand's Twitter posts as her data. The aim of her study was to find out what types of discourses could be identified in Oatly's tweets and how the brand's identity is constructed multimodally through the tweets. She also wanted to find out how entextualisation and resemiotisation were visible in Oatly's social media marketing and identity work. Lehtikangas analyzed the tweets using multimodal discourse analysis and identified six different discourses: pro plant-based discourse, "us vs. them" discourse, environmental discourse, national and cultural discourse, "the cool guy" discourse, and fan discourse. The findings of her study showed that out of the six discourses the pro plant-based and environmental discourses were the most prominent and were also a significant part of Oatly's brand identity construction. The study also shows how brands can, in addition to commercial reasons, use social media to construct and communicate their identities as well as to convey ideas and cultures.

Palviainen (2012) studied how the Finnish origin is represented on the websites of six different Finnish design companies (Fiskars, Iittala, Kalevala Jewelry, Lumi Accessories, Minna Parikka and Tonfisk Design). She also wanted to find out how the Finnish origin affects the companies' image and if there are differences between the companies. Even though the focus of this study is not exactly on brand identity, I wanted to include it because of the focus on the country of origin of the Finnish companies. Palviainen (2012) used a multimodal discourse analysis as her method and focused on three modes: language, images, and colors. She found out in her study that all three modes were used in representation of Finnishness, but verbal text was the most used. She found four recurring themes: nature, history, Finnish words, and the colors of blue and white. However, she found out that Finnishness seemed not to be the main point of the companies' images, but it was an important part of some of the companies' image.

The previous studies presented show similarities with the present study in terms of data, methods, and the focus on branding and brand identity. The study carried out by Lehtikangas (2019) has a similar focus on brand identity and also applied Kapferer's brand identity prism in her study. However, the present study differs from that of Lehtikangas (2019) in terms of data set, Lehtikangas using social media as her data while the present study uses the brand's website. Moreover, what makes this study different from the ones discussed above is the added aspect of nation branding and country-of-origin on brand identity, which does not seem to be researched a lot outside of tourism. The present study also looks at the brand identity of Lumene from the point of view of the international audience instead of their local Finnish audience by using Lumene's international website as the data, whereas the previous studies have not necessarily considered if the brand identity could be represented differently for different audiences.

Some research has been done on Lumene as well in, but these studies are commonly Bachelor's and Master's level theses in the business field. For instance, Keränen (2016) studied in her BA thesis Lumene's rebranding in 2016 with the focus on how the rebranding was received and how successful the rebranding was. She sent our surveys to Finnish beauty and lifestyle bloggers and received seven replies. According to the results, Keränen (2016) found out that the rebranding was received positively and that the brand was perceived significantly more attracting after the rebranding. Another study on Lumene was carried out by Helin (2014), who also studied the brand identity and image of Lumene. However, the research was empirical and used quantitative methods and interview data of the target group of Lumene, which can result in quite different findings compared to using the company's own media and content as data. Her study was also carried out before Lumene's rebranding in 2016 and focused on Lumene's image and identity in Finland.



### **3 DATA AND METHODS**

#### **3.1 Aims and research questions**

The purpose of the present study is to analyze the multimodal construction of the brand identity of Lumene through different types of discourses found on the brand's website.

The research questions of the study are the following:

1. What types of discourses can be identified on Lumene's website?
2. How is Lumene's brand identity constructed multimodally on their website?
3. What kind of role does the Finnish origin of Lumene play in the brand identity construction?

The aim of the first question is to find out what types of discourses are constructed on Lumene's international website. In order to answer the second question, I will take a multimodal approach to analyze more in depth how the different discourses are constructed through visuals and language, and how these discourses work together to build Lumene's brand identity. I also find it interesting how strongly the Finnish origin is present in Lumene's branding, and thus wanted to explore more how the Finnish origin is used in the construction of Lumene's brand identity.

#### **3.2 Defining discourse**

Since the present study is constructed around the term 'discourse', it is important to clarify what I mean by this term. First of all, the terms 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis' have several different interpretations and definitions in a variety of disciplines (Johnstone 2018: 1). Although the terms are widely used, they are often left undefined and vague, and the many uses have blurred the meaning of 'discourse', making its use as a descriptive and analytical tool problematic (Kress 2011: 35). To discourse analysts,

'discourse' commonly refers to "actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language" (Johnstone 2018: 2). However, communication is much more than language; language is just one among the many modes of meaning-making, such as gesturing, facial expressions, images, colors, and sound – even media such as dance, architecture and clothing can be meaningful. Discourse analysts must, therefore, take into consideration the connections between language and other modes of meaning-making. Thus, discourse analysis does not focus solely on language as an abstract system, but rather on what happens when people draw on their experiences and knowledge of language to do things in the world, such as exchanging information, expressing their feelings, and making things happen (Johnstone 2018: 2).

Gee's (2010) definition of discourse differentiates 'discourse' with a little "d" from 'Discourse' with a big "D". Similarly to the common definition of 'discourse', Gee (2010: 30, 34) uses 'discourse' with a little "d" when referring to language-in-use or stretches of language (e.g. conversations or stories), whereas 'Discourse' with a big "D" is "a characteristic way of saying, doing, and being". According to Gee (2010: 30), people use the resources of a language to project themselves as a certain kind of person engaged in a certain practice or activity. The kind of person one projects, however, is different in different situations. Hence, Discourses are about projecting different identities, "being different kinds of people" (Gee 2010: 34). Big "D" Discourses are always language combined with "other stuff", such as action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places. Discourses require recognition in order to be successful; language, thinking, acting, interacting, places, objects etc. should be put together in a way that others recognize you as the particular type of identity engaged in a particular type of activity (Gee 2010: 35).

Gee (2010: 37) points out that people are constantly changing and creating new Discourses, and therefore Discourses have no discrete boundaries. People engage in so-called "recognition work" (Gee 2010: 37) when they try to make sense of and project who

they are and what they are doing, as well as who others are and what they are doing, and when they are interacting and when they reflect on their interaction later. Discourses exist in the world because of recognition work, but they are also reflectively related and create each other. People can also project different Discourses at the same time when they weave the strands of their multiple Discourses together (Gee 2010: 38). If different Discourses together become recognized enough by enough people, they can become a single Discourse. Because Discourses do not have clear boundaries and new ones can always emerge, Discourses are limitless, and no one has a set number of different Discourses.

Fairclough (2003) offers a similar definition to Gee's (2010) big "D" Discourse. When used as a count noun, Fairclough (2003: 26) views discourses as "particular ways of representing part of the world". Different discourses represent different perspectives on the world and are affected by people's social and personal identities, the social relationship in which they stand to other people, people's positions in the world, and the different relations people have to the world (Fairclough 2003: 124). In addition to representing the world as it is, discourses also represent possible worlds, which are different from the actual world.

I find both Gee's (2010) and Fairclough's (2003) definitions of discourse appropriate for the present study, as they expand the definition to representation and projection of identities, instead of simply focusing on language-in-use. I also appreciate the social aspect of both definitions, how discourses depend on socially accepted associations, relationships, and people's perspectives of the world. Thus, when talking about discourse or discourses, I am referring to Gee's big "D" Discourse as well as Fairclough's idea of discourses being ways of representing the world and identities.

### 3.3 About Lumene

Lumene is a Finnish cosmetics brand that produces skin care and makeup products. Lumene was created in the 1970 by the pharmaceutical company Orion and quickly became the leading cosmetics brand in Finland – and still holds this position today. The name Lumene originally comes from the lake Lummene located in Kuhmoinen. Lumene’s factory is located in Espoo, where their skin care and face makeup products are manufactured. Lumene was the first brand to use wild grown Finnish berries in its products, later expanding also to other local plants (Our history n.d.).

In 2016 Lumene went through an extensive rebranding: the brand got a new logo, a new story, and new product packaging; product formulations were improved, and new product ranges were added. They also launched a brand-new website that portrays their new identity better. Through the rebranding, Lumene is aiming to expand their market outside of Finland by using the exoticism of Finnish beauty and the Nordic nature as their selling point (Haaksluoto 2016). Lumene’s philosophy has been strongly based on the Nordic nature since the beginning. In 2000 Lumene began using Nordic berries in its formulations, and in 2016 Lumene expanded its formulation strategy to include also other local plants (Our History n.d.). The goal of the rebranding was also to increase the vegan volume and diversity. The emphasis on the natural ingredients is very prevalent on Lumene’s website, as well: there is, for example, an [entire page](#) on their website dedicated to the natural ingredients used in their products with descriptions explaining what the ingredients are used for.

### 3.4 Data

The data of the present study consists of the English language website of Lumene. I chose to study Lumene’s website instead of its social media platforms, because it provides the

most information about the brand and its products, philosophies, and goals. The website also functions as the foundation for the company's business online and provides visibility. As popular as social media platforms are and most companies promote themselves through them, consumers still often search for the company website when they want to learn more their business and services and/or products.

Most of the website was used to create a corpus for the corpus linguistic analysis in order to make the corpus as extensive as possible. However, because the website is also an online store for Lumene's products it has a lot of content, which makes it challenging to do a multimodal discourse analysis of the entire website within the scope of this study. Therefore, for the multimodal discourse analysis, I narrowed down my focus to the pages with most content, such as the homepage, "Our story" page, and the "Ingredients" page. I also wanted to include the pages of the most popular product collections, because they are, after all, what Lumene is all about. Lumene has eight different skin care product collections and five makeup product collections. Each skin care collection is designed for different purposes, such as anti-aging, hydration, or added luminosity, and contains several different products. Instead of looking at individual product pages, I decided to focus mostly on the collection pages, specifically the descriptions of the main properties and purposes of the collection. The webpages included in the data can be found listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Webpages used as data in multimodal discourse analysis. Accessed September 2019 – May 2020.

Homepage	<a href="https://www.lumene.com/">https://www.lumene.com/</a>
Story page	<a href="https://www.lumene.com/story-page.html">https://www.lumene.com/story-page.html</a>
Ingredients page	<a href="https://www.lumene.com/ingredients-page.html">https://www.lumene.com/ingredients-page.html</a>

Nordic Hydra [Lähde] collection page	<a href="https://www.lumene.com/skincare/collections/nordic-hydra-lahde">https://www.lumene.com/skincare/collections/nordic-hydra-lahde</a>
Nordic C [Valo] collection page	<a href="https://www.lumene.com/skincare/collections/nordic-c-valo">https://www.lumene.com/skincare/collections/nordic-c-valo</a>
Invisible Illumination [Kaunis] collection page	<a href="https://www.lumene.com/makeup/collections/invisible-illumination">https://www.lumene.com/makeup/collections/invisible-illumination</a>

Packaging is also without a doubt one of the key aspects of any brand's identity, and Lumene has also done many changes to their product packaging. However, the present study focuses on how Lumene constructs its identity on the international website, on which the outside packaging of the products is presented only from the front angle, and therefore cannot be studied fully. Therefore, I will not be analyzing the product packaging in depth.

### 3.5 Data collection

After receiving a permission from Lumene to use the website as my data, I began my data collection by first exploring the website to get an overall picture of it. I then took screenshots of the pages that I had chosen to include in my data and made some notes with initial observations. The first screenshots were collected already in September 2019, but the data collection was carried out till May 2020 and most screenshots were taken during the spring of 2020. It is important to note that websites are forever changing, and therefore the website may later be different from the way it was presented in this study. Although the data collection of the present study expanded over several months, I made sure the content of the web pages had not changed much between the earlier and later screenshots. There were only some minor changes during that time, such as different products, articles and images displayed on the homepage.

For the corpus linguistic analysis, I created a corpus of Lumene's website using Sketch Engine (<https://www.sketchengine.eu/>). Sketch Engine is an online a corpus manager and text analysis tool that identifies what is typical and frequent in a language and what is rare, outdated, or emerging (What can Sketch Engine do? n.d.). I decided to include almost the entire website, because it would have been very challenging and time consuming to select only certain parts (e.g. skin care pages, but excluding makeup product pages) of the website for the corpus. However, I tried to exclude features like customer reviews and pages about terms and conditions, privacy policy, and delivers, which often contain more official and legal language. The corpus ended up with 9,838 words. I then created lists of keywords, both single and multiword, and most frequent words and adjectives, which provide an overlook of the language patterns of the website.

### **3.6 Research ethics**

As for the ethical aspect of the study, I contacted Lumene via email and I was given their written permission to use the website as my data. I assured that my study would have a neutral take on the brand and its business, and my analysis would be mostly objective and descriptive and would not include personal opinions or attitudes towards the brand.

### **3.7 Methods of analysis**

The present study has a mixed-method approach combining corpus linguistics and multimodal discourse analysis. In this section, I will describe the main methods of the study and discuss how websites specifically can be analyzed multimodally.

### 3.7.1 Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is evidence-driven form of text linguistics that utilizes computerized corpora in the study of language (Partington 2013: 5). Like other forms of text linguistics, corpus linguistics describe “the interactions between writers/speakers and readers/hearers as evidenced in the linguistic trace, that is, the texts, that these interactions leave behind” (Partington 2013: 5). There are vast variety of corpora and they can be used to study, for instance, the use of single lexical items, textual cohesion, authorial style, or different ideologies, whether political, religious, social, or cultural (Partington 2013: 6). Corpus linguistics makes it also possible to discover recurring patterns of usage of words and to conduct word-frequency counts. According to Partington (2013: 8), word-frequency counts can highlight typical grammar and recurrent topics in the corpus when compared to another similar corpus. In the present study, I focused on the keywords (both single and multi-words) and most frequent words and adjectives.

Partington (2013: 10) presents the term corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) which was created to refer to discourse studies that combine qualitative and quantitative methods and emphasize the “eclectic nature of the approach”. Thus, the method used in the present study could be called corpus-assisted *multimodal* discourse analysis, because the corpus offers an overall view of the data and helps identify certain themes and discourses apparent in the data and multimodal discourse analysis then explores the identified discourses deeper. Partington (2013: 11) argues that because the aim of CADS is to uncover “non-obvious meanings” that may not be noticed by naked eye, involving corpus techniques to discover expected findings that can be discovered with discourse analysis (e.g. place names appearing often on a travel website) is unnecessary and pointless. However, a corpus can work as a support and confirmation of the researcher’s initial observations. Take the present study for example: I was able to predict which words may show up more frequently on the website just by looking at it, but I created a



corpus because wanted to see which words exactly are the most frequent and whether my initial observations were correct.

### 3.7.2 Multimodal discourse analysis

Multimodality refers to communicational and representational situations that rely on a combination of the different modes in order to be effective (Bateman et al. 2017: 7). Traditionally different modes have been linked to certain theories and disciplines, such as language to linguistics and image to art history (Bateman et al. 2017: 7-8; Kress 2011: 38). However, multimodality is a multidisciplinary approach in which all modes are framed as one field and seen as equally valuable in meaning-making (Kress 2011: 38).

In multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA), *texts* are seen as multimodal semiotic entities in two, three or four dimensions (Kress 2011: 36). This means that a painting, play, image, or sculpture are all different types of texts since they all communicate something. Because of the focus on different modes, multimodal discourse analysis enables deeper analysis of meaning-making than discourse analysis done solely on writing or speech. According to Kress (2011: 37-38), doing discourse analysis of writing or speech alone reveals only partial meanings; all the modes in a text jointly create meanings and they should be treated as one connected cultural resource for meaning-making.

Websites are a great example of a multimodal – and multimedia – channel, as they contain a range of different modes, such as writing, images, videos, colors, movement, and sound. Websites make an interesting subject for discourse analysis, as they could be characterized as inherently social; websites are created by someone for others to visit, explore and interact with. Websites also have certain goals and functions and can be, for example, educational, informative, or promotional. The type and function of the website affect its content and structure. For example, the structure and content of an online newspaper is quite different from an online store, because they want the user to do and

pay attention to different things. Because websites have so many distinct uses, Bateman et al. (2017: 347) argue that a 'website' is not an appropriate level of abstraction for multimodal discourse analysis and is at best "an abbreviation for a range of media". 'Website' could, therefore, be used as an umbrella term or category for many different types of online media channels. Blogs, social media platforms, online shops, institutional websites, etc. are all websites, but they differ from each other significantly. Therefore, it is crucial to specify what type of website is being analyzed and why analyzing it is worthwhile.

Pauwels (2011) gives a useful in-depth model for analyzing websites multimodally. The model is constructed of six phases, moving from general observations and first impressions to more in-depth interpretations. The phases are as follows:

1. Preservation of first expressions and reactions
2. Inventory of salient features and topics
3. In-depth analysis of content and formal choices
4. Embedded point(s) of view or 'voice' implied audience(s) and purposes
5. Analysis of Dynamic Information Organization and Spatial Priming Strategies
6. Contextual Analysis, Provenance, and Inference

(Pauwels 2011: 577)

The first two steps are more general. First, the analyst records and preserves their first impressions and reactions of the website in terms of 'look and feel' and proceeds then to collecting and categorizing present and absent topics and features of the website. The third step suggests first doing intra-modal analysis looking the potential information found in separate modes (verbal/written, typographical, visual, sound, layout) and then doing cross-modal analysis looking at the interplay between the different modes. Step four takes the analysis from 'what' is being said or expressed to asking "'who' is saying 'what' to 'whom' and with what 'purpose'" (Pauwels 2011: 581). Step five moves on to analyzing the structural and navigational options and constraints as well as the priming

strategies and outer-directed features. The sixth and final step focuses on the origin and circumstances of the different constituting elements and investigating the authorship and trustworthiness of sources.

Pauwels' (2011) model seems applicable for different types of websites and foci. Since websites are very large entities and can feel a little overwhelming to analyze, it is important to divide the analysis into smaller sections, and this model gives a good guideline for that. I also followed this model for the analysis but modified it to better fit my data and focus. For example, I focused mostly on the first four steps and put most emphasis on the third step "In-depth analysis of content and formal choices".

Pauwels (2011) also utilizes the theory grammar of visual design by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), which is widely recognized in multimodal research. The grammar of visual design focuses on the structures of how visual elements (e.g. diagrams, photographs, moving images, drawings, paintings) represent and communicate meaning by looking at the elements and structures of design, such as color, perspective, framing and composition. Even though the visual grammar theory emerged for the first time already two decades ago, it is still very relevant and useful for analyzing websites as well, since websites are mainly visual.

## **4 ANALYSIS**

The analysis is divided into three main sections: a brief analysis of the homepage, corpus linguistic analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis. I will first provide the reader with an overall look of the website in order to describe the style and structure. Next, corpus linguistic analysis will provide some general observations of the language use on the website and the identified discourses, after which the analysis is deepened with multimodal discourse analysis.

#### **4.1 Brief analysis of the homepage**

Before diving deeper into the analysis of the data, I wanted to give more of an overview of the homepage of the website and see how it fulfils the primary and secondary communicative purposes introduced by Askehave and Nielsen (2005: 130). This also gives the reader a general idea of the structure and design of the website before the more in-depth examples and analysis.

As was already discussed in chapter 2.3, the primary communicative purpose of a homepage is to give the most important information of the website in a concise manner and to serve as an introduction to the website. As can be seen on Image 1, which shows part of the homepage of Lumene's website, the homepage introduces seven main topics on the top banner: Best sellers, Skincare, Makeup, Ingredients, Story, Inspiration, and Latest offers. Skincare and Makeup pages expand to subpages, such as the product collections and product categories. It is, therefore, quite clear to the visitor that Lumene is a cosmetics brand, even if they have never heard of the brand or visited the website before. The top right corner also has a user login/registration icon and a shopping cart icon, making it clear to the visitor that the website is also an online store.

FREE INTERNATIONAL DELIVERY ON ORDERS OVER €100

**LUMENE**

PERSONAL SHOPPER

BEST SELLERS SKINCARE MAKEUP INGREDIENTS STORY INSPIRATION LATEST OFFERS

**WILD-CRAFTED. SUSTAINABLE. NORDIC BEAUTY**

We bring sustainable Nordic beauty products, wild-crafted with potent Nordic ingredients, to create a naturally luminous look.

[DISCOVER OUR SECRET](#)

**Even brighter skin in 2 weeks**

Lumene's bestseller and a real key player in your beauty routine. A super concentrated, miracle boosting serum for brighter-looking, intensely hydrated skin.

[Learn more](#)

**Fresh, bouncy & plump skin**

Say hello [moj] to plump and bouncy, hydrated skin. Pure and naturally refreshing deep hydration for dehydrated and dry skin - perfect for the spring season! Now €44,90 (worth €79,60)

[Shop now](#)

**New in**

<p>NORDICA HYDRA Labde Oxygen Recovery 72h Hydra Gel Mask 150ml</p>	<p>NORDICA C Valo Clear Glow Cleansing Gel Scrub</p>	<p>Arctic Sun Skin Tone Perfector</p>	<p>Blur Longwear Primer</p>
<p>€ 21,90</p>	<p>€ 14,90</p>	<p>€ 12,90</p>	<p>€ 12,90</p>

Image 1. Homepage. <https://www.lumene.com/>. Saved on 05.05.2020

The secondary communicative purposes of a homepage are to create an image of the sender and present news, which can be seen on Lumene's homepage as well. The homepage gives a light, clean, and natural image of the brand by having clear structure and neutral background colors. The colors that are the most prominent are the colors of

the products, such as orange and blue in Image 1. The page has been divided into clear sections with the use of different background colors and images. The first section serves as an introduction to the website and the brand. It consists of a large image of two women and nature, alongside an introductory text of Lumene's purpose: providing sustainably made beauty products that help create a "naturally luminous look". The button "Discover our secret" takes the visitor to their "Story" page, which contains information about Lumene's inspiration and background. The second section is separated from the others with a different background color and layout: the background is grey instead of white and the section consists of two images and brief summaries side by side. This section could be seen to present "news", as it introduces current products and campaigns, and the content in it changes quite regularly. The third section is a reel of new products, which also changes as new products are released. The background is back to white, separating it from the previous section. The structure of the section is also different, consisting of a horizontal line of images of the products side by side and arrows on the sides that allow the visitor scroll through the products. The rest of the home page continues the same way: there is another section which often contains links to campaigns or articles or introduces certain products or collections, after which there is another reel of Lumene's best selling products.

To conclude, the homepage introduces the consumer to Lumene's products, style, and part of its identity right from the start. However, I found it interesting that Finland is not clearly mentioned anywhere on the homepage, even though, as can also be seen later in the analysis, Lumene emphasizes its Finnish origin often throughout the other parts of the website. On the other hand, *Nordic* is mentioned three times on the introductory section alone. Hence, the consumer would not instantly know, which part of the Nordics the brand and its products come from.

## 4.2 Findings from the corpus

After giving an overview of the homepage, I am going to present some of the findings I discovered from the corpus, which was created using a tool called Sketch Engine. Table 2 shows 20 keywords and key multi-words, and Table 3 the 20 the most frequent words and adjectives. The adjectives are listed under the word ‘lemma’, which is the basic form of a word and is used, for example, in dictionary entries. The keyword lists were created in comparison to the English Web 2013 (enTenTen13) corpus, which is the largest one of the English web corpora.

It should be noted that the keyword collection tool can be set to collect rare or common words, depending on the user’s goals. I set the setting more towards common words in order to exclude scientific words, such as the ingredients used in the products. Moreover, since the corpus contains only 9,838 words, the provided lists may not give a 100% accuracy of the language patterns of the website. However, even though the corpus is small, I believe it can still give a generalized yet valuable overview of the website’s language use.

Table 2. Keywords and key multi-words on Lumene’s website.

Word	Word	Word	Word
1 Nordic	11 Spring	1 purchased product	11 nordic heather
2 skin	12 ingredient	2 sensitive skin	12 conditioning nordic heather
3 Arctic	13 Water	3 skin tone	13 invisible illumination
4 NORDIC	14 infuse	4 bvseo sdk	14 nordic lingonberry
5 hydrate	15 extract	5 p sdk 3	15 separate tube
6 formula	16 sensitive	6 spring water	16 recycled plastic
7 antioxidant	17 CREAM	7 face makeup	17 separate bottle
8 natural	18 lip	8 local authority	18 skin balance
9 Finnish	19 skincare	9 dry skin	19 glowing beauty
10 hydration	20 lipstick	10 nordic glow	20 antioxidant concentration

Table 3. Most frequent words and adjectives on Lumene's website.

Word		Word		Lemma		Lemma	
1	and	11	i	1	Nordic	11	global
2	the	12	is	2	natural	12	light
3	to	13	in	3	good	13	fresh
4	a	14	it	4	dry	14	first
5	of	15	from	5	perfect	15	high
6	skin	16	nordic	6	purchased	16	pure
7	with	17	this	7	extra	17	flawless
8	product	18	out	8	Finnish	18	more
9	your	19	by	9	subject	19	healthy
10	for	20	arctic	10	aqua	20	sensitive

What can instantly be seen is that the word 'Nordic' is present on every list, and is, in fact, number one keyword of the corpus, as can be seen on Table 2. This finding was expected, since one can easily notice Lumene emphasizing its Nordic origin on the website. It is also expected that nouns like 'skin' and 'product' are also high on the lists. However, I was surprised how low the word 'Finnish' appeared on the lists and is not even included in the 20 most frequent words. The emphasis on nature and naturalness can also be found on the word lists, the adjective 'natural' being eighth keyword (Table 2) and second most frequent adjective (Table 3). Also, words like 'fresh', 'pure', 'arctic', 'Nordic lingonberry', and 'Nordic heather' can be seen as indicators of nature and naturalness. We can also see words that refer to physical appearance, such as 'glowing beauty' and 'flawless'. When we look at all the words, three main themes can be identified: nature, beauty, and Nordicness.

#### 4.3 Discourses on Lumene's website

In this part of the analysis, I will focus on the different discourses separately and more in depth, considering images, colors, and written text. As the result of multimodal discourse



analysis, three different discourses were identified on the website: “Nordic beauty” discourse, “Finnish exoticism” discourse, and “Natural and sustainable” discourse. Three main themes – nature, beauty, Finnish/Nordic origin – could be noticed rather quickly on the website but identifying the three discourses was a little more challenging, since they are all intertwined and often overlap.

#### **4.3.1 “Nordic beauty” discourse**

There have been beauty trends that originate from different regions, such as K-beauty from South Korea and J-beauty from Japan. Regional beauty trends often focus on routines and products characteristic to the regions and portray, to some extent, the beauty standards of the regions. K-beauty, for instance, is known for an extensive skin care regimes that range from seven to 12 steps to achieve healthy and hydrated looking skin (Russon 2018).

One of Lumene’s selling points on its international website is the concept of “Nordic beauty”. The term appears in several parts of the website; in fact, the visitor is introduced to the concept of Nordic beauty right on the homepage (see Image 1). Nordic beauty seems to be closely connected to Nordic women, as can be seen on their Story page on Image 2.

Our Story

## Wild-crafted, sustainable Nordic beauty

Inspired by Nordic women



We take our inspiration from the Nordic approach to wellbeing and beauty: a region where a unique blend of resilience, mindfulness and harmony with nature is deeply rooted in everyday life. Despite the harsh climates of the northern longitudes, Nordic women are fresh-faced, radiant and healthy-looking.


Image 2. “Story” page. <https://www.lumene.com/story-page.html> . Saved on 15.01.2020.

The first and most salient features of the Story page are the title “Wild-crafted, sustainable Nordic beauty” and the image of two women. Following Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) theory of visual grammar, the women are the Participants or, more specifically, the Interactors in the image, since they are engaged in bidirectional action, both being the Actor and the Goal at the same time (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 66). This can be realized by the way the women are positioned in the image; they are standing close to each other, almost in an embrace, yet it is not clear whether one of them is actively holding the other, for instance, making one of them the Actor and the other the Goal. The women are also interacting with the viewer of the image. They look straight at the viewer, which creates

a demand, i.e. the direct gaze demands the viewer to engage in an imaginary relation with the participants (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 118). The type of relation is often signified with facial expressions. The women in the image have a very neutral and calm expressions on their faces; they are not really smiling, yet they do not look serious either. The image is also a close shot, i.e. it is framed to show the head and the shoulders of the subject. This creates a close personal distance and a rather intimate relation between the women in the image and the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 124). However, the women are standing in a slight oblique angle away from the viewer, which indicates detachment from the viewer and their world (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 136). In addition, the way the women's bodies are turned towards each other could indicate togetherness between them, creating further separation between them and the viewer. Together with the text "Inspired by Nordic women", this could be seen to tell the viewer the women are the "Nordic women" Lumene is inspired by, but the viewer is not. However, the demand of their gaze still invites the viewer to engage and identify with them, creating a double message, as if to say: "You can be like us".

Thus, the women in the image can be seen to portray "Nordic women" and thus "Nordic beauty". Nordic beauty is further described in the text below the image, according to which Nordic women are "fresh-faced, radiant and healthy-looking". These features are portrayed in the image as well. The women look quite un-styled, with very minimal makeup and "undone" hair, the shirts barely buttoned and draping off the shoulder, which gives them a more natural and effortless look. The setting of the image also makes it look like the women are outside in nature, since there is some greenery in the background. The lighting also looks very natural, as if the sun is shining on them. The image also gives the sense of freshness due to its light colors and brightness. The pure white shirts the women are wearing could also be associated with freshly washed clothes. The women also look quite radiant because of the light and smooth, flawless looking skin.


Another salient feature of Nordic beauty is a natural, glowing complexion, or the “Nordic glow”, which is present throughout the website. The terms ‘Nordic glow’ and ‘glowing beauty’ could also be found on the key multi-words list (Table 2). Most Lumene’s products claim to give the consumer a healthy glow, but the Invisible Illumination [Kaunis] make-up product collection seems to have been created around the “Nordic glow” term, which can be seen on Image 3.



**The Beauty Behind a Natural Nordic Glow**

Don't you wish your foundation could actually improve your skin in addition to evening out your complexion? Well, these ideal beauty formulas actually exist and they are about to change the way you choose your face makeup forever.

[Shop here](#)



**The Nordic Glow with Invisible Illumination ritual**

Get the perfect Nordic Glow and carefree look with Lumene Invisible Illumination skincare infused makeup products. These products help brighten, hydrate and perfect your skin for a Nordic, healthy and naturally glowing beauty.

[Read Full Article](#)

**Glow the Nordic way**

Invisible Illumination was precisely created to ensure your skin looked better day after day, even after your makeup was removed. With weightless, subtly tinted formulas Invisible Illumination has rapidly redefined face makeup and acquired a huge fan base beyond its Finnish homeland.

[Read Full Article](#)

Image 3. Homepage. <https://www.lumene.com/>. Saved on 30.09.2019.

The collection is one of the most popular ones from Lumene, and therefore is often featured on the homepage. According to description next to the image on the bottom left in Image 3, the collection consists of products that combine makeup with skin care in order to “help brighten, hydrate and perfect your skin for a Nordic, healthy and naturally

glowing beauty". The "glowiness" is also emphasized in the images of the products with colors and lighting. The image on the top has a shiny, water-like background, and the products are shining in the bright light. The bottom right image features a woman holding one of the products in her hand by her face. The image is an extreme close shot, showing mostly just the face. The woman is also looking at the camera, which together with the framing creates a close relationship between her and the viewer. She is also in the eye-level with the viewer, which creates equality. The title next to the image says "Glow the Nordic way", and the text below it gives a brief explanation about the inspiration behind the Invisible Illumination range: creating a makeup product with skincare properties. The range is also said to have "acquired a huge fan base beyond its Finnish homeland". Where the women in Image 2 could be seen as representation of "Nordic beauty" and the Nordic women Lumene is inspired by, the woman in Image 3 could be perceived as the user of the products, as there is no mention of Nordic women. This could also be a reason why social distance between the viewer and the woman is closer and more equal, since the viewer is also a potential user of the products. With the notion of the fan base beyond Finland, the woman could also be perceived as a non-Finnish/Nordic user of Lumene's products, showing that anyone can "glow the Nordic way" with Lumene's products.

In addition to physical appearance, we should also consider the Nordic lifestyle and wellbeing practices as part of Nordic beauty. As was said on Lumene's "Story" page in Image 2, Nordics is "a region where a unique blend of resilience, mindfulness and harmony with nature is deeply rooted in everyday life". Thus, in addition to looking fresh, healthy, and radiant, Nordic beauty is also about having a balance in mind and body and appreciation for nature.

### **4.3.2 "Finnish exoticism" discourse**

As mentioned earlier in chapter 3.3, Lumene uses the “exoticism” of the Finnish and Nordic nature and beauty as a way to attract international consumers and thus expand its business. The term *exotic* can refer to something “introduced from another country: not native to the place where found” or “strikingly, excitingly, or mysteriously different or unusual” (Merriam-Webster online). I decided to name this discourse the “Finnish exoticism” discourse, because Finland is presented as quite unique, different, and almost mysterious on the website. *Exotic* does not also necessarily have to refer to only faraway tropical places, which may commonly be seen as exotic from the Northern European point of view. Just like tropical places can be perceived exotic by me and other Finnish people, Finland can be perceived exotic by people from other countries.

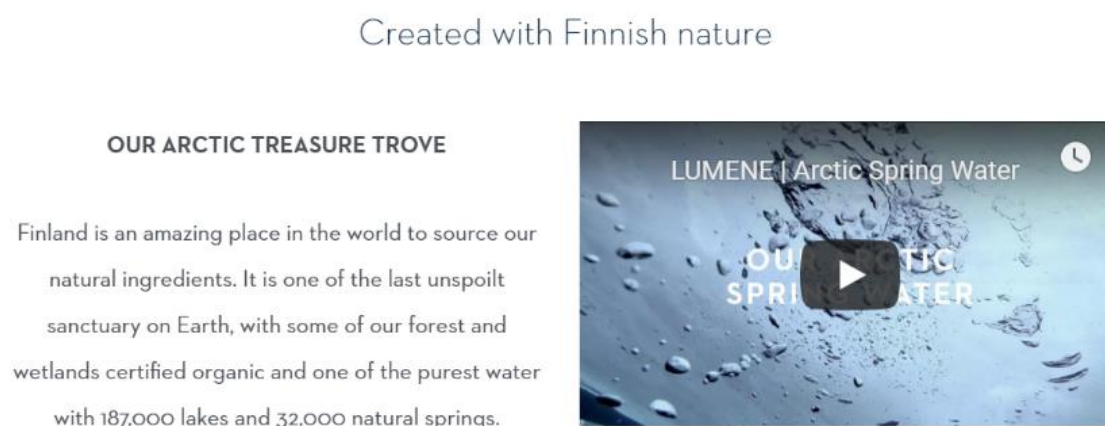






Image 4. “Story” page. <https://www.lumene.com/story-page.html> . Saved on 30.09.2019.

One of the ways Lumene builds on the “Finnish exoticism” discourse is through the Finnish nature. Words with strong connotations and emotions are frequently when describing the Finnish nature. For example, as can be seen on Image 4, Finland is described as an “arctic treasure trove” and “one of the last unspoilt sanctuary on Earth”. The term *treasure trove* holds connotations of something valuable, perhaps hidden, and unknown. The “Discover our secret” button on the homepage (see Image 1) also gives the

sense of extraordinariness and curiosity. The noun *sanctuary*, in turn, could be associated with peace, safety, and sacredness. Together these words present Finland and its nature as an untouched, precious place. This can be seen also in the video titled “Arctic Spring Water” (Table 4).

Table 4. Seconds 0 to 6 of “Arctic Spring Water” video on the “Story” page. Saved on 03.11.2020.

Time	Frame	Shot	On-screen text
00:00-00:01		Aerial shot of a lake and forest scenery moving from right to left.	We source our most precious ingredient
00:02-00:03			In Finland
00:03-00:04		Shot underwater with bubbles moving towards the surface.	A country with one of the purest water on earth
00:05-00:06			Our Arctic spring water

The video shows an aerial shot of a landscape that has a lake surrounded by forest. The shot is long distance, placing the viewer out of the landscape rather than in it, giving them just an overview of the place (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 128). The movement of the shot also makes it feel as if the viewer was looking at the view from a plane or helicopter. The place on the video seems remote and completely inhabited, reinforcing the image of untouched nature. The long distance also allows the viewer to see how far the untouched

nature stretches. Together with the text, the viewer is given the impression that the place shown on the video is where Lumene's ingredients are sourced. The next shot shows water, and unlike in the previous shot, this one is short distance and places the viewer in the water, as if submerged and looking at the surface. After the long distance shot of the lake, it makes it seem as if the viewer took a dive into the lake. The movement of the bubbles going upwards also resemble air bubbles formed when breathing underwater. The water is very clear which emphasizes the purity of the water.

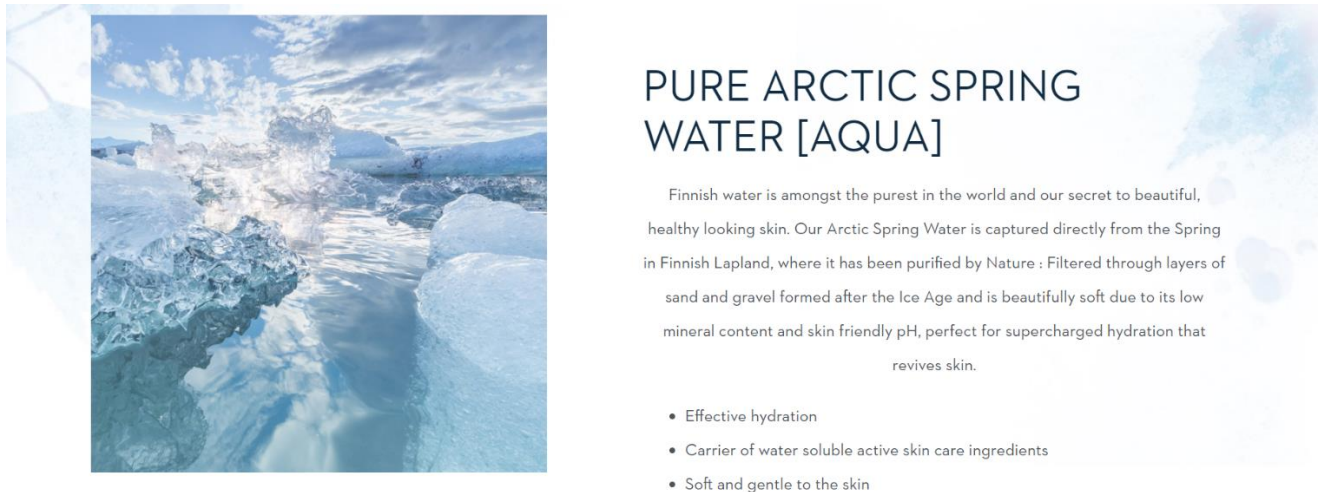


Image 5. "Ingredients" page; Pure Arctic Spring Water.

<https://www.lumene.com/ingredients-page.html> . Saved on 14.01.2020.

Spring water is one of the most important ingredients in Lumene's products; in fact, it is Lumene's "secret to beautiful, healthy looking skin". The purity of Finnish water is emphasized with a statement that it is "amongst the purest in the world". According to the description of Pure Arctic Spring Water in Image 5, the water used in the products is captured "directly from the Spring in Finnish Lapland". What catches my attention is the use of "the Spring", instead of "a spring". The use of definite article 'the' and a capital letter gives the consumer the impression that there is a spring called "Spring". However, in reality, there are several springs in Lapland, the biggest of which is the Sulaoja spring



located in Utsjoki, the northernmost municipality in Finland. I cannot know for certain why the source of the spring water is not specified; however, one possible reason could be to maintain the exotic image of Finland. When we look at the text and image together, “the Spring” could be seen to refer to the image, which features an icy scenery with crystal clear water. Thus, a non-Finnish consumer may assume that the image is of “the Spring” and, therefore, of Finland. However, in reality, Finnish springs are commonly found in forests and surrounded by trees and other plants and are not as “arctic” looking as in the image. Another function of this image could be to reinforce the purity and “Arcticness” of the spring water used in Lumene’s products, since the water in the image seems exceptionally clear and clean and the scenery looks very remote and untouched.

The seasons of the Northern Hemisphere, specifically the changing amount of daylight, are also used to build on the uniqueness of the Finnish nature, as can be seen on Image 6.

### Born of Arctic light



#### A UNIQUE ARCTIC LIGHT CYCLE



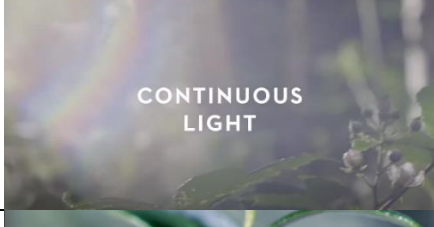


Berries, seeds, plants, tree saps and even mushrooms have evolved in the wild over thousands of years to survive and thrive under a uniquely disruptive and challenging annual light cycle with 8 months of darkness followed by continuous summer light which gives Arctic plants incredible antioxidant potency.

Image 6. “Story” page. <https://www.lumene.com/story-page.html> . Saved on 30.09.2019.

This natural occurrence is referred to as “a unique Arctic light cycle”, which is “uniquely disruptive and challenging” and gives the plants “incredible antioxidant properties”. The plants are also said to have “evolved in the wild over thousands of years to survive and thrive” under these conditions. This natural phenomenon is presented as something

exceptional and unique to Finland and the Arctic. The word choices here also give the impression that living in these conditions take a lot of resilience: the plants “survive” the “disruptive and challenging” change of light. The video next to the text demonstrates the changes in seasons and light, as can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. “A Unique Arctic Light Cycle” video on “Story” page. Saved on 03.11.2020.

Time	Frame	Shot	On-screen text
00:00-00:02		Medium/long shot of the moon on a dark and cloudy sky, moon moving sped up downwards with clouds passing by	Arctic darkness
00:02-00:04		Close shot of ice with sun shining through trees in the background	Followed by months of
00:04-00:06		Close shot of plants in sunlight moving from right to left.	Continuous light
00:06-00:09		Close shot of lingonberries covered in frost.	Supercharge our Arctic plants with unrivalled antioxidants potency
00:09-00:11		Lumene’s logo with the “Wheel of Light” in the background rotating clockwise.	Lumene, beauty born of light

The video starts with a shot of a dark night sky with clouds and full moon with a text “Arctic darkness”, suggesting that the darkness is unique to the “Arctic”, special kind of darkness. The moon is moving quickly towards the right bottom corner as the clouds pass by it. The next shot has ice covering the bottom half of the frame with some blurry trees and sun shining in the background. After this, the screen is mostly covered with a close shot of plants, with some blurry forestry in the background and bright sunlight. The second last shot has a close shot of lingonberries covered in frost which can be seen melting in sped up motion. The sped-up motion of the moon and the melting frost can be seen as indication of time passing and seasons changing; darkness (winter) turns into some more light (spring), which then turns into “continuous light” (summer). The frost on the lingonberries is also melting due to the increased amount of light and warmth. The plant also looks very vibrant with flawlessly green leaves and bright red berries, which can be seen as suggestion of its “supercharged” and “thriving” properties. The video demonstrates a dramatic change in the amount of light (complete darkness versus continuous daylight), which reinforces the notion of “disruptive and challenging” annual light cycle. The last shot shows the Lumene logo with the so-called “Wheel of Light” in the background rotating clockwise which also expresses time moving forward. The darker and lighter sections on the wheel may also symbolize the changing light. On Lumene’s logo there is a little circle above the letter “M”, which could also be seen to symbolize either the moon or the sun, the letter “M” being either trees or *tunturi*, a fell in Lapland.

“The Finnish exoticism” discourse is further strengthened on the “Ingredients” page (Image 7). The page has a title “We originate from Finland” and underneath is the following statement:

“Our natural products have been carefully crafted with Finnish wilderness to reflect the potency of a variety of hand-picked Arctic ingredients unlike any other.”

This statement emphasizes the uniqueness of Finland and its nature and also Lumene's products. For instance, using the word *wilderness* instead of *nature* complements the exotic image Lumene is aiming to give of Finland. *Nature* is quite a broad term that can be understood in many ways. If we look at the dictionary definitions of these two words, we find that *nature* can mean, among many other definitions, "the external world in its entirety", whereas *wilderness* can be defined as "a tract or region uncultivated and uninhabited by human beings" (Merriam Webster online). Like the metaphors "Arctic treasure trove" and "unspoilt sanctuary", the word *wilderness*, can hold connotations of something untouched and unknown. The uniqueness of Lumene's ingredients is also emphasized by saying they are "hand-picked" and "unlike any other". The ingredient illustrations are placed over the illustration of Finland as if to demonstrate where in the country each ingredient can be found, reinforcing their Finnish origin.

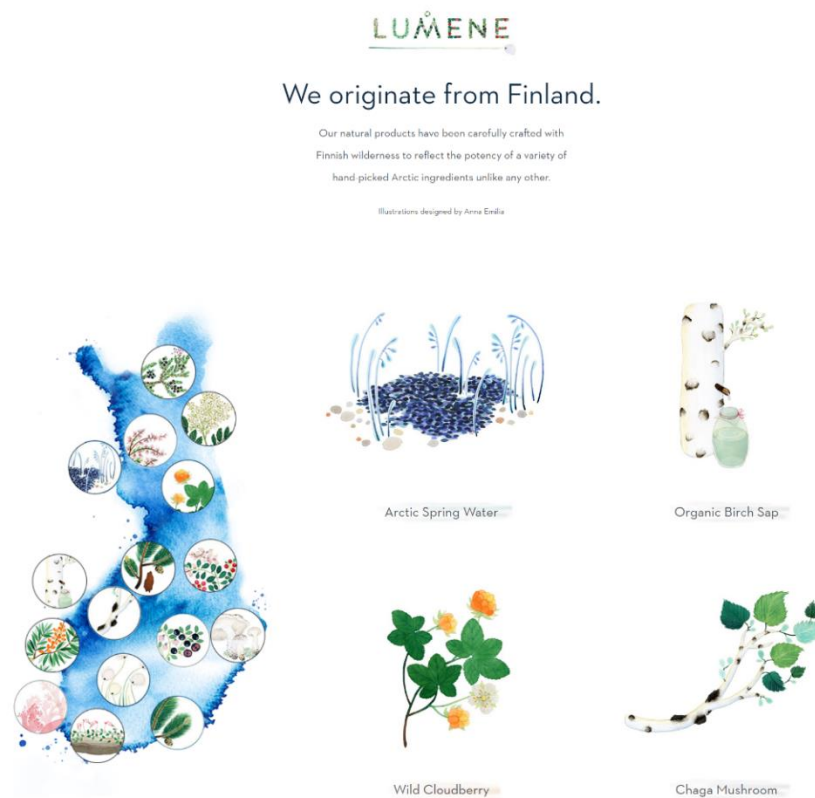


Image 7. "Ingredients" page. <https://www.lumene.com/ingredients-page.html> . Saved on 26.01.2020

The handmade illustrations are an interesting detail, because all the other images on the websites are photographs. The illustrations could be viewed to reinforce the statement of “carefully crafted” products and “hand-picked” ingredients. The word *craft* refers to making something or something made by hand; thus, Lumene’s products are portrayed as handmade, and the illustrations reinforce this image. Moreover, the illustration of Finland may be used to strengthen the country of origin of the brand, using both the map and Finnish national colors blue and white.

Even though the ingredients are presented with handmade illustrations, the images found in the ingredient descriptions are real photographs, as can be seen on Images 8 and 9. One reason for this could be that the content of the ingredient descriptions is more informative including the Latin name of the plant as well as its properties and uses. Thus, using real photographs is more appropriate and may give a more knowledgeable and credible image of the brand to the consumer.

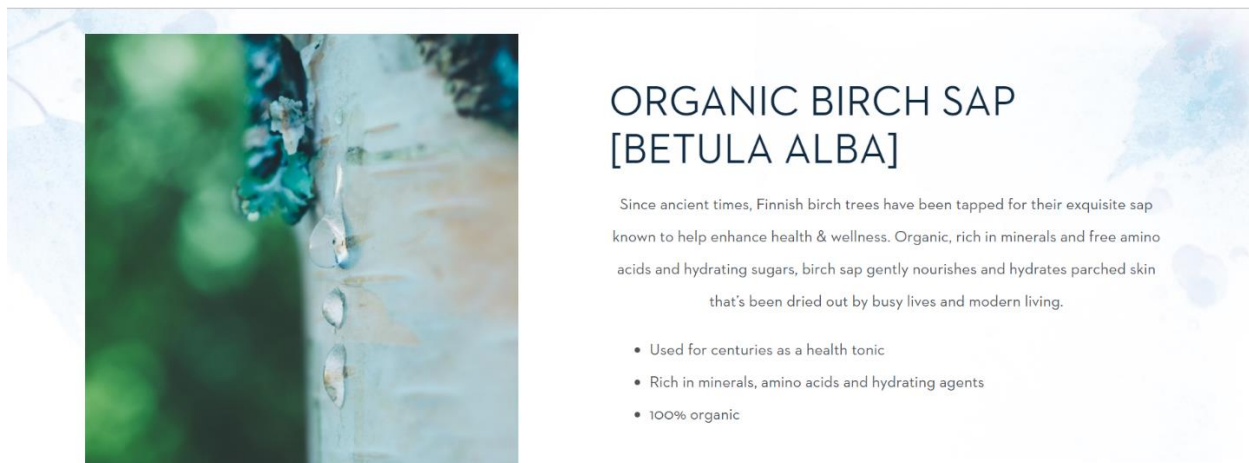


Image 8. “Ingredients” page; Organic birch sap.

<https://www.lumene.com/ingredients-page.html> . Saved on 30.09.2019.



Image 9. “Ingredients” page; Chaga mushroom. <https://www.lumene.com/ingredients-page.html> . Saved on 25.05.2020.

The “Finnish exoticism” discourse is constructed also through references to the ancient Finnish health and wellness practices as can be seen on Images 8 and 9. The phrases “since ancient times, Finnish birch trees have been tapped...” (Image 8) and “... where it has been used for centuries in folk medicine” (Image 9) give a sense of tradition that has been going on for centuries and is still followed today. This is achieved by using present perfect tense (“have been tapped”, “has been used”), which can be used to describe an action that has begun in the past and is still ongoing. If these phrases were written in past tense, e.g. “During ancient times, Finnish birch trees were tapped” or “where it was used for centuries in folk medicine”, they would not have the same effect; instead, they would refer to practices that are not employed anymore, and thus would not complement the exotic image of Finland the same way.


Some Finnish language is also used to emphasize the Finnish origin of Lumene and differentiate Lumene from other beauty brands. Finnish language can be seen most prominently in the names of the skin care product collections. Each collection has been named both in English and in Finnish according to its purpose, such as Nordic Hydra

[Lähde], Nordic-C [Valo], and Nordic Detox [Sisu]. What can be instantly seen is that the English name contains, in most cases, two words, the first of which is *Nordic*, whereas the Finnish name is only one word and is placed in square brackets. The English name could, therefore, be seen as the “proper” name of the collection, and the Finnish one as a complementary one. The English names also sound more scientific and give at least a little bit of context of the purpose of the products: Nordic Hydra products are for hydrating the skin, Nordic-C products contain vitamin C, and Nordic Detox products are used to purify the skin from toxins. The Finnish names, on the other hand, are much more symbolic and do not directly relate to the purpose of the products: *lähde* can mean *source* or *spring* (as in spring water), the latter being the more appropriate translation in this case, as the main ingredient in the products is Arctic spring water; *valo* means *light* (as in *illumination*); *sisu* is an old and highly symbolic concept that can be described as persistence, courage, resilience, and determination. Naturally, these words would be understood by Finnish consumers and they would attach certain connotations to them. However, non-Finnish consumers most likely would not know the meaning of the words, let alone how to pronounce them. Therefore, when considered from the point of view of Kelly-Holmes’ (2016) linguistic fetish theory, it could be argued that the Finnish words do not have strong communicative function and are mostly decorative and used to emphasize the country of origin of the brand. The foreign words also strengthen the exotic and unique image of the brand and its products.

### 4.3.3 “Sustainable and natural” discourse

As mentioned at the beginning of the analysis, the discourses identified on the website often overlap and are intertwined. Nature and naturality, for instance, are strongly present in all three discourses and have been discussed quite extensively in the previous chapters, from “naturally glowing beauty” to the exotic Finnish nature. As could also be seen in the corpus analysis, the word ‘natural’ was one of the keywords and most frequently used adjectives in the corpus.

In the “Finnish exoticism” discourse, the term *nature* was used to mainly refer to the physical landscape of Finland with its plants, forests, and lakes, as well as the natural phenomena, such as the cycle of light and changing seasons. The “sustainable and natural” discourse, however, presents nature in a more metaphorical way. As can be seen in Image 10, the word *Nature* is capitalized. Capitalizing the word makes it a proper noun, which is used to refer to a specific entity, such as a person or a place. *Nature* with capital “N” could also be seen in Image 5: the spring water used in Lumene’s products “has been purified by Nature”. Therefore, *Nature* could be interpreted as a human-like being, a reference to Mother Nature, for instance. Lumene also expresses its respect towards Nature: local ingredients are selected and sourced thoughtfully, while “allowing Nature to regenerate and remain in balance” in the process.



LUMENE | WILD CRAFTED SU... :  
NATURALLY NORDIC

**WILD CRAFTED SUSTAINABLE NORDIC INGREDIENTS**

We use handpicked Nordic botanicals, allowing Nature to regenerate and remain in balance. Thoughtfully selected not only for their ability to nourish the skin but also for their local origin and sustainable source.

**OUR NATURAL FORMULATION PHILOSOPHY**

All our skincare formulas are 100% vegan and cruelty-free. We work everyday in making our beauty products even more natural with a great efficacy, safety and sensoriality. Some of our formulas contain as high level as 100% of naturally derived ingredients.

UP TO 100% NATURALLY DERIVED  
CRUELTY-FREE  
100% VEGAN

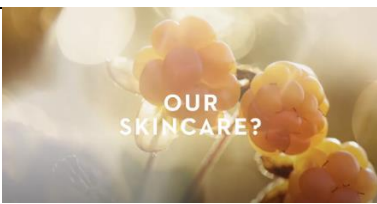

Image 10. “Story” page. <https://www.lumene.com/story-page.html> . Saved on 30.09.2019.


As could be seen already on Lumene’s homepage in Image 1, one of Lumene’s main goals is to provide natural and sustainable products. The adjective *sustainable* refers to



environmental sustainability, i.e. using resources that do not damage the environment. Hence, Lumene uses ingredients that can be found in the Nordic nature because of their “local origin and sustainable source”. The naturality of the products is emphasized with, for instance, the use of percentages that indicate the level of “naturally derived ingredients” in the product. In Image 10, we can see a round label that says “up to 100% naturally derived” in the center. Round labels can symbolize many things, such as the cycle of life, unity, movement, or natural entities, such as the moon, the sun, or the earth. Since Lumene’s philosophy focuses strongly on the annual light cycle and the changing seasons, the label could symbolize this cyclic movement. The label could also be seen as a symbol of completeness and perfection, especially with the “100%” in the middle. Additionally, in the discourse of sustainability, the circle could signify circular economy, the aim of which is to eliminate waste and utilize renewable sources. The percentage label is also attached to different skin care products: for instance, the products in the Nordic Hydra [Lähde] and Nordic-C [Valo] collections contain up to 97% naturally derived ingredients (Image 11 and 12). The video beside the text in Image 10 also emphasizes the natural origin of the products and could be perceived as showing the “journey” of the berry from the forest to the factory, as can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Seconds 0 to 6 of the “Wild Crafter Sustainable Nordic Ingredients” video on the “Story” page. Saved on 03.11.2020.

Time	Frame	Shot	On-screen text
00:00-00:02		Moving close shot of cloudberries with sunshine in the background, fading transition to the next frame	Our skincare?
00:02-00:04		A medium shot of a bucket full of cloudberries on the ground	Naturally Nordic

00:04-00:06		A close shot of a laboratory glass beaker containing orange liquid on a white surface, blurry objects in the background	Up to 100% naturally-derived Vegan cruelty-free
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First, there is a close shot of cloudberry in bright sunlight. The first shot gives the viewer a clear and close look at the berry, the source from which the product originates from. The next shot shows a bucket full of cloudberry. The bucket is simple and rustic, instead of something industrial, which makes it seem as if the berries were handpicked by someone. The bucket is also placed on the ground in what seems like a forest and is in eye-level with the viewer, as if the viewer were sitting on the ground by the bucket. The video then jumps to the third shot, which shows a glass beaker up-close on a clean white surface with other blurry objects in the background. The viewer has, thus, been transported from the forest into a laboratory. The beaker contains bright orange liquid, which could be assumed to be made of the berries that were showed earlier. The video shows the manufacturing process as something very simple: the berries are picked and moved straight to the laboratory and pressed into a liquid, which is then presumably used for the products. The video ends after the third shot with the same Lumene logo as in the video on Table 5. However, the video could have had one more shot showing some of the products, as this would “complete” the process.

The “naturalness” of the products is emphasized on the product pages as well. The products are displayed with different plants according to the main ingredient of the products. For example, in Image 11, we can see the products laid out with a piece of birch bark and leaves which refer to the main ingredient, organic birch sap, used in the Nordic Hydra [Lähde] products. In Image 12, the products are accompanied with cloudberry, which are one of the main ingredient in the Nordic-C [Valo] collection.

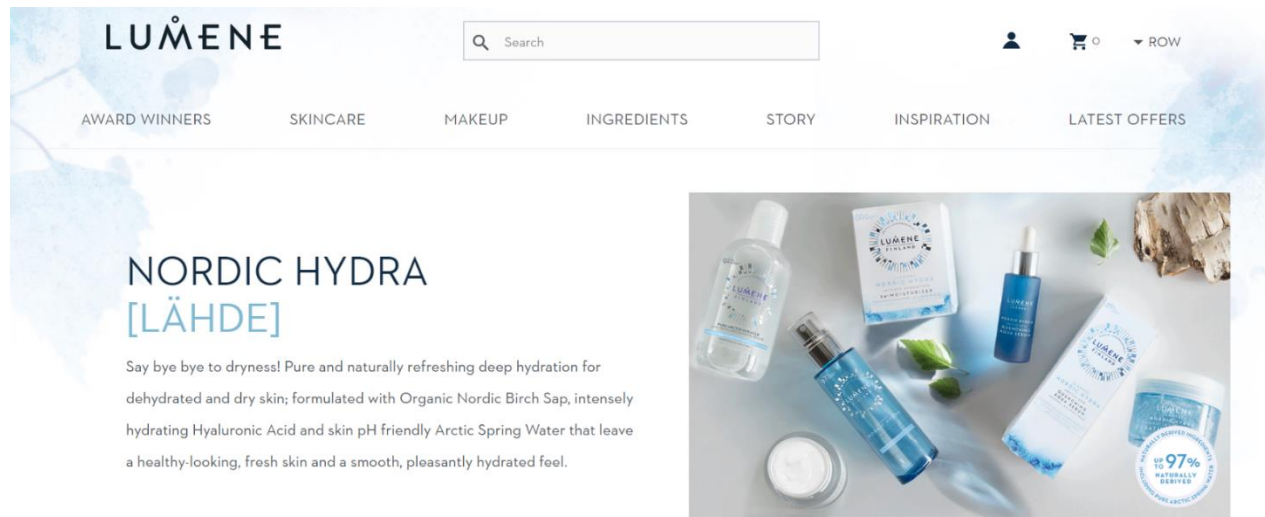


Image 11. Nordic Hydra [Lähde] page.

<https://www.lumene.com/skincare/collections/nordic-hydra-lahde> . Saved on 04.02.2020.

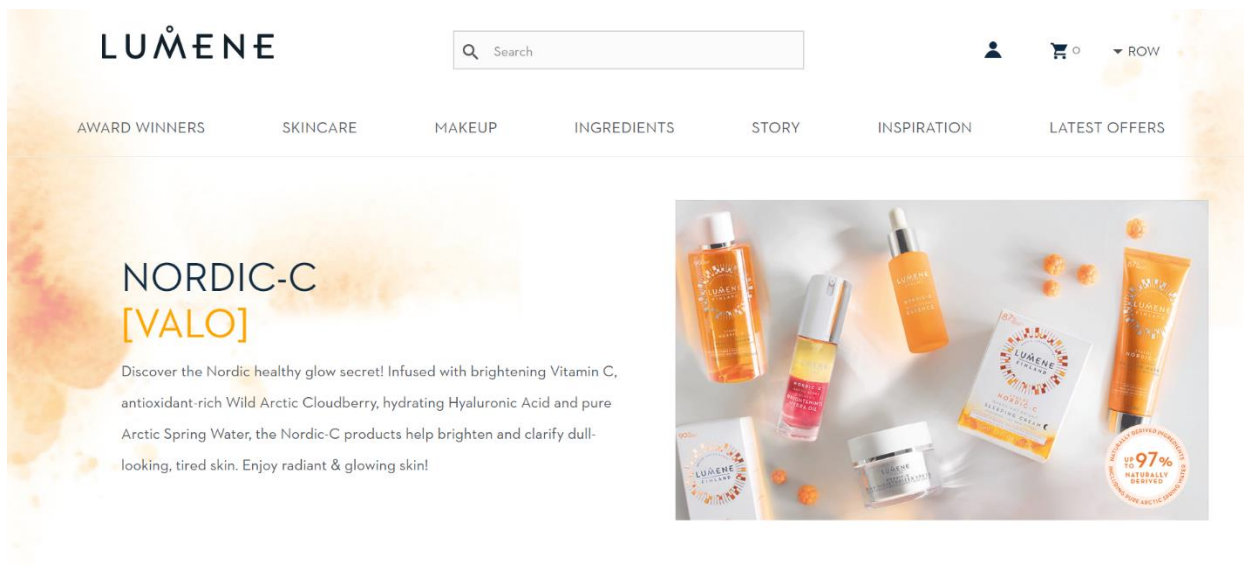


Image 12. Nordic-C [Valo] page.

<https://www.lumene.com/skincare/collection/nordic-c-valo> . Saved on 26.01.2020.

Adding the plants in the product images reinforces the idea of “handpicked” ingredients and the claim that the products contain “up to 97% naturally derived ingredients”. Akin to the video in Table 6, the “journey” of the plants is present also in the images. The plants could be seen as the source and beginning of the entire manufacturing process and product as the end result; the handpicked natural ingredient in the image was turned into these products. The main ingredients also work as the basis of the visual design of the pages. The color of the background and the product packaging matches the main ingredient, blue for spring water and orange for cloudberry. On the Nordic Hydra [Lähde] page, we can also see faint, watercolor-like illustration of birch leaves in reference to the other main ingredient, birch sap. The illustration on Nordic-C [Valo] page is more abstract, yet the round shapes on the left side could be seen to resemble a cloudberry. The watercolor appearance with paint splashes and irregular color intensity also gives the pages a natural look and feel; the illustrations look free-handed and spontaneous instead of carefully painted to resemble something in a realistic manner.

“Natural” does not, however, refer only to the use of natural ingredients or taking care of the nature. A big part of Lumene’s “natural formulation philosophy” is taking animal welfare into consideration by producing skincare products that are 100% vegan and cruelty free. This means that Lumene does not test their skincare products on animals or use any animal-derived ingredients. This can be seen in Image 10 in the two oval labels next to the round one and in the left-side text as well as at the end of the video on Table 6. Veganism is increasingly popular, and many cosmetics brands have also begun advertising their products as vegan and cruelty free in order to be more attractive and on-trend.

#### 4.4 Lumene's brand identity

I have now analyzed how Lumene communicates the three different discourses through the modes of text, images, colors, and video. In order to find out how Lumene's brand identity is constructed, I will look at all the discourses and modes together, and by using Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism as a guide, attempt to define Lumene's brand identity. I will also use some of Aaker's (1996) perspectives to expand Kapferer's identity prism facets. Figure 3 below shows Lumene's brand identity in the visual form of the prism. The brand identity prism is modified slightly and consists of only five facets instead of six. As was mentioned in chapter 2.1.2, the facet of customer self-reflection is omitted, because it describes how the customer views him/herself in relation to the brand, which the data and the scope of the present study cannot cover. Hence, the prism consists of the physique, personality, culture, customer reflection, and relationship facets. Next, I will go through each facet separately and give a more in-depth explanation of how Lumene's brand identity is constructed.

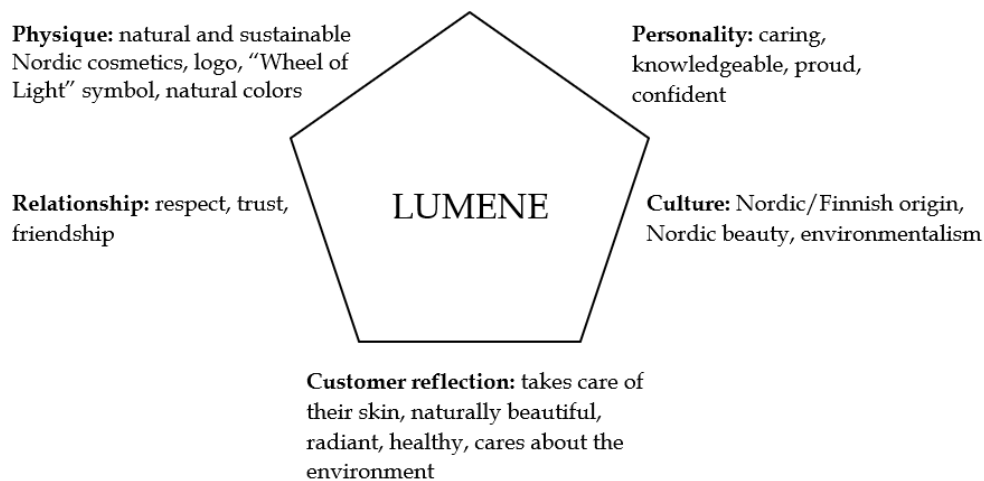


Figure 3. Lumene's brand identity prism. Adapted from Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism.

#### **4.4.1 Physique**

The first facet of Kapferer's (2012: 158) brand identity prism is the physique of the brand: what the brand is, what it does, and what it looks like. Part of Aaker's (1996) "Brand as a product" perspective could be combined with this facet, mainly associations with product class and product attributes, as well as visual imagery under "Brand as a symbol" perspective. Product class associations mean linking a brand to certain types of products. Product attributes, in turn, are added characteristics that differentiate the product from other products and make it more appealing to the consumers. Hence, in the most basic sense, Lumene is a cosmetics brand that produces skincare and makeup products. The attributes that make Lumene's products more unique are the Nordic origin, the use of the local, natural ingredients, and sustainability. In terms of appearance, Lumene is recognized from its logo and the "Wheel of light" symbol on the product packaging. There is not just one distinguishing color that plays a significant part in Lumene's identity construction as every product collection has its own color. However, the overall color palette could be described as natural, since most colors on the website are from images of nature or are based on things found in nature, such as the ingredients used in the products. The background colors are also very neutral, mostly different shades of grey.

#### **4.4.2 Personality**

Like people, brands can also have certain traits that show their personality. Brand personality determines the tone and style of advertising, and customers can find themselves either identifying with a brand's personality or projecting themselves into it (Kapferer 2012: 159). Brand's personality traits can be detected from, for example, the way the brand talks about its products and services.

If we think of Lumene as a person, its personality could be characterized as caring, knowledgeable, proud, and confident. The caring personality trait can be seen in the way the natural sources of the ingredients used in Lumene's products as well as the vegan and cruelty free formulas are emphasized, which expresses concern for the environment. As was seen in Image 10, the word *Nature* was capitalized, which would indicate the respect Lumene has for nature but also that it wants to treat nature like any other living being. Furthermore, Lumene could be seen as caring towards its customers as well; Lumene offers safe yet efficient products that help solve different skin issues, from dehydrated skin to dull looking skin to aging skin. Hence, Lumene wants everyone to benefit from its products.

Lumene also presents itself as knowledgeable by giving detailed information about the different plants, such as the Latin name, the history and the properties and benefits of the plant, as was seen in Image 5, 8, and 9. In addition to the plants, Lumene also provides information about other ingredients, such as different acids or vitamins, as shown in Image 13. Showing that the brand has deeper knowledge about the ingredients used in the products proves that terms like 'Arctic Spring Water' or 'hyaluronic acid', for example, are not just buzzwords that are supposed to make the products seem more interesting, but every ingredient is selected for certain purpose.

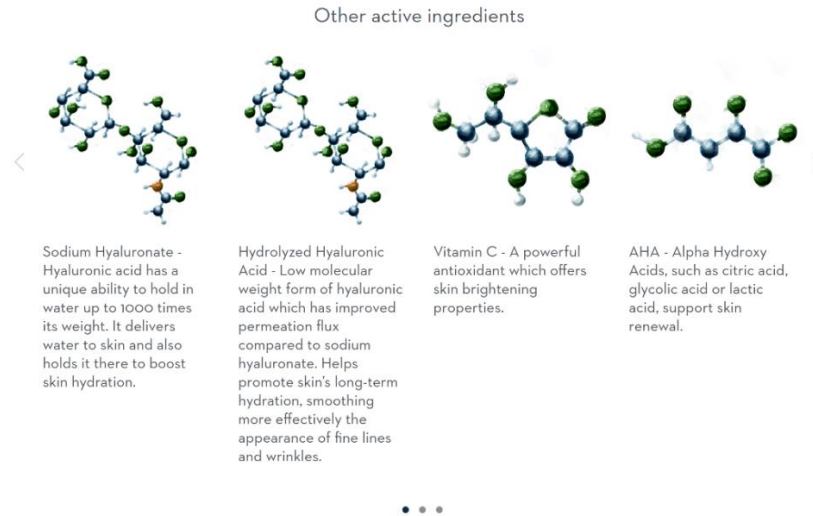


Image 13. "Ingredients" page. <https://www.lumene.com/ingredients-page.html> . Saved on 05.05.2020.

Lumene seems to take pride in their Finnish and Nordic roots, which is especially visible in the "Finnish exoticism" discourse. Finland and Finnish nature are described with emotionally charged words and portrayed as something exceptional. The statement "We originate from Finland." in Image 7 can also be seen as an indication of pride: the statement is written with a large font and is separated from other text, making it very clear where Lumene's roots are from. The "Nordicness" of the brand is also displayed clearly already on the homepage and is a significant part of the brand from product names to the concept of "Nordic beauty". Lumene could, therefore, be characterized as proud. It is important to note that by 'proud' I mean being appreciative of one's own qualities and origin, instead of being arrogant or feeling superior to others, traits, that are often associated with pride. In this sense, confidence would go hand-in-hand with pride; it is unlikely for one to be confident if they have no pride in themselves and vice versa. Pride and confidence in oneself can help keep up high standards, which is important for brands. If a brand does not display any pride or confidence in its products or services, it is unlikely customers would be willing to put their time and money on the brand.



#### 4.4.3 Culture

According to Kapferer (2012: 159), the cultural facet is the most important one in brand identity construction. Brands build communities, yet communities do not form around just product attributes or personality; it is the brand's values and ideologies, what the brand stands for, that help tie everything together (Kapferer 2012: 160). In addition, Aaker's (1996) perspectives of brand heritage and country of origin could be added to brand culture, as the culture the brand originates from can affect the culture they convey.

Needless to say, the Finnish and Nordic roots are a big part of Lumene's culture: Lumene takes its inspiration from the Nordic women and the Nordic lifestyle, sources its ingredients from the Finnish nature and has most of its products manufactured in Finland. According to Aaker (1996), associating a brand with a country or region that has positive associations in a certain product class adds credibility to the brand. In Lumene's case, the associations with Finland and its pure nature as well as the Nordic lifestyle are used to enhance the credibility and perceived quality of the brand and its products.

The Nordic origin is also the basis of the concept of "Nordic beauty", which is a significant part of Lumene's ideology. As was discussed in chapter 4.3.1, in addition to being a physical beauty ideal, Nordic beauty could be seen as a lifestyle and, if put into a larger scope, a culture. Hence, Lumene and the users of its products could be seen to form a culture of Nordic beauty and by purchasing and using the products, one is taking part in that culture. Environmentalism could be seen at the same time as a part of Nordic beauty and as a separate part of the Lumene's culture. Being mindful of one's actions in relation to the environment is part of the Nordic beauty lifestyle; however, some people may be drawn to Lumene mainly because of its natural, vegan and cruelty-free skincare products and focus on sustainability but may not be interested in the minimal and natural appearance and prefer to wear bolder makeup, for instance.

#### **4.4.4 Customer reflection**

Customer reflection should not be confused with the target audience of a brand. Customer reflection is the “outward mirror” of the target and reflects the way the customer wishes to be seen as a result of using a brand, whereas a target is the brand’s potential user (Kapferer 2012: 162). Hence, the target customer and the customer reflection can be different.

The “Nordic beauty” discourse reflects the customer as a woman who takes care of her skin and looks effortlessly beautiful, radiant, and healthy. As was discussed in the chapter 4.3.1, the two women in Image 2 may represent Nordic beauty and the Nordic women Lumene gets its inspiration from, whereas the woman in Image 3 could be seen as the user of the product. Both the women in Image 2 and the woman in Image 3 could be seen as customer reflection of Lumene, and therefore we could further define the customer reflection as a woman who is in her late 20s to early 30s and enjoys a minimal and natural look.

Furthermore, the “sustainable and natural” discourse expands the customer reflection to someone who, in addition to taking care of their appearance, wants to take care of the environment. By purchasing and using Lumene’s products, the customer wishes to be seen as environmentally friendly and cautious, because they choose products that use natural ingredient and are vegan and cruelty free. If the customer did not care about the environmental impact of the brand, they would probably choose a different brand that also promises a youthful appearance but may not have a strong focus on sustainability.

#### **4.4.5 Relationship**

The relationship facet defines the brand’s behavior and affects the way the brand acts, delivers services, and relates to its customers (Kapferer 2012: 162). A brand-customer

relationship is often based on the brand's personality and can be similar to the relationships we have with other people (Aaker 1996).

As was discussed above in chapter 4.4.2, Lumene presents itself as knowledgeable by, for instance, explaining the properties of the ingredients used in the products. Showing that the brand knows what it is doing by providing the customer with detailed information like this creates trust between the brand and the customer. The customer may also believe more in the product claims and trusts that the results of the products will be what is promised when the use and the properties of the ingredients have been explained and justified. What also makes a brand seem more trustworthy is the website design. Lumene's website is clearly structured and easy to navigate. The website also looks clean and professional due to the neutral background colors and simple structure that allow the brand's products to stand out.

Lumene shows respect for nature through both the "Finnish exoticism" discourse and the "sustainable and natural" discourse. The respect for Finnish nature can be seen in the word choices that are used to describe it, such as *treasure trove*, *sanctuary*, *precious*, and *pure*. Lumene also expresses respect for the environment by sourcing the ingredients in a way that is not harmful to nature and by producing vegan and cruelty-free products. Lumene's respect for the environment may, in turn, make the customer respect the brand and feel like they are doing something good when supporting the brand. Trust and respect together with Lumene's caring personality creates a friendship between the brand and the customer. Additionally, Lumene could be seen to be "letting the customer in on a secret". The homepage, for instance, has the "Discover our secret" button (Image 1) that leads to the "Story" page. On Image 12, the description of the Nordic-C [Valo] collection says "Discover the Nordic healthy glow secret!". Sharing secrets is part of a friendship; thus, Lumene seems to be close and comfortable enough with its customers to share its beauty secret with them. The customers are also able to leave reviews and ratings for the products, which shows that the brand values its customers and their opinions.

Additionally, when we look at all the examples from the analysis, we can see that most of the images on the website are close or medium shot, which creates a closer social distance. The social distance between the viewer and the women in Image 2 and 3 were discussed in chapter 4.3.1; however, the system of social distance can also be applied to images of objects and landscapes. The closer the objects or the landscape in the images are, the closer and more involved the viewer is with them. The middle-distance shots of the products (see Image 3, 11, and 12), for instance, can make the products seem more accessible and appealing, as they are within the viewer's reach. When it comes to landscapes, a close or medium shot places the viewer within the landscape, as if they were wandering in it. Hence, the close and intimate social distance between the viewer and the participants in the images could be seen to create a close relationship between the brand and the consumer as well, thus reinforcing the friendly relationship

## 5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from the analysis in relation to the research questions and previous research. After this, I will outline the implications and applications of the findings. Lastly, I will discuss the limitations of the present study and suggest how future studies could expand on the topic and the findings.

### 5.1 Findings in relation to the research questions

The research questions of the present study were the following:

1. What types of discourses can be identified on Lumene's international website?
2. How is Lumene's brand identity constructed multimodally on the website?
3. What kind of role does the Finnish origin of Lumene play in the brand identity construction?

The aim of the study was to find out how Lumene's brand identity is constructed multimodally on their international website. To do this, I first did a corpus analysis of the website to get an overall picture of the language use and most common themes of the website. Next, I used multimodal discourse analysis in order to identify the most prevalent discourses identified on the website. Lastly, with the help of Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism and Aaker's (1995) brand identity model, I presented how Lumene's brand identity was constructed by the three discourses.

In relation to the first research questions, I identified three different discourses on Lumene's international website: "Nordic beauty" discourse, "Finnish exoticism" discourse, and "sustainable and natural discourse". The "Nordic beauty" discourse could be seen as the heart of the brand, as Lumene says the Nordic approach to beauty is the source of their inspiration. Lumene's products are also created around this discourse and they all are supposed to help the user achieve natural, healthy, and glowing appearance,

all of which are characteristic to Nordic beauty. The findings also showed that the “Nordic beauty” discourse is not only about beauty ideals in terms of physical appearance, but Nordic beauty is also connected to the Nordic lifestyle and culture which nature and balanced and healthy life is a big part of. The “Finnish exoticism” discourse shows how Lumene uses their national origin as a way to distinguish themselves from other beauty brands. Finland and the Finnish nature are presented as very unique and exceptional, or “exotic”, on the international website. This discourse is an important building block in the construction of Lumene’s brand identity that is specifically targeted at the international audience, as it helps create interest and curiosity towards the brand and its national origin. I will further discuss the role of the Finnish origin when answering the third research question. Lastly, Lumene communicates its identity through the “sustainable and natural” discourse. Many beauty brands communicate an increased focus on sustainability and being more environmentally friendly by, for instance, using recycled and recyclable materials in their packaging and creating vegan and cruelty-free products. Hence, it is not a surprise that Lumene also presents itself as sustainable and natural, especially since nature is already a significant part of the brand.

Even though analyzed separately, the three discourses are by no means detached and unrelated to each other. In fact, they are intertwined and often overlap with each other. Nature, beauty, and the Finnish and Nordic roots of Lumene are all strongly present in all discourses. However, each discourse is a significant part of Lumene’s brand identity construction; if any one of them was removed, the brand would not be the same. The three discourses also make sense together: they complement each other and create a cohesive entity, neither of them feeling out of place or inappropriate to the brand. It is important to note, though, that these three discourses are not the only ones that can be found on the website. I identified discourses that best represent Lumene’s brand identity; however, one could also take a critical discourse analysis approach and include gender, ethnicity, or culture related discourses, for instance.

The aim of the second research question was to find out how different semiotic modes (written text, images, colors, moving image) were used to build on the discourses and thus construct Lumene's brand identity. The modes were analyzed using multimodal discourse analysis and, more specifically, the visual grammar theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Lumene communicates the different discourses as well as its identity on its website through the modes of images, text, video, and color. The different modes are used together to create meaning and are often closely related: if we were to take the modes apart and look at them separately, they would probably convey different meanings. For instance, in Image 2, the text and the image are connected by references to Nordic women and beauty. As was discussed in the analysis, the women could, thus, be seen to represent Nordic women and beauty. If the image were not accompanied by the text or vice versa, this connection could not have been established. Images and videos were also used to reinforce the ideas presented in the text. For instance, as could be seen in the chapter 4.3.2, the exotic image of Finnish nature was created with words like *pure*, *unspoilt sanctuary*, and *treasure trove* and further reinforced in the video in Table 4 with shots of remote, untouched nature and crystal-clear water. Plants were also included in product images to emphasize the naturalness and sustainability of the products, as was shown in Image 11 and 12. Additionally, the colors used on the website were commonly derived from the colors of the ingredients used in the products, such as blue for spring water or orange for cloudberry. The colors could be seen not only in the product packaging but also on the background of the product collection pages.

All the modes also construct Lumene's brand identity; the images, colors and language used on the website all reflect what Lumene is, what it does, and what it looks like. Lumene's physique can be seen in the product images, logo, and colors, whereas the personality is mainly communicated through language, i.e. how Lumene talks about nature, Finland, and its products. Lumene's culture is reflected strongly both visually and textually. For instance, the Finnish/Nordic origin is mentioned often throughout the website and is also further emphasized in images and videos of Finnish landscape and

the illustration of the Finnish map. The term 'Nordic beauty' is also very prominent and can be found on almost every page of the website. Nordic beauty is also depicted in the images featuring women, which can also be seen as the brand's customer reflection. Lastly, the relationship between the brand and the customer could be seen to be formed by the other identity facets: Lumene's personality, culture, and customer reflection all affect how Lumene and its customers feel about each other. I also suggested that the social distance between the subjects in the images and the viewer could also reflect the brand-customer relationship, especially if the social distance in the images is rather consistent.

I compiled the attributes of Lumene's brand identity into the brand identity prism (see Figure 3) to give an overall look at Lumene's brand identity. Even though Kapferer's (2012) brand identity may be used mostly in the marketing and business field, it is applicable for analyzing brand identity using multimodal discourse analysis as well, although some modifications may be needed. The prism considers visual aspects, like colors and symbols associated with the brand, which gives basis for multimodal analysis. However, on its own the prism could be seen as a tool for simply identifying recognizable features of a brand instead of analyzing the meanings they convey more in depth. Thus, multimodal approach offers a deeper understanding of a brand's identity as it regards communication and meaning-making as something more complex and multidimensional. Understanding how the details in images, such as the size of frame or gaze, as well as other symbols, colors and written text create meanings could help brands communicate and reflect their identity even more successfully.

To answer the third research question, as the "Finnish exoticism" discourse shows, the Finnish origin of Lumene is a significant part of its brand identity, and Lumene definitely uses its national origin as a unique selling point. However, when looking at the website and the brand identity of Lumene from a wider perspective, it seems that the Nordic origin is emphasized more than the Finnish one. Firstly, the word *Nordic* appeared much more frequently in the corpus than *Finnish* or *Finland*. Secondly, Finland is not mentioned



as noticeably on the homepage as Nordic is (e.g. Image 1), and the concept of “Nordic beauty” is used instead of “Finnish beauty”. This could be a strategic marketing decision, since, as Magnus (2016) pointed out, the rest of the world regards the Nordic region as a unit and is more recognizable than the individual countries. Therefore, emphasizing the Nordic origin may make it easier to build a recognizable brand. It is also common for Nordic countries to use their national identity when branding themselves while also taking advantage of their “Nordicness”. For instance, when we also look at how Finland and Nordics are described and talked about, it is clear that Lumene has a more emotional connection to its Finnish roots than Nordic. As the findings show, Finland is described with emotionally charged words that show respect and appreciation towards the country and its nature, whereas Nordics is not described more in depth. Therefore, even though the Nordic origin may be more salient on Lumene’s website, the brand still shows pride in its Finnish roots.

It is worth mentioning that the international website of Lumene cannot give the whole picture of the brand’s identity. The brand communicates their identity to the consumers through social media platforms, advertisements, product packaging etc., and therefore the website shows only a fraction of the big picture. Moreover, their website is available in other languages, which can affect the content. I did a quick scan through the Finnish as well as the Swedish website, since Swedish is the second official language in Finland, and noticed that they differ to some extent from the English one in content and the way the brand presents itself. For example, Finland and the Finnish nature and wellness practices are not presented in as an exotic way in Finnish or Swedish as they are in English. Moreover, surprisingly the concept of “Nordic beauty” is not apparent on either the Finnish or Swedish website, which could indicate that the “Nordic beauty” discourse is specific to Lumene’s international marketing communication. As was noted by Aaker (1996), brands can have multiple identities. Thus, it seems that Lumene also portrays different identities to different audiences; however, this observation is out of the scope

and focus of this study, and therefore another research would be needed to explore it further.

## **5.2 Findings in relation to previous research**

Next, I will compare and contrast the findings of the present study with previous research done on brand identity. In general, the findings of this study add to the notion made by previous research that brand identities, just like people's identities, are highly discursive, and therefore it is worthwhile to take a discourse analytical approach to analyzing them. The identity work also often makes use of several different modes, which could also be seen in this study.

When we take a look at the findings from the point of view of brand identity representation on the brand's website, we should consider the findings of Cheng's (2016). Cheng (2016) compared the identity representation of two luxury hotels and found out that there were differences in the ways the hotels represented their luxury identities, which reflects the aim to create a unique identity and evoke a distinct sense of upscale exclusivity in the consumer's mind. Creating a unique image is what every brand should aim for. The findings of the present study also show that Lumene builds on the uniqueness of its identity by, for instance, emphasizing the Finnish/Nordic origin and the concept of Nordic beauty, in order to distinguish it from other beauty brands. Cheng (2016) also found out that the images on both hotel websites used mostly close social distance and eye-level angles, which project an equal relationship and create a friendly bond with the viewer. The close-shot also allows the viewer to visualize being in the location. Similar observation was done in the present study in which most images were also from close and medium distances and objects and people placed on eye-level with the viewer. Therefore, Cheng's (2016) finding supports the suggestion that the social

distance created by the images could reflect and reinforce the brand-customer relationship.

Schnurr et al. (2016) also studied the brand identity construction on a brand's website, which in their case was the UK juice and smoothie brand Innocent. The findings of the study show how Innocent creates a set of interrelated and intertwined professional and social identities, such as professionalism, ethicality, responsibility, friendliness, and informality. The interrelated and intertwined nature of brand identity is very visible in the present study as well. Schnurr et al. (2016) also emphasize how all the modes are valuable for meaning making in identity construction. This was also evident in the present study: each mode contributes something to the creation of meaning and combining the different modes can result in different interpretations or one mode can reinforce the meaning conveyed by another.

Similarly to the present study, Lehtikangas (2019) applied Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism to help identify Oatly's brand identity. Because both studies applied the same brand identity model, the way the brand identities were identified and analyzed is rather similar. However, the different datasets naturally result in differences in the findings. Lehtikangas (2019) analyzed Oatly's Twitter posts, which consist of images, videos, and text. Twitter, and many social media platforms in general, does not give much freedom to the user in terms of layouts and structures as each post is structured the same way - the user only chooses the content they want to post. Therefore, Lehtikangas' (2019) analysis was restricted to only the written text and the image or video posted by Oatly. Websites, in turn, can be made to specifically reflect the identity of the brand. Hence, the present study was able to consider colors, layout, and structure in addition to text, image, and video. On the other hand, social media platforms allow brands to interact more with their customers, which can yield important insight of the brand-customer relationship which might not be very visible on a website.

#### **5.4 Limitations and suggestions for future studies**

To end this chapter, I will present some of the limitations of the present study and suggest how future research could expand on the topic of Lumene's brand identity construction and brand identity in general.

First of all, as was mentioned earlier, it is important to remember that the brand identity described in this study is based on only the international website of Lumene, and therefore cannot give the whole picture of Lumene's brand identity. Because of the scope of the study, I also had to narrow down the content of the website to a feasible amount, hence leaving out a rather large part of the website. I opted for pages that had the most content and that gave the most information about the brand, thus excluding product listings and all individual product pages. Websites also change constantly, which presents some challenges. As was explained in chapter 3.5, I made sure there were no major changes during the data collection period. However, as could be expected, Lumene's website has recently had some changes. For instance, now in 2021, there is a whole page about sustainability that gives much more information about Lumene's goals and actions towards circular economy. Even though sustainability has been a significant part of Lumene, it was not communicated with so much detail before. Lumene has also created a couple of new product collections and removed some of the ones mentioned in this study. It is natural for brands to change and evolve over time, and especially because Lumene went through such an extensive rebranding, these changes could also indicate that Lumene's brand and brand identity is still being developed and "fine-tuned".

Moreover, it is also important to remember that the findings are based on my own perspective and observations. The qualitative nature of the present study leaves a lot of room for interpretation, and therefore the findings presented cannot be seen as entirely objective. Even though my aim in this study was to look at the construction of Lumene's

brand identity from an objective point of view, the findings may still be influenced by my existing perception and knowledge of the brand. Being also Finnish, I cannot know for certain how someone outside of Finland would interpret Lumene's descriptions of the Finnish nature or Nordic beauty, for example. Hence, observations done by someone who is not familiar with the brand and does not have much knowledge about Finland or the Nordics could be different from mine. However, I tried my best to keep the observations neutral and as objective as possible.

In order to get a full picture of Lumene's identity across different platforms as well as the image consumers have of the brand, more research would be needed. Product packaging, social media platforms, advertisements, and consumer feedback and reflections of the brand are all relevant for the brand identity construction. For instance, studying Lumene's social media, such as Instagram, could result in a more comprehensive image of Lumene's personality and relationship with its customers, since social media is typically much more interactive in nature than a brand's website, and brands can be viewed more as people on social media as their posts can be more casual and informal. As was mentioned earlier, there are also some differences in the way Lumene communicates its brand identity for the Finnish and international consumers, e.g. the concept of Nordic beauty and the exotic portrayal of Finland, and therefore I believe a study comparing the Finnish and international branding and marketing strategies would yield some new findings about the complexity of brand identities as well as nation branding.

When it comes to brand identity research in general, I think applying discourse analytical approach to the topic is highly beneficial for both the discourse analytical field and the marketing field. Multimodal discourse analysis specifically allows us to consider brand identity from many different perspectives, and hence more emphasis should be put on multimodality in brand identity construction. In addition, more research should be done

on country of origin as a part of brand identity as well as the effects brands may have on the overall nation branding and country image.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This thesis studied how the brand identity of the Finnish cosmetics brand Lumene is constructed multimodally on their international website. Guided by three research questions, the aim of the present study was to find out what types of discourse can be identified on Lumene's international website, how these discourses construct Lumene's brand identity multimodally, and what kind of role the Finnish origin plays in Lumene's brand identity construction.

Using a mix-method approach of corpus linguistics and multimodal discourse analysis, I identified three main discourses on the website: the "Nordic beauty" discourse, the "Finnish exoticism" discourse, and the "sustainable and natural" discourse. The discourses were built on through the modes of images, written text, colors, and video. The findings reveal that the modes were used simultaneously to create meanings and were often closely related to each other. The findings also show that the identified discourses are highly interrelated and intertwined, often overlapping each other. These three discourses are not by any means exclusive, yet they are significant part of how Lumene builds its identity on their international website.

After analyzing the three discourses more in depth, I proposed how Lumene's brand identity could be defined by using Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism as the guide (see Figure 3). The prism was modified to better suit the purpose of the present study and consisted of five facets, brand's physique, personality, culture, customer reflection, and relationship, through which Lumene's brand identity was constructed. Nature, Nordic beauty, and the Finnish and Nordic origin of Lumene is strongly present in all five facets

and could be seen as the core of Lumene's brand identity. Lumene also presents itself as caring, confident, and proud of its roots and aims to establish a trusting, respecting and friendly relationship with its customers.

The findings of the present study offer insight of the complex and multimodal nature of brand identity construction. As this study together with previous research show, brand identities are highly discursive and are created through various semiotic modes, especially in online spaces like websites, which are inherently multimodal. As could be seen in the analysis, Lumene also constructs and communicates its identity through images, text, colors, and videos, often simultaneously. The present study also sheds light to how company websites are used to express the company's or brand's identities to the consumers. Studying websites is very relevant, since nowadays everything is online; even Lumene's products are available mostly online for international customers. Websites are a major part of marketing not only the products but also the company and its identity. Even though companies use different social media platforms, such as Instagram and Twitter, as an extension to their branding and marketing, I believe that for many companies their website is still the platform that holds the most information about them and where consumers go to when they want to learn more about the company, and therefore studying them is worthwhile.

Furthermore, the present study contributes to research about country of origin as part of a brand identity. While country of origin is a widely used technique for differentiating products and is a widely researched aspect of international marketing, not a lot of research has been done that looks at country of origin as part of brand identity and from a discourse analytical point of view. This study also shows how Lumene uses both its Nordic and Finnish origin in slightly different ways to differentiate itself, the Nordic origin allowing easier recognition abroad and connecting Lumene to the existing Nordic trends, while the Finnish origin gives the brand more personality and uniqueness. Since

the present study has a strong focus on both discourse analysis and marketing, I believe it would be interesting and beneficial for students and professionals in both fields.

When I was still planning this thesis, I also considered comparing Lumene's website before and after the rebranding in order to see how the brand identity has changed. However, I felt like I would not be able to get as a comprehensive picture of Lumene's brand identity as I was intending since I would have had to narrow both websites down quite drastically in order to fit the scope of this study. I was also so fascinated by the "new" Lumene that I wanted to focus on analyzing just their new website and the identity representation on it. On hindsight, I think the comparison could have given valuable insight on how brand identity can change over time, and if I could go back in time, I would perhaps reconsider this approach. That said, I do still think this study was successful in terms of reaching its goals and yielding some interesting findings about of brand identity construction online and, therefore, is a good addition to previous research.



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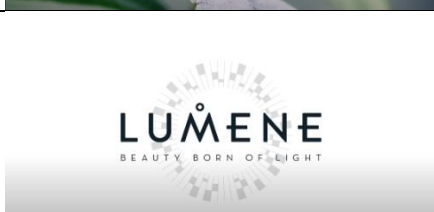
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## APPENDICES





Appendix 1. Transcription of the video titled “Arctic Spring Water” on Lumene’s “Story” page. Saved 03.11.2020

Time	Frame	Shot	On-screen text
00:00-00:01		Aerial shot of a lake and forest scenery moving from right to left.	We source our most precious ingredient
00:02-00:03			In Finland
00:03-00:04		Shot underwater with bubbles moving towards the surface.	A country with one of the purest water on earth
00:05-00:06			Our Arctic spring water
00:06-00:07		A close shot of a Caucasian woman swiping gel on her cheek.	Is skin friendly PH
00:08-00:09		A close shot of the woman switching positions and smiling at the camera.	For absolute softness
00:09-00:10		Lumene’s logo with the wheel in the background rotating clockwise.	Lumene, beauty born of light

Appendix 2. Transcription of the video titled “A Unique Arctic Light Cycle” on Lumene’s “Story” page. Saved on 03.11.2020.

Time	Frame	Shot	On-screen text
00:00-00:02		Medium/long shot of the moon on a dark and cloudy sky moving downwards with clouds passing by	Arctic darkness
00:02-00:04		Close shot of ice with sun shining through trees in the background	Followed by months of
00:04-00:06		Close shot of plants in sunlight moving from right to left.	Continuous light
00:06-00:09		Close shot of lingonberries covered in frost.	Supercharge our Arctic plants with unrivalled antioxidants potency
00:09-00:11		Lumene’s logo with the wheel in the background rotating clockwise.	Lumene, beauty born of light

Appendix 3. Transcription of the video titled “Wild crafted sustainable Nordic ingredients” on Lumene’s “Story” page. Saved 03.11.2020.

Time	Frame	Shot	On-screen text
00:00-00:02		Moving close shot of cloudberries with sunshine in the background, fading transition to the next frame	Our skincare?
00:02-00:04		A medium shot of a bucket full of cloudberries on the ground	Naturally Nordic
00:04-00:06		A close shot of a laboratory glass beaker containing orange liquid on a white surface, blurry objects in the background	Up to 100% naturally-derived Vegan cruelty-free
00:06-00:07		Lumene’s logo with the wheel in the background rotating clockwise.	Lumene, beauty born of light