Resistance to metaphor in parliamentary debates

This dissertation aims to contribute to the study of political discourse by examining how politicians turn parliamentary debates into their favour by using metaphors in arguing, and how opposing parties resist these metaphors in an attempt at turning the debate into their own favour. Combining insights from the three-dimensional model of metaphor and the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, it presents a novel theoretical perspective to investigate the argumentative roles and functions that metaphors and the resistance to metaphors fulfil at specific discussion stages, uncovering the advantages that politicians attempt to attain by employing metaphors in those stages.

The author first examines how politicians use metaphors to express starting points and the different ways in which opponents resist these metaphors to achieve diverging outcomes in the opening stage of a discussion. Then, she studies the argumentative role of metaphors in parliamentary debates by focusing on cases of figurative analogy arguments in the argumentation stage of the discussion, and on how figurative analogy arguments are countered. Finally, she investigates how metaphors with a clarificatory function and the resistance to such metaphors feature in parliamentary debates to establish a shared understanding of the issue under discussion between politicians in the confrontation and argumentation stages. Together, the studies presented in this dissertation demonstrate that metaphors are important argumentative strategies in parliamentary debates, and that resisting them seems to be a pertinent skill for politicians.
Resistance to metaphor in parliamentary debates
Resistance to metaphor in parliamentary debates
**Promotiecommissie**

**Promotores:**
- prof. dr. G.J. Steen Universiteit van Amsterdam
- prof. dr. C.F. Burgers Universiteit van Amsterdam

**Copromotores:**
- dr. C. Andone Universiteit van Amsterdam

**Overige leden:**
- prof. dr. E.O. Aboh Universiteit van Amsterdam
- dr. C.J. Forceville Universiteit van Amsterdam
- dr. I.R. Hellsten Universiteit van Amsterdam
- prof. dr. J.A.L. Hoeken Universiteit Utrecht
- prof. dr. A. Rocci Università della Svizzera italiana

Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
The research for/publication of this doctoral thesis received financial assistance from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO); Free competition project number 360-80-060
To my father, Diederik

To my mother, Yvonne
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 11

List of figures and tables 13

Author contributions 15

Chapter 1  Introduction 17

Chapter 2  “I did not say that the Government should be plundering anybody’s savings”. Resistance to metaphors expressing starting points in parliamentary debates 41

Chapter 3  Uses and functions of figurative analogy arguments in British parliamentary debates 63

Chapter 4  Figurative analogies and how they are resisted in British Public Bill Committee debates 85

Chapter 5  The use of metaphor in clarifying argumentative discourse in British Public Bill Committee debates 111

Chapter 6  Discussion and conclusion 135

Summary 161

Samenvatting 167

About the author 173
Acknowledgements

When I decided to write my premaster thesis about metaphor, I never imagined that this decision would eventually lead me to be part of a research project about metaphor as a PhD-researcher. But here we are, seven years after that initial decision, and I am about to finish my dissertation. Over the course of the years, many people have supported me and cheered me on, for which I am very grateful.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors, Corina Andone, Gerard Steen and Christian Burgers for their advice, their time, and our pleasant cooperation. Corina, thank you for introducing me to the world of argumentation and rhetoric, for your insightful, critical and detailed comments, and for always being there for me when I needed it. I am thankful for your kindness and for your interest in me beyond me being a PhD-candidate. Your confidence in me and your support have been of great importance to my work on this dissertation, and to me personally.

Gerard, seven years ago you supervised my premaster thesis about metaphor and framing in newspapers. You asked me to take up a research position as a Network Institute Academy Assistant during my masters, and then also to apply for the position of PhD-candidate in the Resistance to Metaphor project. Save to say, that I would not have been writing the acknowledgements to this dissertation right now if it was not for your confidence in me. I would like to thank you for your contagious enthusiasm for metaphor, and for the support you have given me over the years, ever since that premaster thesis.

Christian, I am very grateful that you agreed to supervise me when I needed a second promotor at the very last stage of writing this dissertation. Together with Corina, you dragged me through the last few months of this research project and made sure that I finished it. It was hard at times to suddenly have to integrate a new perspective at the end of it all, but I believe the dissertation and I only profited from your critical and detailed feedback, your patience, and advice. Thank you.

The research presented in this dissertation is part of the larger research project ‘Resistance to Metaphor’. I want to thank my fellow resistance to metaphor PhD and post-doc colleagues Dunja, Andreas, Jie, Roosmaryn, Lotte, and Giulia for the good times and the bad times that we have shared over the past years. Meeting and getting to know all of you has been (one of) the best part(s) of this PhD rollercoaster ride. I would also like to thank Jean and José for the discussions
we had in the resistance to metaphor group meetings, and the hallway conversations we had.

In my third year, I had the opportunity to work as a visiting researcher at the University of East Anglia in Norwich for three months. A big thank you to Andreas Musolff for being so kind to host me, and for our pleasant talks during lunchtime in the staff cafeteria. I very much enjoyed my time at UEA and the city of Norwich.

I would also like to thank my former colleagues at the P.C. Hooftuis and the different research groups that I was part of: the Metaphor Lab, ARGA, and the ACLC. A special thanks to Marieke, Ulrika, Marloes and Hongmei for the inspiring and helpful talks in our peer-coaching group. And thank you to Britta. We started our research adventure together as Network Institute Academy Assistants at the Vrije Universiteit, and have shared our experiences ever since. I hope that we will keep doing so in the future. And I would also like to thank Gudrun, I always very much enjoy our lunches and bouldering sessions (which now have changed into zoom tea/coffee breaks; thank you, Covid). Thank you for providing a listening ear (very ugly translation of a Dutch idiom, I guess) and advice all those times I needed it.

I thank the members of the Committee for taking the time and effort to read and evaluate my dissertation.

Besides all the support I received from my colleagues, I also want to thank my friends and family. Their support has been very important to me, and I am lucky to have such a great family and friends. Of course a special thanks to my paronymphs Maaike and Colette. I am very happy to have you by my side during the defence. And thank you, Ysabelle, for designing the cover. I am super happy with it. And thank you for helping me with impossible page numbers and headers.

Finally, I want to thank Frank. The past four years haven’t always been easy, but you were truly always there for me; celebrating the good times, and cheering me up and on in the not-so-good times. You kept me sane (more or less, you might not necessarily agree with me that I am sane). Your unwavering support means the world to me.

Kiki

Rotterdam, April 2021
List of figures and tables

**Figures**
- **Figure 2.1** Dialectical core profile for establishing a starting point.
- **Figure 3.1** Greenwood’s argumentation in defence of the standpoint that the Secretary of State should be required to make a statement to the House of Commons as soon as yearly budgets are, or are expected to be, exceeded.
- **Figure 3.2** Gibb’s argumentation in defence of the standpoint that review panels should impose a financial penalty when a child is wrongfully expelled from school.
- **Figure 4.1** Reconstruction of Brennan’s argumentation in favour of a health check on the way in which the Secretary of State uses statistical data produced by compulsory participation in international surveys.
- **Figure 4.2** Reconstruction of Fuller’s critical response to Brennan’s assertion that there should be a health check on the way in which the Secretary of State uses statistics.
- **Figure 4.3** Reconstruction of Brennan’s counter-analogy in response to Fuller’s figurative analogy.
- **Figure 4.4** Reconstruction of Stuart’s critical response to Brennan’s figurative analogy.
- **Figure 4.5** Reconstruction of Fuller’s critical response to Brennan’s figurative analogy.
- **Figure 4.6** Reconstruction of Fuller’s meta-comment on his own counter-argumentation refuting Brennan’s figurative analogy.

**Tables**
- **Table 1.1** Schematic overview of the research chapters of the dissertation.
Author contributions

Chapter 1
This chapter has not been submitted for publication elsewhere.
Kiki Y. Renardel de Lavalette

Renardel de Lavalette wrote the first version of the text. Andone and Burgers acted as supervisors, providing valuable feedback on earlier versions of the text. Based on this feedback, Renardel de Lavalette rewrote and revised the text into its final form.

Chapter 2

Renardel de Lavalette was the principal investigator of this study. Renardel de Lavalette wrote the first version of the text. Andone and Steen acted as supervisors, providing valuable feedback on earlier versions of the manuscript. Based on this feedback, Renardel de Lavalette rewrote and revised the manuscript in its final, published form.

Chapter 3

Renardel de Lavalette was the principal investigator of this study. Renardel de Lavalette wrote the first version of the text. Andone and Steen acted as supervisors, providing valuable feedback on earlier versions of the manuscript. Based on this feedback, Renardel de Lavalette rewrote and revised the manuscript in its final, submitted form.
Chapter 4

Renardel de Lavalette was the principal investigator of this study. Renardel de Lavalette wrote the first version of the text. Andone and Steen acted as supervisors, providing valuable feedback on earlier versions of the manuscript. Based on this feedback, Renardel de Lavalette rewrote and revised the manuscript in its final, published form.

Chapter 5
Submitted as: Renardel de Lavalette, K.Y., Andone, C., & Steen, G.J. The role of metaphor in clarifying argumentative discourse in British Public Bill Committee debates.

Renardel de Lavalette was the principal investigator of this study. Renardel de Lavalette wrote the first version of the text. Andone and Steen acted as supervisors, providing valuable feedback on earlier versions of the manuscript. Based on this feedback, Renardel de Lavalette rewrote and revised the manuscript in its final, submitted form.

Chapter 6
This chapter has not been submitted for publication elsewhere.
Kiki Y. Renardel de Lavalette

Renardel de Lavalette wrote the first version of the text. Andone and Burgers acted as supervisors, providing valuable feedback on earlier versions of the text. Based on this feedback, Renardel de Lavalette rewrote and revised the text into its final form.