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### Resistance to metaphor in parliamentary debates

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Resistance to metaphors: a first example

In a political interview on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, already at the time of the interview former Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union David Davis criticised the UK Government's approach to the Brexit negotiations with the EU. In doing so, Davis said:

- (1) One of the difficulties about the Government's approach to the negotiation to date has been that they've been unwilling to take any risk in testing the European Union stance on anything [...] That means they'll never concede a point until you test it. If you buy a house, you don't just take the first price offered and you don't say, 'well, he never said he'd take a lower price'. You press for a lower price. If you buy a car, the same.

("BBC Radio 4 Today", 2018)

In (1), Davis describes the UK Government negotiating terms for Brexit with the EU in terms of someone buying a new house or car. He argues that just like a person buying a house or car will press for a lower price, so should the UK Government press the EU for better exiting terms. In other words, by describing one thing (i.e. Brexit negotiations) in terms of another thing (i.e. buying a new house or car), Davis uses a metaphor. His metaphor functions to support the standpoint that the UK Government should press the EU for better terms.

Metaphors abound in political discourse (Lakoff, 1996). A number of scholars attribute strong persuasive effects to metaphors, and argue that metaphors can shape political reality (Charteris-Black, 2004; Musolff, 2017a; Lakoff, 1996; Thibodeau, 2016). Musolff (2017a), for example, argues that the metaphors that dominated the Brexit debate partly affected the way in which the British people voted. Thibodeau (2016, p. 53) even referred to extended metaphors as "the home-runs of persuasion".

However, some of the claims concerning the persuasive force of metaphors seem somewhat overstated. For example, the Brexit campaign only won by 51.9% of the votes (BBC News, 2018), which means that the metaphors dominating the Brexit debate did not affect almost half of the British electorate.

Various meta-analyses examining the persuasiveness of metaphor in political discourse (e.g., Brugman et al., 2019) and in persuasive contexts more generally (e.g., Sopory & Dillard, 2002; Van Stee, 2018) show that the persuasive effects of metaphors are statistically small. Additionally, Boeynaems et al. (2017) found that studies examining the persuasiveness of metaphors produce mixed results, indicating that the persuasive effects of metaphors are influenced by various factors, such as message and recipient characteristics.

Some scholars claiming that metaphors are powerful persuasive devices also seem to assume that metaphors are unproblematically and immediately accepted (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2004; Goatly, 2007), and to disregard that political metaphors are publicly debated and regularly resisted. For instance, the metaphor in (1) elicited extensive resistance by members of the general public when a recording of the fragment was uploaded by BBC Radio 4's Today programme on its Twitter and Facebook accounts. A few examples of such resistance are the following:

- (2) The analogy is wrong. If you don't buy a car or house because you don't like the deal, you don't lose your existing house or car, no deal Brexit means you do.

(David Tricker @trickboxmedia, Twitter, 2019)

- (3) It is nothing like negotiating the purchase of a house or car. In such a negotiation you can walk away and the situation remains unchanged as it was before the negotiation. In the case of Brexit walking away means leaving the EU with no deal. Brexit is more akin to a man on a ledge negotiating the terms of using a ladder; the 'walking away' alternative being jumping. His [David Davis'] comparison is ridiculous and shows why we are in this mess.

(David Norris, Facebook, 2018)

- (4) If Brexit were a house any responsible solicitor would be telling you its foundations were unstable, the seller was an inveterate liar and you would be a fool to have anything to do with it.

(John Kemp, Facebook, 2018)

In (2), Tricker resists Davis' metaphor by explicitly claiming that the metaphor is wrong and then supports this claim by pointing out relevant differences between the two compared concepts; whereas a person can go back to their house when

rejecting the deal for buying a new house, rejecting the Brexit deal means a no-deal Brexit and not a return to the situation as it was. Example (3) similarly starts with explicitly rejecting the analogy by highlighting the differences between Brexit and buying a house, but in this example the metaphor is then further criticised by means of an alternative metaphor. By suggesting that Brexit is more like a man on a ledge trying to negotiate the terms of a ladder, Norris attempts to refute Davis' comparison between Brexit and buying a house as an apt metaphor for describing the Brexit negotiations. In the alternative metaphor, in which the UK wanting to leave the EU is likened to a man on a ledge, it is implied that the UK does not have a strong negotiation position as the only alternative to not accepting a deal is a no deal Brexit (i.e. jumping from the ledge). Lastly, in example (4), Kemp resists the metaphor in (1) by critically extending it, introducing a "responsible solicitor" who would advise against buying the new house as an additional character. In this way, Kemp turns the metaphor against its originator and uses it to criticise the decision to leave the EU in the first place.

As examples (2), (3), and (4) demonstrate, metaphors are not always without further ado accepted, but may elicit overt resistance. Yet, resistance to metaphors is often ignored by scholars concerned with political metaphor (some exceptions are, e.g., Burgers et al, 2019; Flusberg et al., 2018; Hart, 2020; Musolff 2004, 2017b, 2017c; Semino, 2008, 2020). The fact that metaphors may be resisted suggests that the persuasive force of metaphors may not be as strong as is often claimed by some metaphor scholars (Charteris-Black, 2004; Goatly, 2007; Lakoff, 1996; Thibodeau, 2016). Examples (2), (3), and (4) show that metaphors are not always immediately accepted, but rather that their conceptual content is subjected to scrutiny, and that as a result of such scrutiny they may be rejected.

In response to the issues regarding the persuasiveness of metaphor and the resistance that metaphors may elicit, Musolff (2004) proposes that some metaphors are an integral part of the argumentation taking place in political debates. He argues that metaphors may function as part of an argument, and as such they "must appear to give a valid justification for using particular premises in order to arrive at a certain conclusion" (Musolff, 2004, p. 33). The argumentative use of metaphors may hence be a factor affecting their persuasive force. Yet as distinct argumentative devices, metaphors may also be contested and elicit overt resistance, as happens in (2), (3), and (4). This suggests that the investigation of their argumentative functions and of the resistance to such metaphors is pertinent for a better understanding of the roles fulfilled by metaphor in political debates. However, the argumentative functions of metaphors in political discourse have not been the focus of much research (for exceptions, see, e.g., Musolff, 2004; Oswald &

Rihs, 2014; Santibáñez, 2010; Xu & Wu, 2014), let alone of research focusing on the resistance to them.

The main aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the study of political discourse by examining the ways in which politicians employ metaphors to turn a debate into their favour, and how opposing parties resist these metaphors in various ways to achieve an outcome in the debate that is more beneficial to their own argumentative goals and interests. In Section 1.2, the concepts of metaphor, and resistance to metaphor are explained in greater detail, and the potential argumentative role of metaphor and the resistance to metaphor in political debates is explored. Section 1.3 describes the theoretical framework, combining insights from the three-dimensional model of metaphor (Steen, 2017) and the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (Van Eemeren, 2018), employed in this dissertation to provide an analytic account of the argumentatively employed metaphors and of the resistance they elicit. Section 1.4 discusses the aims and scope of this dissertation, and introduces the research questions that are addressed in the studies reported here. Finally, Section 1.5 presents an outline of the dissertation.

## 1.2 Metaphors and the resistance they elicit in political discourse

Metaphors are defined as “cross domain mappings” between a source and a target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Conceptual metaphor theory (henceforth: CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) proposes that metaphorical expressions in language (linguistic metaphors) reflect metaphorical structures in thought (conceptual metaphors). Metaphor is a conceptual tool that involves talking and thinking about one thing (the ‘target domain’) in terms of another (the ‘source domain’), because of some perceived similarity between the two domains. In many cases the source domain is more familiar and concrete than the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As metaphors may hence be instrumental in simplifying complex issues, CMT proposes that metaphors are important reasoning devices that take a central role in discussing complex and novel issues.

Besides simplifying issues, metaphors may be important in discussing societal issues because they often reflect an ideological stance (Burgers et al., 2019; Charteris-Black, 2004; Goatly, 2007; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As such, it has been suggested that metaphors should be regarded as specific types of frames (Boeynaems et al., 2017; Burgers et al., 2016; Lakoff, 1996). Entman (1993, p. 52) defines framing as “select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicated text, in such a way as to promote a particular

problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described". For example, the metaphor in (1) comprises a specific framing of Brexit. It depicts the Brexit negotiations in terms of buying a new house or car (problem definition), in which the Government is unwilling to press for a better price, which is undesirable ((moral) evaluation), because pressing for a lower price is needed to achieve a better price (treatment recommendation). Metaphorical frames may affect how an issue is understood, evaluated and reasoned about. As a result, metaphors may become controversial and elicit overt resistance, as happens in (2), (3), and (4).

Metaphors and the resistance to metaphors are of particular importance in the political domain. Semino (2008, p. 90), for example, argues that "the use of metaphor is particularly necessary in politics, since politics is an abstract and complex domain of experience, and metaphors can provide ways of simplifying complexities and making abstractions accessible". Resistance to metaphors in political discourse, in turn, should be expected as this type of discourse is inherently antagonistic (Finlayson, 2017), and political metaphors are "publicly scrutinised, debated, and routinely contested" (Musolff, 2017b, p. 313).

This dissertation focuses specifically on the use of metaphor and resistance to metaphor in parliamentary debates. While Parliament fulfils a crucial role in political debates (Ilie, 2010), the use of metaphor in parliamentary debates is relatively understudied (Perrez et al., 2019). As Ilie (2010, p. 1) argues, "[p]arliaments are democratically constituted fora for political deliberation, legislation, problem solving and decision making". Due to the high degree of complexity of the issues discussed in parliamentary debates, the use of metaphor is to be expected in this type of debate. Resistance to metaphor is also to be expected in parliamentary debates, because of its inherently antagonistic nature (Finlayson, 2017). Parliamentary debates offer politicians the opportunity to discuss proposals for government policies and legislation to come to a well-informed decision on their acceptability (Debates, n.d.). Opposition parties and government back benchers are expected to hold the Government to account and to scrutinise the Government's policy and legislative proposals. The Government, in turn, is expected to defend its proposals, and to justify its policies (Mohammed, 2018; Turpin & Tomkins, 2011; Webber, 2017).

Justifying and opposing government policy and legislation involves providing arguments in favour of or against the issue under discussion (Finlayson, 2017; Ihnen Jory, 2012). More specifically, it is by means of argumentation that the Opposition challenges the work of the Government, and that the Government defends its policy and legislative proposals. In arguing in favour of or against the

acceptability of policy or legislative proposals, metaphors are instrumental. Parliamentary debates typically concern complex topics, such as health care, the economy, and foreign policy. As metaphors typically involve a comparison between a complex and abstract concept and a more familiar and concrete concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), they may simplify the issue under discussion and make a politician's argumentation easier to understand. Additionally, in parliamentary debates politicians try to convince the electorate of their standpoints. Framing argumentation in metaphorical terms may be instrumental to this goal, because metaphorical frames may introduce a perspective on the issue under discussion that is favourable to the speaker and/or unfavourable to an opponent. A metaphorical frame introduces a particular interpretation and evaluation of the issue under discussion and promotes a particular problem resolution.

However, as metaphorical frames typically reflect a particular ideological stance, the frame introduced may not be in line with the ideas and values of other discussion parties. Additionally, while metaphors may be illuminating in some cases, they can also be misleading by making complex and controversial conclusions appear obvious and unproblematic (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2004, Goatly, 2007, Landau et al., 2017, Musolff, 2004; Semino, 2008). As such, opposing parties may wish to resist metaphors to introduce a perspective on the issue under discussion that is more in line with their own particular beliefs and ideas. Metaphors and the resistance to metaphors are important argumentative strategies in parliamentary debates, employed by politicians to turn the debate into their favour.

As argumentation is an integral aspect of parliamentary debates, this dissertation focuses on a specific type of resistance, namely resistance by argumentative criticisms. This type of resistance can be placed in a larger framework of resistance to persuasive messages. Fransen et al. (2015) propose that resistance to persuasive messages can be divided into four main categories: avoidance strategies, biased processing strategies, empowerment strategies, and contesting strategies. Avoidance strategies involve individuals avoiding persuasion attempts, such as marketing, political, or health communications. Examples of avoidance strategies are changing channels during commercial breaks on television or radio, or skipping the advertising section in newspapers. With biased processing strategies, individuals process a (inconsistent) persuasive message in a way that supports their original attitudes. For example, people may resist a persuasive message by attributing more weight to information that is consistent with one's attitudes, and less weight to information that is inconsistent with one's attitudes, or they may believe that a negative message (e.g., drinking is bad for one's health)

is not likely to happen to them, and downplay the risks (e.g., I can control my alcohol intake, and do not run the risk of becoming addicted). Empowerment strategies involve individuals bolstering their existing attitudes and beliefs. They may do so, for example, by generating reasons that support their existing beliefs, by thinking of people who share their beliefs, or by asserting their self-confidence. Empowerment strategies do not, however, involve challenging the arguments presented in a persuasive message. Challenging a persuasive message is a contesting strategy. In contesting a persuasive message, people may contest a message by presenting counterarguments; they may contest the message by questioning the source's credibility; and they may resist a persuasive message by contesting the strategies used to persuade, such as using pups in advertising to appeal to the emotions.

The focus of this dissertation, resistance by means of argumentative criticisms, is a type of contesting strategy, namely the challenging of the content of a message by presenting counter-argumentation. Within the context of parliamentary debates in which metaphors are challenged, this type of resistance is most suited. Parliamentary debates constitute an argumentative exchange in which politicians advance arguments to defend their point of view regarding the acceptability of government policy or legislative proposals, and counterarguments to attack the opponent's standpoints. The aim of such debates is to improve government policy and legislation, and to appeal to the electorate. Resisting metaphors advanced by an opponent involves refuting the opponent's argumentation expressed in metaphorical terms. As just discussed, avoidance and biased processing strategies do not involve argumentation, but the avoidance and favourable processing of a persuasive message, respectively. Empowerment strategies may involve the repetition of one's own arguments in favour of a message, but this type of resistance strategy does not involve the challenging of a persuasive message of an opposing party. In focusing on contesting strategies, this dissertation conceptualises resistance as a negative evaluation of an opponent's metaphor. Focusing on argumentative criticisms also allows for analysing the reasons discussants have for not accepting a metaphor. As resistance involves opposing a metaphorically expressed utterance, the terms resistance, opposition, and criticism are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

To fully understand the argumentative role of metaphors and the resistance to metaphors fulfilled in parliamentary debates, two different aspects of the argumentatively employed metaphors and the resistance to these metaphors need to be examined. These are (1) the metaphorical properties of the metaphors and the resistance to metaphors, and (2) the argumentative function of the



metaphors and the resistance to metaphors. Examining the metaphorical properties involves the identification of metaphors, and the specification of the type of metaphor that is used. In the three-dimensional model of metaphor (Steen, 2017), three dimensions of metaphor are distinguished, namely the linguistic, conceptual and communicative dimensions. On each of these dimensions, different types of metaphor can be distinguished. On the linguistic dimension, a distinction is made between indirect and direct metaphors (cf. Steen et al., 2010); on the conceptual dimension, metaphors can either be conventional or novel (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980); and on the communicative dimension metaphors can be non-deliberate or deliberate (cf. Reijnierse, 2018). For example, in (1) a direct comparison between the Brexit negotiations and buying a house is made. As the source domain concept of buying a house introduces an alternative perspective on the target domain concept of Brexit negotiations with the EU, the metaphor is also potentially deliberate. The analysis of the metaphorical properties informs analysts of which metaphors are used for argumentative purposes, and how the target and source domain concepts may play a role in resisting a metaphor.

The argumentative analysis of metaphors and the resistance to metaphors enables specifying the particular argumentative function that a metaphor and the resistance to a metaphor fulfil in a debate. Metaphors and the resistance to them can fulfil different functions in a debate, and as such achieve diverging goals. The metaphor in (1), for example, functions as an argument supporting the standpoint that the UK Government should press the EU for better exiting terms. The pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (Van Eemeren, 2018) offers an overview of all the argumentative moves that can be made in discussions, such as advancing a standpoint and arguments, and introducing starting points. The argumentative analysis reveals for which argumentative function a metaphor is used, and what outcomes in a debate can be achieved by resisting them.

Metaphor theory and argumentation theory, however, are not commonly combined. Most studies concerned with political metaphor take a cognitive-linguistic or critical-discourse analytic approach (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2004; Goatly, 2007; Lakoff, 1996; Musolff, 2016; Semino, 2008). These studies typically consider metaphor as an important reasoning tool, but they do not necessarily examine the role of metaphor in argumentation (for an exception, see, e.g., Musolff, 2004). In argumentation theory, there is little scholarly attention to metaphor (Oswald & Rihs, 2014; Santibáñez, 2010), and only a few studies attribute argumentative functions to metaphor (e.g., Garssen & Kienpointner, 2011; Oswald & Rihs, 2014; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958/2003; Reboul, 1989; Santibáñez, 2010; Van Poppel, 2020a, 2020b; Xu & Wu, 2014). As a result, an analysis of the different

argumentative functions that metaphors may fulfil in parliamentary debates and the resistance to these metaphors is missing.

This dissertation introduces a novel theoretical perspective for the analysis of argumentatively employed metaphors and the resistance that they elicit, in which insights from the three-dimensional model of metaphor (Steen, 2017) are combined with insights from the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (Van Eemeren, 2018). This combinatory perspective offers a holistic account of metaphors and the resistance to metaphor in parliamentary debates, revealing which types of metaphor are used for argumentative purposes, the various argumentative functions that metaphors can fulfil in parliamentary debates, and the consequences that opposing such metaphors can have on the continuation of the debate.

### 1.3 Analysing the argumentative functions of metaphors and the critical responses elicited by these metaphors

To examine the metaphorical properties of the metaphors employed for argumentative purposes and of the opposition to these metaphors, the three-dimensional model of metaphor is employed (Steen, 2017). This model extends CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which mainly focuses on the linguistic and conceptual dimensions of metaphor, by adding a third dimension, namely that of metaphor in communication. CMT holds that metaphors in language are reflections of underlying metaphorical structures in thought that guide our understanding of the world. Within CMT, conceptual metaphors are central, and regarded as instruments playing a significant role in comprehending abstract and complex concepts. Metaphor is hence regarded as a cognitive tool that enables people to think, and therefore talk, of one thing in terms of something else. Because of CMT's primary interest in metaphor in thought and language, it does not provide the theoretical tools to also account for the various communicative purposes that metaphors can fulfil. To also account for this third dimension of metaphor, Steen (2017) developed the three-dimensional model of metaphor, allowing analysts to examine a metaphor's linguistic, conceptual, and communicative dimensions.

On the communicative dimension of metaphor, a distinction is made between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors. Steen (2013, p. 180) defines deliberate metaphor as "an instruction for addressees to adopt an 'alien' perspective on a target referent so as to formulate specific thoughts about that target from the standpoint of the alien perspective". Specifically, this means that the source-domain meaning of a metaphor is part of the referential meaning of the utterance, and a metaphor is used as metaphor in communication between

language users (Steen, 2017). An example of a deliberate metaphor is the metaphor in (1), in which a direct comparison is made between Brexit negotiations and buying a house. The source domain is present as an autonomous referent in the state of affairs designated by the utterance, and introduces an external perspective into the discourse (cf. Reijnierse et al., 2018). Conversely, a metaphor is considered non-deliberate when the source domain is not part of the situation model of the utterance or text (Steen, 2017). Rather, such metaphors are typically so ingrained in language that they constitute the typical way in which people talk. Taking into account a metaphor's communicative dimension is of particular importance in this dissertation, because it aims to analyse metaphors that are used for the communicative purpose of arguing.

To analyse the argumentative functions that are fulfilled by metaphors in parliamentary debates, and the resistance that these metaphors elicit, the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation is employed (Van Eemeren, 2018). Within this theory, argumentation is defined as "a verbal, social and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint" (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 1). The pragma-dialectical perspective on argumentation allows for studying the metaphors and the resistance to metaphors as part of an argumentative exchange in which politicians aim to convince each other of the (un)acceptability of a recommended course of action set out in legislative proposals.

In the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, the theoretical concept of an ideal model of critical discussion is employed for the analysis of argumentative discourse (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984). This model is a normative representation of how an argumentative exchange would proceed if it was primarily aimed at solving a difference of opinion in a reasonable way. It specifies the stages that discussants ideally go through to solve their difference of opinion. In the confrontation stage of a discussion, discussants establish that there is a difference of opinion. In the opening stage of a discussion, discussants establish the procedural and material starting points for the debate. In the argumentation stage of a discussion, discussants engage in the critical testing of the arguments raised in support of a standpoint. Finally, in the concluding stage the outcome of the debate is determined by the discussants (Van Eemeren, 2018).

The ideal model of critical discussion serves as an analytical tool for the reconstruction of authentic argumentative exchanges (Van Eemeren, 2010). Specifically, analysts reconstruct an argumentative exchange as it occurs in reality in terms of the ideal model of critical discussion, which results in an analytic

overview that reveals the argumentative function of the different contributions that the discussion parties have made in a debate. For example, when a metaphor is employed to clarify a proposition that is under discussion and elicits criticisms, such an exchange can be reconstructed as part of the confrontation stage of a discussion, as it plays a role in the definition of the difference of opinion. When a metaphor is employed to express a starting point for the debate, it will be reconstructed as part of the opening stage of the discussion. In reply, an opposing party may accept or reject the metaphorically expressed proposal for a starting point. Whenever a politician frames an argument in metaphorical terms under the form of a figurative analogy, the metaphor is considered to be part of the argumentation stage of a discussion, and in response, the figurative analogy argument may be accepted or critically tested for its acceptability.

The ideal model of critical discussion outlines the dialectical procedure for reasonably resolving a difference of opinion. In argumentative practice, however, arguers do not only strive for the dialectical aim of maintaining reasonableness, but also for the rhetorical aim of being effective (Van Eemeren, 2010). In other words, arguers attempt to strike a balance between reasonably resolving a difference of opinion and resolving the difference of opinion in their own favour. Integrating dialectical and rhetorical insights allows for a more realistic examination of argumentative discourse (Van Eemeren, 2010). This way, the analysis of argumentatively employed metaphors and of the resistance to these metaphors does justice to both the dialectical aim of being reasonable and to the rhetorical aim of being effective.

An argumentative reconstruction should also take into account the context in which argumentative discourse takes place (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992). To this end, Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2005) introduced the concept of argumentative activity types, which accounts for the institutional aims of the arguers and the influence of these aims on the arguers' attempts to balance their dialectical and rhetorical aims (Van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 2005). More specifically, the rules and conventions of the institutional context in which argumentation takes place create opportunities and impose constraints on the production of argumentation. Examples of such argumentative activity types in the political domain are presidential debates, Prime Minister's Question Time, plenary parliamentary debates, and Second Reading debates (Van Eemeren, 2010, p. 140). Gaining insight into the opportunities and constraints imposed by the institutional characteristics of argumentative activity types allows analysts to better account for the discussants' argumentation.

The studies reported in this dissertation focus specifically on discussions on public bills that take place at the third formal phase of the legislative process in the British House of Commons: Committee Stage. Committee Stage follows the introduction of a bill at First Reading, which only involves the reading out of the short title of a bill and an order for a bill to be printed, and a debate on its principles at Second Reading (UK Government Cabinet Office, 2015). Focusing specifically on debates at committee stage enables studying the argumentative use of metaphors and the resistance to these metaphors in a well-demarcated parliamentary context.

British Parliament has served as a model for several legislatures within the Commonwealth (Ilie, 2006; Kumarasingham, 2016). In other words, while a characterisation of British parliamentary debates as an argumentative activity type cannot be representative of all parliamentary systems, such a characterisation can be extended to a substantial number of them. This dissertation focuses on legislative debates because Parliament is the supreme legislative body of the UK (Turpin & Tomkins, 2011), and debating and making laws are one of its main roles ("How are laws made", n.d.). The decision to focus on public bills is motivated by the fact that such bills are the most common type of bill introduced in the British Parliament. Additionally, public bills change the law as it applies to the general population ("Public Bills", n.d.). In contrast, private bills are much rarer and only change the law as it applies to specific individuals or organisations, rather than the general public ("Private Bills", n.d.). The analysis of debates on public bills therefore has a wider range of applicability than the analysis of debates on other types of bills. Finally, this dissertation focuses on Public Bill Committee (henceforth: PBC) debates because they examine the details of a bill, and consider a bill clause by clause. This offers committee members extensive time for discussing bills, including discussions about metaphors. In debates at Second Reading, by contrast, no amendments to a bill can be made, presumably leaving little room for discussions on matters such as metaphors. Focusing on PBC debates thus made it easier to find examples of metaphors eliciting resistance.

#### 1.4 Aims and scope of the dissertation

Metaphor and resistance to metaphor play a role at different discussion stages in British PBC debates, namely as starting points in the opening stage, as arguments in the argumentation stage, and they are used to clarify the ongoing argumentation in the confrontation, opening, and argumentation stages. British PBC debates are concerned with discussing the details of bills. Specifically, committee members scrutinise a bill clause by clause, and they may propose amendments and table new

clauses (Turpin & Tomkins, 2011). The discussions on the acceptability of the details of bills are typically based on shared assumptions between discussion parties, referred to in argumentation theory as ‘starting points’. Starting points are established in the ‘opening stage’ of a discussion, and relate to the discussion rules or to the agreed-upon propositions that can be used to justify or refute a standpoint (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 60).

When discussion parties establish the starting points for the debate, they attempt to establish starting points that are clear, and that are in their best interest. These aims can be achieved by framing a starting point in metaphorical terms, as metaphors can introduce a perspective on the issue under discussion that is beneficial to a discussant. Other discussion parties may wish to oppose such a metaphor to create a point of departure that is more beneficial to their own particular goals and interests. As shown by examples (2), (3), and (4), opponents can resist metaphors in various ways. For example, they can refute a metaphor by claiming the metaphor is wrong or inappropriate, they can critically extend a metaphor, or they can advance an alternative, competing metaphor. To gain better insight into the advantages that politicians may obtain by expressing their proposals for starting points in metaphorical terms, and into the different outcomes that can be achieved by resisting these metaphors, the first research question of this dissertation, consisting of two sub-questions, is:

RQ 1: (a) How are metaphors used to express starting points? (b) How can metaphors be resisted in various ways to achieve diverging outcomes in the opening stage of the discussion?

Secondly, metaphors and resistance to metaphors are at play in the argumentation stage of the discussion. In discussing legislative proposals, committee members may frame their arguments in metaphorical terms under the form of figurative analogy arguments. As these figurative analogies typically reflect the ideological stance of the speaker, and as some of these figurative analogies may oversimplify the issue under discussion, other discussion parties may wish to resist them by putting forward counter-arguments.

British PBC debates are aimed at discussing the details of a bill. The main proposition under discussion in these debates can be reconstructed as ‘The clause should stand part of the bill’. The Government will typically defend the acceptability of this standpoint by pointing at the positive consequences of the measures proposed in the clause under discussion, whereas the Opposition will challenge the acceptability of the proposition by referring to the negative

consequences of the legislative proposal. More specifically, in British PBC debates prescriptive policy statements in which a recommendation for taking or not taking action is made are justified or refuted by so-called pragmatic arguments in which the (un)desirable consequences of the action are highlighted.

In defending the acceptability of pragmatic arguments, figurative analogy arguments can be instrumental. They may make an argument easier to understand, while they may also enhance an argument's convincingness (Musolff, 2004). Figurative analogy arguments are therefore a suitable means for increasing the acceptability of legislative proposals. This suggests that a better understanding of the way in which this form of argumentation works in parliamentary debates is required. Research question 2a, therefore, is:

RQ 2a: How do committee members in British PBC debates argue by means of figurative analogy argumentation?

While figurative analogies may make an argument clearer and more acceptable, argumentation scholars propose that this type of argument is weak and easily defeasible, because the two compared concepts in the source and target domains are clearly different (e.g., Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958/2003, p. 393; Walton et al., 2008, p. 61). Additionally, research shows that while metaphors may be illuminating in some cases, they can also be misleading by simplifying complex and controversial conclusions, making them appear obvious and unproblematic, in other cases (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2004; Musolff, 2004). Resisting figurative analogy arguments by putting forward counter-arguments can therefore be important to come to a well-informed decision about the acceptability of a legislative proposal. Whereas a number of studies show that metaphors may elicit overt resistance (e.g., Burgers et al, 2019; Flusberg et al., 2018; Hart, 2020; Musolff 2004, 2017b, 2017c; Semino, 2020), an approach to examining resistance to metaphor is lacking, and the ways in which figurative analogy arguments are countered in parliamentary debates remains understudied. To address this issue, research question 2b is:

RQ 2b: How are figurative analogy arguments countered in British PBC debates?

Finally, metaphor and resistance to metaphor play a role when misunderstandings in the debate arise. For the effective scrutiny of policy and legislative proposals, it is pertinent to ensure that the argumentation advanced in parliamentary debates is understood by all discussion parties. This often requires clarification, which can be

achieved by employing a metaphor in which a complex concept is compared to a more familiar and easily understood concept (Nerlich et al. 2011; Thibodeau et al. 2017). Clarificatory metaphors are aimed at transferring understanding from one discussant to other discussants. However, metaphors sometimes also hamper understanding (e.g., Deignan et al. 2019; Mukherjee 2010), as they typically make salient some aspects but not others. To avoid biased conceptions, or even misunderstandings, discussion parties may consequently want to challenge such metaphors. To better understand the ways in which clarificatory metaphors and the resistance to them feature in parliamentary debates, and contribute to resolving a difference of opinion, research question 3, consisting of two sub-questions, is answered:

RQ 3: (a) How do metaphors employed for clarifying argumentation feature in British parliamentary debates to establish a shared understanding of the issue under discussion? (b) How does the resistance to clarificatory metaphor affect the continuation of the debate?

The transcripts of the debates that have been analysed in the studies presented in this dissertation to answer the research questions have been retrieved from the online version of the official report of all parliamentary debates in the UK, Hansard Online. The advantage of using Hansard is that it provides access to a readily available, consistent record of proceedings. Yet, using Hansard transcripts also poses some problems (Shaw, 2018). In the transcription process, a number of transformations occur that alter the original spoken text in various ways, such as “the filtering out of ‘disfluency’ and other obvious properties of spokenness” (Slembrouck, 1992, p. 104). Most importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, illegal interventions and interruptions are typically not transcribed (Shaw, 2018, p. 117). This means that critical reactions to metaphors made from ‘a sedentary position’ (i.e. heckling) are often not represented in the transcripts and can therefore not be analysed.

## 1.5 Outline of the dissertation

To clarify how the three research questions specified in Section 1.4 have been answered, the structural division of this dissertation will now be explained. This dissertation comprises six chapters. Except for the Introduction (*Chapter 1*) and the Conclusion (*Chapter 6*), all chapters have been written as independent journal articles. As such, a certain degree of overlap between chapters 2-5 cannot be avoided, especially with respect to the theoretical background of the three-



dimensional model of metaphor and the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, and the empirical insights into the institutional characteristics of British PBC debates. The research questions formulated in Section 1.4 are addressed in the four papers in the following way (see Table 1.1 for a schematic overview of the research chapters of this dissertation, which also specifies the argumentative moves that each of the chapters focus on).

*Chapter 2* gives an answer to RQ 1 that aims to examine the ways in which metaphors are used to express starting points in the opening stage, and how such metaphors can be countered in various ways to achieve diverging outcomes in the debate. It is first established which expressions count as a metaphorically expressed starting point and which types of responses meet the criteria of being a form of resistance to starting points. To this end, the conceptual tool of the dialectical profile of the opening stage is employed (cf. Van Eemeren et al., 2007). This profile specifies the moves that discussants in a discussion can make to unambiguously establish the starting points for the debate. It is shown that there is only one move that an arguer can make in reaction to a starting point that can be considered a form of resistance, namely the rejection of the proposed starting point. Then, a detailed analytic account of cases in which metaphorically expressed starting points are countered is provided to explain the advantages that committee members may obtain by employing metaphors to express a proposal for a starting point, and how opponents can resist such metaphors to create a point of departure for the debate that is more in line with their own argumentative interests.

RQ2a concerns the uses and functions of figurative analogy arguments in parliamentary debates. *Chapter 3* examines the argumentative role of metaphors by focusing on cases of figurative analogy argumentation supporting pragmatic arguments in British PBC debates. It is explained that the institutional characteristics of British PBC debates impose the use of figurative analogy arguments in combination with pragmatic arguments in which a recommendation for a future course of action is made. To explain how such a way of arguing can be instrumental in increasing the acceptability of legislative proposals, two cases in which figurative analogy arguments are combined with pragmatic arguments are analysed in detail.

RQ2b, dealing with the ways in which figurative analogy arguments are countered, is answered in *Chapter 4*. In this chapter, detailed qualitative analyses of a number of cases of resistance to figurative analogy arguments found in the British PBC debates on the Education Bill 2010-11 are presented. It is thus demonstrated that resisting figurative analogy arguments is a complex

phenomenon, involving different types of critical responses that each require a detailed examination on their own.

*Chapter 5* answers RQ3, concerning the role of metaphors and the resistance to metaphors in clarifying argumentative discourse in British PBC debates. The chapter presents a number of cases in which metaphors used for clarificatory purposes are opposed in a British PBC debate on the Digital Economy Bill. The analyses uncover which metaphors are used for clarificatory purposes, to what extent these clarificatory metaphors contribute to furthering the resolution of a debate on the acceptability of legislative proposals, and what consequences opposing such metaphors can have on the continuation of the debate.

Finally, *Chapter 6* is the conclusion of this dissertation. The findings from the studies reported in this dissertation are outlined, and their implications for metaphor studies, argumentation studies, and for political discourse are discussed. This chapter also points out the most important limitations of the studies, and offers suggestions for future research.

Table 1.1  
*Schematic Overview of the Research Chapters of the Dissertation*

<b>Metaphor and resistance to metaphor in the opening stage of a discussion</b>	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
<u>Protagonist:</u>	<u>Antagonist:</u>
Metaphorically expressed proposal for a starting point	Rejection of the starting point
<b>Metaphor and resistance to metaphor in the argumentation stage of a discussion</b>	
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
<u>Protagonist:</u>	
Prescriptive standpoint Pragmatic argument Figurative analogy argument	
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
<u>Protagonist:</u>	<u>Antagonist:</u>
Figurative analogy argument	Refutation of the figurative analogy argument
<b>Metaphor and resistance to metaphor in clarifying argumentative discourse</b>	
<b>Chapter 5</b>	
<u>Protagonist:</u>	<u>Antagonist:</u>
Standpoint OR starting point OR argument	Clarification request
Clarificatory metaphor	Rejection of the clarificatory metaphor

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