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**THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF BORIS JOHNSON DURING HIS
TENURE AS PRIME MINISTER OF THE UK**

Master Thesis

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Master Thesis

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Bratislava 2024

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Affirmation

I hereby declare in lieu of an oath that I have completed the Master's thesis independently and without illegitimate assistance from third parties. I have used no other than the referenced sources.

In Bratislava

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ABSTRAKT

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Boris Johnson, kontroverzná a zároveň charizmatická osobnosť, zanechal nezmazateľnú stopu v britskej politike svojím jedinečným a často svojráznym používaním jazyka. Táto práca sa zaoberá sférou obrazného jazyka, konkrétne sa zameriava na metafory, ktoré Johnson použil počas svojho pôsobenia vo funkcii predsedu vlády Spojeného kráľovstva. Vzhľadom na obmedzenia spojené s takouto komplexnou štúdiou sa tento výskum zužuje na skúmanie vplyvu metafor na politický diskurz, vnímanie verejnosti a komunikačné stratégie politických lídrov.

Vychádzajúc zo súčasnej kognitívnej lingvistiky, ktorá metaforu považuje za základný kognitívny proces uľahčujúci porozumenie a interpretáciu, táto štúdia odhaľuje nuansy, akými metafora formuje naše vnímanie komplexných a abstraktných pojmov. Metafory, ktoré slúžia ako silné jazykové nástroje, umožňujú autorom vrátane politikov, ako je Johnson, ovplyvňovať emócie, manipulovať s názormi a formovať svetonázor. V oblasti politického diskurzu metafory presahujú rámec obvyčajnej ornamentiky a zohrávajú presvedčivú a manipulatívnu úlohu. Rozborom a analýzou metafor použitých Johnsonom sa táto práca zameriava na odhalenie základných zámerov a stratégií politickej rétoriky a objasňuje, ako sa tieto jazykové prostriedky využívajú na ovplyvňovanie a manipuláciu publika. Prostredníctvom analýzy a interpretácie Johnsonových metafor sa preto táto diplomová práca snaží poskytnúť nový pohľad na súvislosti medzi jazykom, mocou a presvedčaním v politickom diskurze.

Kľúčové slová: Johnson, metafora, COVID-19, Brexit, vojna, cesta, EÚ, jazyk

ABSTRACT

ŠÁLYOVÁ, Viktória. *The Figurative Language of Boris Johnson during his tenure as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom*. – University of Economics in Bratislava. Faculty of Applied Languages; Department of English Language. --Thesis Supervisor: Mgr. Linda Krajčovičová, PhD. Bratislava: FAJ EUBA, 2024. 77 p.

Boris Johnson, a controversial yet charismatic figure, through his distinctive and rather eccentric use of words, fundamentally altered language in British politics. This thesis explores figurative language, with a particular emphasis on the metaphors that Johnson employed during his tenure as the UK's Prime Minister. This research narrows its focus to examine the influence of metaphors on political discourse, public perception, and political leaders' communication techniques in light of the limitations involved in conducting such a thorough study.

Based on the findings of contemporary cognitive linguistics, which consider metaphor a basic cognitive process in comprehension and interpretation, this research reveals the subtle ways in which metaphor influences our understanding of intricate and abstract concepts. Authors, particularly politicians like Johnson, have the power to sway recipients' emotions, affect the way they think, and change their worldviews by using metaphors, which are powerful language devices. Metaphors take on a role beyond aesthetics in political speech, one of persuasion and manipulation. This thesis endeavors to unravel the motivations and underlying intentions of political rhetoric by deconstructing and analyzing Johnson's metaphors. It explains how these language devices are exploited to manipulate and influence audiences. Therefore, this paper attempts to provide an insight into the intricate connections between language, power, and persuasion in politics through an in-depth analysis and interpretation of Johnson's metaphorical language.

Key words: Johnson, metaphor, COVID-19, Brexit, war, journey, EU, language

PREFACE

I realized after giving it some serious thought that I was rather limited in terms of the choice of the topic for my master's to stay in my academic field. I would either have to deal with more literature, analyze some literary works, or focus my attention on a linguistic or cultural issue. Despite my natural tendency to lean towards cultural concerns, I decided to go for something a little more challenging this time around as I conducted my bachelor's thesis on the cultural subject. Additionally, I have also been intrigued by such a controversial figure as Boris Johnson appears to be. I, therefore, welcomed my supervisor's suggestion to devote my work to the nuances of the figurative language of this internationally renowned politician.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Boris Johnson is a controversial yet charismatic figure and is known for his idiomatic and often undiplomatic language. During his tenure, Boris Johnson's use of figurative language was notable for its vividness and ability to captivate his audience. He painted pictures with his words, employing descriptive metaphors and similes that brought his messages to life (Regmi, 2015). For example, when discussing the economy, Johnson often referred to it as a *booming fortress*, conveying a sense of strength and resilience (Ball, 2022). This figurative language not only evoked optimism but also reassured the public that the country was on a path to prosperity. Furthermore, Johnson's figurative language was not limited to positive imagery. He also utilized figures of speech to convey the complexities and challenges facing the nation. In one instance, he likened navigating Brexit negotiations to *walking a tightrope over a stormy sea*, emphasizing the delicate balance and potential dangers. Overall, Johnson's use of figurative language added depth and impact to his communications, allowing him to connect with his audience on an emotional level.

Throughout his time as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson has conceptualized and conveyed the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 outbreak as well as the nuances of Brexit using metaphors reminiscent of warfare. Such metaphors are deliberately employed for a variety of reasons, from making complex topics more accessible to the general public to understand to eliciting feelings that are consistent with shared experiences. The goal of this thesis is to examine the specific applications, circumstances, and implications of Johnson's metaphorical language in terms of influencing political discourse, creating a feeling of urgency, and affecting public views of these momentous events.

The aim of the thesis is to investigate and analyze the figurative language that Boris Johnson utilized while serving as Prime Minister. Since the scope of the thesis does not allow us to deal in detail with all the figurative linguistic devices used by Boris Johnson, we have decided to focus on metaphors. Structured into six chapters, this thesis analyzes metaphor's theoretical foundations and its empirical applications in various contexts. It embarks on an exploration of figurative language, with a particular focus on metaphors, aiming to uncover the intricate mechanisms that underlie their formation, the cognitive processes involved, and the profound implications they hold for both language and cognition.

The first chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to metaphor theory, including its philosophical underpinnings and historical evolution. Drawing upon insights from the theory of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor, this chapter investigates how metaphor shapes political speech and how it is perceived in media texts. The paper additionally looks into multiple approaches for categorizing metaphors, providing a foundation for subsequent research.

The focus of the following chapters turns to empirical investigation, analyzing metaphors in two different contexts: the COVID-19 epidemic and the Brexit negotiations. The second chapter focuses on how Boris Johnson employed a rhetorical strategy to articulate public health measures, policies, and remedies by navigating the complexity of the COVID-19 crisis through metaphorical language. This chapter looks at the speeches, press conferences, and public addresses delivered by Johnson in an attempt to identify the metaphorical frameworks that influenced the public discourse on the pandemic.

The third chapter digs into Brexit discussions, examining the metaphors Johnson employed during negotiations with the European Union. Johnson's use of metaphorical language provides insights into his strategic communication techniques and the broader discursive dynamics.

This thesis seeks to improve the understanding of the ways language influences political discourse and public opinion by clarifying the function of metaphor in Boris Johnson's political rhetoric. By employing a multidisciplinary methodology that combines theoretical understanding with empirical investigation, it aims to shed light on the complex interactions that exist between language, metaphor, and politics in present-day settings.

2 METHODOLOGY

Research on metaphorical processes in communication is of great scientific contribution, especially when analysing internationally significant events such as Brexit or global pandemics. Examining how the British former Prime Minister expresses himself about these two discursive events using metaphors gives us insight into not only his own approach but also the perception of society. This research also sheds light on the mental processes associated with figurative language, and the overall impact of it on public actions. With metaphors increasingly being used as a key tool for manipulating speech in the media and political discourse, this topic is particularly relevant in the present day. At the same time, we consider the research in question to be very topical because metaphors are nowadays no longer regarded as just an ornamental linguistic device, but after the cognitive revolution of the 1970s, when there was a turn in science, metaphors are now looked upon as part of our thinking.

Based on the comprehensive analysis of Johnson's figurative language in his speeches, our study reveals a nuanced understanding of his rhetorical strategies. The systematic identification and analysis of metaphors unveil unique characteristics in his communication style, distinguishing it from other political leaders. Our analysis centers on Boris Johnson's speeches during his tenure as Prime Minister from July 24, 2019, to September 6, 2022.

The object of our research is Boris Johnson's speeches and the metaphors, their functions, pragmatic potential, and intentions of their use in shaping the perception of both COVID-19 and Brexit. By addressing these objectives, the thesis aims to provide a multifaceted analysis of Boris Johnson's use of metaphors, offering insights into the intricate interplay between language, politics, and public perception. The main sources for our applied research on Boris Johnson's metaphorical language are the websites *ukpol.co.uk* and *gov.uk*, which both provide transcripts of Johnson's speeches throughout his time as Prime Minister.

We employ the descriptive method to outline our approach to investigating metaphors, providing a clear understanding of our analytical process. Additionally, we utilize a comparative method to juxtapose various theoretical frameworks in the study of metaphor, enhancing our theoretical foundation. Our approach to metaphor analysis involves identifying metaphors within Johnson's speeches and conducting a detailed

examination of the metaphorical frames and their constituent slots. For example, the metaphor of war may involve slots such as *beat*, *enemy*, *killer*, or *fight*. Abstraction enables us to generalize findings, highlighting recurring patterns and themes in his rhetorical approach. The use of induction gradually builds a comprehensive view of Johnson's figurative language, while deduction allows us to apply established theories to evaluate the efficacy of his communication strategies. Through synthesis, our conclusions integrate diverse pieces of information, providing a coherent insight into the multifaceted role of metaphor in Johnson's political discourse and its enduring impact on public perception and political power.

We aim to identify metaphors and categorize them into metaphorical models such as metaphors of *war*, *journey*, *family*, *crime*, *food*, etc. Each model has distinct slots. We analyze the prevalence of these models and endeavor to understand Johnson's purpose in using them. We suspect war metaphors might dominate, given his leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic often likened to a war. We will eventually explore whether Johnson seeks to convince the public of his actions' correctness through these metaphors and assess their effectiveness.

We formulate the following hypotheses, the veracity of which we ascertain in the analytical section of the thesis, based on the topic, its objectives, and methodology:

1. Boris Johnson employs metaphorical language to portray Brexit-related issues and challenges as a *journey*, *struggle*, or *conflict*. This deliberate framing reflects Johnson's rhetorical strategies aimed at shaping public perception and gaining support for his stance on Brexit.

3. Johnson's use of metaphorical language in discussing COVID-19 is expected to portray the pandemic as a *war* or *crisis*. This framing aims to evoke a sense of urgency, solidarity, or resilience in addressing the public health emergency.

2. In political contexts, metaphor serves a variety of substantial purposes but predominantly manipulative, cognitive, expressive-evaluative, and persuasive.

Three main domains will be thoroughly covered in the thesis: First, the thesis will examine the theoretical framework of metaphor research, providing definitions for key terms along with an explanation of the concept of conceptual metaphor. Furthermore, the study will methodically identify metaphors in Boris Johnson's speeches and evaluate them

critically in terms of their contexts, implications, functions, intentions, and discursive techniques. Finally, it will assess how these metaphors affect public perception, examining the extent to which they influence attitudes and opinions, how they support Johnson's political message, and how they contribute to his entire communication strategy.

3 FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE AND METAPHOR

Figurative language, particularly in the form of metaphors, serves as a fascinating domain for investigation due to its ability to transcend the literal and evoke nuanced layers of meaning. By delving into the world of metaphors, this study seeks to unravel the cognitive substrates that enable individuals to comprehend and generate these linguistic constructs.

The term *metaphor* is elucidated by various sources, each emphasizing its distinctive aspects. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a metaphor is characterized as “an expression, often found in literature, which describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary contributes to this definition by specifying metaphor as “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.” Additionally, the definition provided by Oregon State University aptly encapsulates the concept, defining metaphor as “a comparison between two things that are otherwise unrelated.” Collectively, these definitions offer a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of metaphor, encompassing its literary, linguistic, and comparative dimensions.

However, metaphor is a difficult concept to define because of its dynamism, subjectivity, various forms, sensitivity to context, and creative nature. It is often described and interpreted instead of being clearly defined. There are two main reasons why metaphor defies definition. To begin with, there are multiple but related, interpretations for this term. Second, definitions vary to reflect distinctly diverse theoretical objectives and presumptions both inside and between its various senses (Glucksberg, 2008, p. 3).

Metaphors, as a subset of figurative language, play a crucial role in shaping how individuals conceptualize and communicate abstract or complex ideas. The exploration of their mechanisms involves an examination of how distinct concepts are metaphorically linked, contributing to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the subjects discussed. The cognitive processes engaged in metaphorical thinking are integral to the comprehension and expression of ideas that extend beyond the literal, utilizing the imaginative and associative capacities of the human mind.

Furthermore, the implications of metaphors extend beyond mere linguistic ornamentation; they have far-reaching consequences for cognition. Metaphors often serve

as cognitive tools, facilitating the comprehension of abstract or unfamiliar concepts by relating them to more concrete and familiar domains. As such, this thesis aims to shed light on how metaphors act as cognitive bridges, aiding in the assimilation and interpretation of complex information.

In summary, the investigation into metaphors within the broader context of figurative language is driven by a curiosity to uncover the intricate workings of these linguistic devices. By understanding the cognitive processes involved and the implications they carry for language and cognition, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper appreciation of the role metaphors play in shaping the overall understanding of the world.

Metaphors may add originality and clarity to writing and everyday interactions by putting two independent aspects into a comparison, allowing us to perceive things from multiple perspectives and in a new light. Lakoff's perception of the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, p. 5). While metaphor enjoys extensive usage in everyday communication, it is often construed as a poetic device, exemplifying extraordinary language. The introduction of the term typically occurs within the context of a literature class, where it is predominantly characterized as a purely poetic device. This initial encounter has contributed to the perpetuation of the traditional perception of metaphor, emphasizing its association with exceptional language. The prevalent understanding of metaphor as an extraordinary linguistic construct is, to a significant extent, shaped by this early introduction in the realm of literary education. In contrast to this commonly held notion, metaphor is not inherently confined to poetic figures found solely in poetry or other idealistic compositions; rather, it is a pervasive linguistic expression commonly employed in human communication. It is remarkable how it conveys human thoughts, perceptions, understanding, lives, and unconscious behaviours. As previously discussed, metaphors transcend mere verbal expressions; they concurrently function as conceptual constructs integrated into our mental imagery. This sets them apart from conventional metaphor theories, which rely on the idea that every metaphorical expression can, in theory, be substituted with a non-metaphorical one. Unlike the traditional interpretation, metaphor has been interpreted as a means of creating and organizing representations of our reality.

The whole cognitive structure, which directs human actions and thoughts, is essentially metaphorical (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, p. 4). The conceptions govern how humans see the world and navigate their interpersonal interactions. The conceptual

framework is crucial in establishing the experience of the world. The cognitive theory of metaphor reveals the mechanisms by which humans conceptualize reality and how they integrate new knowledge into these primary concepts, thereby revealing the structure of our cognition. Therefore, metaphors often illustrate pre-existing connections that are essential to our experience rather than making wholly new ones (Gibbs Jr. et al., 2004, p. 1190-1191).

However, people are not typically conscious of their conceptual system. In the performance of daily activities, cognitive processes, and behaviours often operate with a high degree of automation, adhering to pre-established patterns. The exact nature of these lines is far from clear. Examining language constitutes one method for gaining deeper insights. Language plays a crucial role in revealing the fundamental aspects of the conceptual system that support both thought processes and behaviour, as communication is inherently built upon it. Language is a multifaceted tool that allows humans to communicate complex ideas, emotions, and experiences. Figurative language, a prominent element of linguistic expression, transcends the boundaries of literal communication to evoke vivid imagery, convey abstract concepts, and create resonant emotional experiences. At the heart of figurative language, metaphors stand as one of the most potent and pervasive linguistic devices. According to Lakoff and Johnson, language is the space in which the system of concepts of human knowledge of the world can be separated because the system of linguistic communication is laid on the same foundation as the system of these concepts (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, p. 4). Insofar as metaphor was something extraordinary in the rhetorical conception, it becomes something essential and also mundane from a cognitive point of view.

According to Black, metaphors play a mediating role in expressing analogies or structural correspondence. Each metaphorical statement implies both a statement of likeness and a statement of comparison, both of which are considered weaker than the original metaphor. However, acknowledging that metaphors are rooted in similarity and analogy does not necessarily contradict Whately's (1846) perspective that similes or comparisons differ only in form from metaphors or Bain's (1887) view that metaphors involve implied similarities in term usage. It is important to note that covert identity, as highlighted by Black, is distinct from mere implication (Black, 1977, p. 445).

3.1 HISTORY

Given that all theories have their origins, it is vital to examine historical perspectives to comprehend the current perception of metaphor. Since ancient times, there have been numerous approaches to the study of metaphor. The term “metaphor” comes from the Greek language and means transfer, transference: meta (trans) + pherein (to carry). In ancient Greece, the metaphor was most profoundly elaborated by Aristotle (384 B.C.E. - 322 B.C.E.), who characterized it as “the application of a name that belongs to something else, either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy” (Aristotle, 1961). Aristotle viewed metaphor as a linguistic mechanism that could be applied to everyday life, but most of his contemporaries attributed to it a mainly ornamental function and considered it one of the many figures of speech.

An important period that laid the foundation for the future study of metaphor was that of ancient Rome. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 B.C. – 43 B.C.) made a significant contribution to the study of metaphor, according to whom metaphor fills the lack of words in language and combines metonymy, synecdoche, and catachresis.

The Roman orator and teacher of rhetoric Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (c. 35 CE – 100 CE), on the other hand, characterized it as an innate human quality that enables us to name anything in the world.

During the Middle Ages (476 AD – 1492 AD) and the Renaissance (late 14th century to mid-17th century), literal, non-metaphorical language was seen as the most appropriate tool for objectively naming reality, and the use of metaphor was condemned for its inexactness and ambiguity.

The same situation could have been observed in the Classical period when its representatives tried to limit the use of colloquial words and metaphors. The representative of the English Enlightenment, the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, considered metaphor to be an ornament of speech and argued that if we want to express ourselves rationally, it should be avoided, as it is not a reliable source in the search for truth.

Friedrich Nietzsche took the opposite view, characterizing it as a source of meaning and truth that has an essential role in understanding the world around us. Thus, Nietzsche regarded it as a creative force and not an obstacle to understanding the world (Grey, 2000, p. 3). Metaphor has been the focus of interest for rhetoricians, philosophers, and scientists since the early ages. However, it was not until the twentieth century that a breakthrough occurred, recognizing its pervasive influence on knowledge, language, and

culture. This newfound understanding led to a heightened appreciation of its significance across diverse academic disciplines.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

Since conceptual metaphors are so ingrained in our daily speech and thought processes that most people no longer recognize them as metaphors, they are sometimes referred to as “dead” (Vaičėnėnienė, 2009, p. 40), lexicalized or conventional. Therefore, the more vivid and creative metaphors are, the more interesting they tend to be.

Lakoff and Johnson in their groundbreaking work *Metaphors We Live by* (1980) categorize conceptual metaphors into three categories: *ontological*, *structural*, and *orientational*. To be exact, ontological metaphors are a kind of structural metaphors. Analyses have also shown that an orientational metaphor can only be a variation of a structural one (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, p. 151-152). Given that the authors perceive structural metaphor as primary and that its definition is identical to that of metaphor in general, it is even more attainable to reduce all other forms of metaphor to structural metaphor. Because of their “dysfunctional” classification, from this moment forth only the collocation “conceptual metaphor” is employed in the research paper.

Conceptual metaphor is a meta-entity that exists above a given concept’s verbal expression. According to Lakoff and Johnson, “Metaphor is a natural phenomenon. Conceptual metaphor is a natural part of human thought, and linguistic metaphor is a natural part of human language” (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, p. 247). The unidirectionality of transmission is a key tenet of Cognitive Metaphor Theory (the terms cognitive and conceptual are used interchangeably to refer to the same theoretical framework). It suggests that abstract domains are rooted in or emerge from immediate sensory experience, in Johnson’s words, “Meaning is grounded in our bodily experience” (Johnson, 2007, p. 12). And so, conceptualization in the form of metaphorical projection is one of the most significant criteria for encompassing these abstract concepts.

The interplay between knowledge and knowledge structures (frames and scenarios) of two conceptual domains – the source domain and the target domain – is the foundation of the theory of conceptual metaphor. This unidirectional cognitive process, also known as metaphorical mapping, uses aspects of one (source) domain to understand

aspects of another (target) domain. The cognitive potential of metaphor involves structuring the less obvious conceptual target domain at the expense of knowledge from the source domain, which is continually supplemented with new knowledge and experience. Thus, mapping in its partial correspondence naturally involves both domains as it always occurs partially and is structurally limited. Metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2002), have a perspectival function and can be used to highlight or hide specific elements of their respective domains.

In metaphorical thinking, universality is produced by the appropriate neurological structures and the universal empirical base. Other components can differ both within and between cultures, including source domains, mappings, entailment, language expressions, etc. Abstract notions that are metaphorically defined, which happens spontaneously and instinctively through metaphor, make up a portion of our conceptual framework. According to Kövecses (2015), the level at which this process takes place is known as the supra-individual. A traditional, static system of mappings between the physical source domain and the abstract target domain makes up this level. Abstract notions are taken to be literal since these mappings are automatic and unconscious, but in reality, they are based on a conceptual metaphor (Kövecses, 2009, p. 14–15).

Although the theory of conceptual metaphor has been criticized by scholars for focusing only on lexicalized metaphors and neglecting the study of metaphor in real discourse and contexts, it has become a prerequisite for further exploration and the drawing of ideas (Kövecses, 2008, p. 168). Traditional Conceptual Metaphor Theory, led by Lakoff and Johnson, is criticized for creating conceptual metaphors and illustrating them with invented metaphors. Russian expert V. Moskvina agrees, stating that the theory exaggerates the influence of metaphor as a regulator of human linguistic and mental activity, stating that its vivid inner form can determine the external style and form of speech action in certain cases (Moskvina, 2006, p. 131).

The exploration of linguistic metaphor encompasses two primary avenues: semantic and cognitive perspectives. Semantic approaches consider metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon, focusing on the inherent characteristics of language. In contrast, cognitive approaches scrutinize metaphor as a mental phenomenon, delving into its role in shaping thought processes. Slovak linguists O. Orgoňová and A. Bohunická distinguish between these approaches, emphasizing that semantics reveals common content components through the lens of similarity. The semantic method looks at how metaphors

are structured semantically, how processes shape metaphorical meaning, and how senses relate to one another in both original and metaphorical meaning. It places a strong emphasis on stylistic elements like emotionality and aesthetic meaning. To fully understand metaphor, one must recognize the nominative unit as metaphorical and look for instances of semantic unity that are reflected in the basic and auxiliary subjects. On the other hand, cognitive approaches perceive metaphors as manifestations of classification relations. This interpretation of meaning facilitates the reconstruction of how individuals understand the world through language. The definition of meaning aligns with the awareness of an average language user, seen as a carrier of culture. It delineates all elements of meaning within the collective consciousness of users, organizing them based on the naive consciousness of culture bearers. In practical terms, this involves a sequence of interpretations reflecting an ordinary person's perspective on an object's purpose, meaning, and safeguarding (Orgoňová, Bohunická, 2011, p. 92). The aim and purpose of the cognitive method is thus to investigate the patterns in how the human brain categorizes and conceptualizes reality. The language content is only understood in the context of an individual's whole cognitive system.

In terms of internal structure, metaphors are divided into *tenor* (subject focus, initial domain), *vehicle* (fig, conceptual domain, source of metaphorization), and *base*. To obtain an entirely new viewpoint on the tenor, the vehicle in a metaphor acts as a point of reference. One should experience a greater shift in their perceptions of the tenor through metaphor understanding than they would in their perceptions of the vehicle given this asymmetry in function (Kelly, 1987, p. 36).

3.3 METAPHOR, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Language and culture are closely related. Since language is a means of transmitting and expressing cultural ideas, values, and customs, it is an essential part of culture. On the other hand, language is shaped by culture, which affects vocabulary, phrases, and communication styles. Culture and language are interdependent, and they work together to shape people's perceptions, social relationships, and the collective identity of a community or society. Culture shapes the way people conceptualize abstract concepts and has figurative expressions embedded in its contexts. In this sense, metaphors

frequently draw on culturally specific symbols, and experiences, reflect cultural values and norms and so contribute to shaping the way individuals perceive the world.

As proposed by the work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), while there is often coherence between culture's basic notions and its fundamental principles, contradictions may arise between these principles and the accompanying metaphors. The shaping of value priorities is influenced by both personal ideals and the subculture within which individuals exist. Although subcultures within a mainstream culture may share underlying beliefs, their specific priorities can vary. Individuals and organisations, influenced by diverse perspectives, hold distinct notions of what is considered right or moral. Despite these differences, each value system tends to align with the primary orientational metaphors embraced by mainstream society (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, p. 23).

Therefore, translating metaphors across different languages and cultures poses significant challenges due to linguistic and cultural variations, as noted by Schäffner (Schäffner, 2004, p. 1253). The intricate nature of metaphors, deeply rooted in language and culture, makes it difficult to seamlessly convey their nuances and meanings across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

According to Schäffner (2004), there are three possible outcomes for a translation of conceptual metaphor: (1) it might exist in both the source and target cultures with the same or comparable metaphorical expressions; (2) it might exist in both cultures with distinct metaphorical expressions; or (3) it might be unique to one of the cultures under comparison (Schäffner, p. 44). Within the works of researchers, many opinions exist regarding the cultural distinctiveness and universality of metaphors (Vaičėnienė, 2009, p. 41).

Recent research also suggests that linguistic metaphors serve as indicators of culturally specific knowledge. Metaphoric language has become a tool for highlighting the distinctions or similarities in conceptual thinking between the source and target cultures. These variations are influenced by behavioral, historical, environmental, and other local factors, as articulated by Vaičėnienė (Vaičėnienė, 2009, p. 40).

Consequently, understanding linguistic metaphors becomes crucial for unravelling the cultural intricacies embedded in language, shedding light on how societies conceptualize and articulate their experiences.

3.4 CLASSIFICATION OF METAPHORS

There are many different criteria, classifications, and types of metaphors that linguists, cultural scientists, and philosophers have tried to categorize. There are no set standards, though; each researcher has come up with various ones. Semantic categorization helps research by comparing major and auxiliary subjects based on features while focusing on the meaning of a metaphorical symbol. Moskvin, a prominent figure within the context of Russian metaphorology, categorizes metaphors into three distinct types: *semantic*, *formal*, and *functional* (Moskvin, 2006).

Within the semantic classification, he distinguishes five types.

1. Moskvin classifies metaphors based on the thematic affiliation of the auxiliary subject, including theatrical, chess, medical, sports, financial, military, animalistic, spatial, anthropomorphic, and machine metaphors. These metaphors reflect material culture and linguistic phenomena (Moskvin, 2006, p. 114).
2. Metaphors are sources of synonymy that are employed in lexical and semantic classes. Intra-system sources include generic units, word formation, tropes, and substitution theory, while extra-system sources include word formation and generic hierarchy.
3. Metaphors are classified based on the semantic distance between the main and auxiliary subjects. They are divided into internal and external structures – the more distant the metaphorized fields, the more expressive and interesting they are. The external structure includes the comparative expression and keyword, while internal metaphors include pronomination (description of an object based on its attributes as opposed to its actual name) and precedent nouns, which are associated with familiar texts or situations.
4. Metaphors are classified based on auxiliary and basic subjects, determining lexical groups that acquire figurative meaning through transfer formulas. These metaphors form a motivic series, sometimes with archetypal characters due to their origin in ancient times. This classification helps determine the sources of language lexical microsystems.
5. Metaphors are classified based on their internal coherence, with dead metaphors having literal and non-metaphorical meanings, living metaphors requiring interpretation, attenuated metaphors being expressions we use without awareness, weakened metaphors hidden in interesting sentences, and vivid metaphors

categorized into occasional, authorial, and conventional (Moskvin, 2006, p. 126-127). Lakoff and Johnson further categorize metaphors as conventional (dead) and imaginative (alive) (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980, p. 56).

It is vital to consider all aspects of the metaphor's expression form while classifying them formally. Here, Moskvin uses textual, phrasal, and verbal metaphors as well as metaphorized verbal phrases. On top of that, verbal metaphors are classified by grammatical form (genitive), syntactic function (predicative), and word type (substantive, adjectival, verbal).

Last but not least, the main objective of functional classification is to select a metaphor depending on its intended application. Metaphor serves a variety of purposes, including evaluative, ornamental, figurative, explanatory, heuristic (cognitive), nominative, and expressive functions, which we shall attempt to identify in the following chapters by examining Johnson's speeches.

3.5 FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF POLITICAL LANGUAGE IN MEDIA DISCOURSE

In the realm of media texts, metaphor serves a diverse array of functions, ranging from cognitive and communicative to persuasive, popularizing, axiological, expressive-evaluative, euphemistic, pragmatic, aesthetic, nominative, explanatory, ameliorative, pejorative, and manipulative. The authors of media texts aim to instill in the population these kinds of mindsets or false, inaccurate preconceptions and stereotypes of thinking that work in their favour. They also intend to spread misinformation and create myths. The construction of authorial, creative metaphors, which can raise the recipient's interest in the given material and contribute to its easier retention, is also a common feature of media texts.

Textual structures in media discourse express or signal hidden meanings, ideas, and ideologies, which is also characteristic of metaphors. To comprehend these hidden meanings in the text, it is required to examine the cognitive, social, political, and cultural contexts. The cognitive approach is founded on the assumption that texts do not have meaning; rather, meaning is assigned to them by language users or their mental processes (Jacob, 2002).

Discourse is essentially any text (oral or written, contemporary or historical, real or fabricated). The interconnectedness of political and media discourses is highlighted by M. Bočák, who observes a symbiotic relationship between them. He notes that the global and national political discourse of contemporary Western societies relies on the media, and the media, in turn, depend on politics as their sources of information. However, there is a shifting balance of power between the two, with media discourse having a discourse-colonizing potential. Bočák introduces the concept of “mediatization” to describe the media’s significant influence on shaping other discourses actively and passively, taking the place of central communication institutions. This phenomenon, as analyzed in the transformations of political communication, underscores the power of the media to impact the form of social and political communication (Bočák, 2010, p. 137).

Metaphors have undeniable rhetorical effects in media and political discourse, and they have the ability to penetrate the recipient’s mind due to their imagery and unexpectedness. Metaphors generate new meanings, which can both conceal and potentially shift thinking. Politicians are fond of utilizing metaphor and metonymy in political speech to construct a compelling picture of reality to which they adjust style and content and through which they aim to appeal to emotions. In democratic political disputes, the use of emotional and metaphorical images is a key strategy for many political groups.

The political language mosaic is unique as it uses professional terminology in an unknown context, reducing it to a metaphorical form. Political language utilizes metaphors effectively, playing a crucial role in shaping political discourse. However, it is essential to recognize that metaphors, despite their compelling nature, can be highly misleading. Figurative language is often used assertively to name and impose harsh measures. As Lišková concludes “(metaphors) serve politics primarily to create consent in cases where refusal is assumed” (Lišková, 2016, p. 197). To substantiate these propositions, it is often the case that politicians, in an attempt to shield the public from confronting unsettling realities, commonly engage in the deliberate bafflement of adverse elements within their statements. Scholars in political and media linguistics argue that excessive use of emotionally charged linguistic devices, such as metaphors, in contemporary communication replaces factual analysis with emotion, affecting the recipient’s perception of social, economic, and political reality (Dulebová, 2018, p. 242). This assumption underpins the strategic use of language, particularly metaphors, as a means to manage

public perceptions by selectively presenting information and mitigating the harshness of certain aspects.

Building on the previously stated arguments, Orwell's classic article *Politics and the English Language* (1946) examines the role of political language in shaping public opinion. He highlights the potential misuse of language to manipulate public opinion, stating that political speech and writing are primarily used to defend indefensible.

Metaphors in political discourse have varying levels of expressiveness and imagery, with innovative, creative, and original metaphors being the most expressive and emotional. De Landtsheer categorizes metaphors in her study *Collecting Political Meaning from the Count of Metaphor* (2009) into six categories, from weakest to strongest.

The weakest metaphors are those related to everyday reality, being not far from the literal meaning, such as family, objects, actions, and people. *Nature* metaphors express human control over the environment or its loss, reflecting the "naturalness" of political life. *Political*, *intellectual*, and *technological* metaphors provide politicians with a perspective for constructing multidimensional processes, while *mechanism* and *machine* metaphors point to the absence of control. Metaphors of *violence* and *disaster* convey rather negative feelings, while *sports*, *games*, and *drama* are manipulative due to the popularity and presumed harmlessness of the activities they point to. *Medical* metaphors, which are metaphors of the body and death, present the strongest type. Since "embodied meaning" is fundamental to cognitive processes, they have their strongest emotional impact when tightly linked to the body (De Landtsheer, 2009, p. 65-69).

The last aspect considered by De Landtsheer is the metaphor's style. Instead of using persuasive language, political speeches with weak metaphorical impact concentrate more on the real-world applications of political issues and daily living. However, metaphor-heavy speeches are beginning to deviate more and more from the accepted political and material norms (De Landtsheer, 2009, p. 69).

The entire political language serves multiple purposes. Persuasion is one of the primary functions of political language. Persuasion is the process of using language to change the voters' opinions. To reach a consensus, persuasion should ideally take the form of compelling arguments. Thus, persuasion is a dynamic process that develops jointly

between a politician and a citizen, depending on each party's willingness to be convinced. In political discourse, metaphor has a huge pragmatic potential, i.e. the power to affect the recipient and bring about a specific sort of decision and political behavior.

The informative role, frequently associated with persuasion, is an additional, equally significant function of political language. Politicians have a duty to enlighten the public about all aspects of their actions. At the same time, it is in their interest to persuade the public of their intentions. Within political discourse, metaphors assume a persuasive function, wielding the power to sway the audience and encourage them to adopt specific political stances.

On top of that, metaphors operate as effective communicators by not only conveying information but also facilitating evaluation. The effectiveness of an assessment, whether positive or negative, often hinges on the emotion it invokes. Politicians strategically employ metaphors to praise their own accomplishments, creating a positive sentiment, while concurrently casting a negative light on the achievements of their opponents' policies. In doing so, metaphors become a nuanced tool for shaping public perception and reinforcing political narratives. Furthermore, when politicians find themselves at a rhetorical impasse and they have seemingly run out of pertinent points to make, metaphors provide a sentimental avenue of communication, allowing them to connect emotionally with their audience even in the absence of substantive arguments. The emotional resonance can be a compelling force in influencing public opinion.

Certainly, the purposeful use of figurative language in political speech is apparent, as supported by the mentioned examinations, and these are just a few examples among numerous scholarly investigations on the matter. What was once a technical term may turn into a political metaphor in a top-down manner (that is, from the politician to the citizen), with the difference between the ordinary citizen's way of communicating and the politicians' manufactured rhetoric being readily apparent. Thus, the supremacy paradigm. The public frequently could not understand political speeches, which is why this kind of rhetoric has come to be associated with statements that are meaningless, incomprehensible, and without significance.

Nevertheless, transformation can also unfold in the opposite direction, originating from the citizen and influencing the politician. The politician uses common language that

the average person can understand while simultaneously “specializing” in language that serves their own political agenda.

Given that facts matter in politics, the language should be, above all, the language par excellence, meaning quintessential. It should be spoken in a straightforward, understandable manner that facilitates communication with the individuals who hold the power to confer legitimacy.

Over the last two decades, political communication has undergone a noteworthy transformation and has evolved from an incomprehensible style to one characterized by identification. This evolution involves a deliberate effort to simplify language, making it more accessible to ordinary citizens. Politicians have adapted their speeches to align with the common language of the people, incorporating simple words from everyday vocabulary into the specialized realm of politics. This linguistic shift serves not only to enhance comprehension but also to emphasize the conative function of language, facilitating effective persuasion and establishing direct connections with listeners.

Research on *speech aggression* (Zakoyan, 2009; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013; Lefter et al., 2012) is interdisciplinary in nature and takes place mainly at the interface of rhetoric, political and media linguistics, psycholinguistics, linguoculturology (scientific field that investigates how language and culture interact and influence one another), and cognitive linguistics. When studying speech aggression, it is important to pay attention to the analysis of lexical means as well as to the communicative strategies of their use, to the distortion of linguistic norms, to neologisms and occasionalism with explicit or implicit intention of aggressive action. The manifestations of speech aggression are most often found in political discourse, which is seen as a scene of a struggle for power and influence, characterized by high emotionality. Linguists distinguish between implicit and explicit forms of verbal hostility based on observations from recent studies. Paraphrasing the addressee’s words, language play, precedent phenomena, and indirect comparisons are examples of implicit speech violence. Invective lexis, verbs with destructive semantics, and expressions with negative semantics, such as contradictory metaphors, are examples of explicit expressions. Speech aggression is the intentional use of verbal attacks to cause psychological and emotional harm to the target.

Specifically, metaphors are used in political discourse to fill gaps in political terminology, reduce the complexity of political speeches, and contribute to their linguistic

economy and innovation. However, the ambiguity of metaphors also leads to the same words being used sometimes positively and sometimes negatively, depending on the political context. This places a burden on the observer, who must constantly keep up with the changing uses of words. The linguistic pictures are especially significant because they transfer the terminology and reasoning of well-known and physically tangible domains of life into intricate, abstract, and challenging-to-understand occurrences. The choice of a specific linguistic image has a significant impact on the substance of political and media discourses since it highlights some features of a situation while hiding others (Helmová, 2020).

4 BORIS JOHNSON

In our examination of political discourse and rhetorical strategies, Boris Johnson emerges as an appealing point of interest. The Prime Minister's distinctive and dynamic manner of speaking, characterized by a fondness for figurative language, serves as a compelling entry point for understanding the nuanced art of political communication. This examination aims to delve into the strategic use of metaphor and linguistic devices in Johnson's speeches and reveal their impact on public perceptions and political narratives.

Before delving into an in-depth analysis of Boris Johnson's linguistic strategies, it is inevitable to provide a concise overview of his life and background. This introductory exploration seeks to illuminate the key facets of Johnson's biography, shedding light on the formative experiences and influences that have shaped his identity as a prominent political figure.

Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson is a British politician and writer who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party from 2019 to 2022. He previously served as Foreign Secretary from 2016 to 2018 and Mayor of London from 2008 to 2016.

Johnson was born in New York City to British parents and was educated at Eton College and the University of Oxford. He began his career as a journalist, working for *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*. In 1997, he was elected to the House of Commons as the Member of Parliament (MP) for Henley. He served as Shadow Minister for the Arts from 2001 to 2002 and Shadow Minister for Higher Education from 2002 to 2004. In 2004, he was appointed Shadow Minister for State Schools. Johnson was elected Mayor of London in 2008 and re-elected in 2012. As Mayor, he introduced a number of policies, including the introduction of the "Boris Bikes" bicycle sharing scheme and the "Oyster Card" contactless payment system for public transport. He also oversaw the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

In 2016, Johnson was appointed Foreign Secretary by Prime Minister Theresa May. He resigned from this position in 2018 in protest at May's Brexit deal. He was a leading figure in the campaign for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, and he became Prime Minister after May resigned in 2019. Johnson's premiership was marked by several controversies, including his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, which the paper looks deeper into onwards, and his decision to prorogue Parliament in 2019. He

resigned as Prime Minister in 2022 following a number of scandals, including the Partygate one.

Johnson is a controversial figure, but he is also a popular one. He is a charismatic and well-known politician, and he is seen by many as a strong leader. However, he is also often criticized for his gaffes and his lack of attention to detail. He has earned attention for his distinctive and unconventional communication style. As Strnad has summarized, Johnson's orations are distinguished by a theatrical manner, a humor-infused tone, and frequently contentious subject matter. Renowned for his distinctive style, he notably employs vivid metaphors and amusing remarks to make his speeches both entertaining and captivating yet challenging to decipher. Furthermore, his discourse regularly incorporates provocative declarations and exaggerations, contributing to its divisive nature (Strnad, 2023, p. 10).

His allegorically directed personal jabs amuse and encourage readers to join in the mockery. Even though insults are a common tactic used by populist politicians, they rarely produce such amusement, leaving one to wonder if he actually said what he said.

In addition to his linguistic playfulness, Boris Johnson's journalism has a unique ability to manipulate words beyond simple rephrasing. His ability to craft entirely new words contributes to the liveliness of his writing, creating a unique and memorable linguistic fingerprint. Johnson's vocabulary not only demonstrates creativity but also highlights his ability to add humor and energy to his writing, which makes readers find his journalism interesting and memorable. The use of vigorous consonant sounds further adds a sense of energy and impact to his language, enhancing the overall rhetorical effect.

5 COVID-19 THROUGH FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In times of crisis, political leaders often turn to metaphors to convey the gravity of the situation and rally public support. The COVID-19 pandemic has been no exception, with leaders worldwide employing the metaphor of war to frame the challenges posed by the virus. This chapter explores the use of the war metaphor in political speech on COVID-19, examining its impact on public perception and policy responses.

While many discourse analysts have demonstrated the significance of metaphors in political communication, few studies have looked at the ways in which these language devices may help or hurt crisis management and communication. This analysis stimulates discussion of critical issues concerning the use of the war or other repetitive metaphors. Our attention will be directed towards whether the speaker is employing the war metaphor to instill a sense of urgency and collective responsibility or if it is being used to manipulate public perception for personal or political gain. We will examine how the use of the war metaphor influences the emotional well-being of citizens, specifically whether it is aimed at fostering resilience and determination or if it contributes to fear and anxiety. We will delve into the extent to which the war metaphor guides or shapes the formulation and implementation of crisis management policies, and whether specific strategies aligned with the metaphor effectively address the crisis.

Furthermore, we will explore whether the use of the war metaphor enhances or erodes public trust in the government's crisis management efforts. Additionally, our inquiry will consider whether the war metaphor fosters unity among diverse social groups or if it contributes to polarization and division. We will also scrutinize whether certain segments of the population are excluded or included in the metaphorical framework..

Epidemics are frequently portrayed as a *war* in which the pathogen is the *enemy*. This language picture can be found in political discourse about the COVID-19 epidemic, with French President Macron declaring, *We are at war*, former US President Trump comparing the struggle to the Japanese attack on *Pearl Harbor*, and British Prime Minister Johnson referring to it as a *battle*. The overall logic of the epidemic is impacted by expressions like *war*, *enemy*, *killer*, or *victory*. Interestingly, war analogies are utilized exceptionally cautiously in Germany, and even during the pandemic, there are few explicit

references to this language imagery (Seixas, 2021, p. 9). However, public outcry quickly grew in response to such declarations of war, including from journalists and academics who believed that using military terminology during a public health crisis was deceptive and unhelpful (Musolff, 2022, p. 77). Rather, the linguistic representation of the crisis dominates political discourse, with the term *corona crisis* adhering to a linguistic tradition applied in response to shifts in the social framework, including the financial, euro, refugee, and climate crises.

This analysis delves into the strategic deployment of military metaphors by political figures in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, examining how these linguistic tools are employed to navigate the crisis. Metaphors, as fundamental elements of culture and language, play a pivotal role in shaping the public's understanding of disease. It has been recognized that the war metaphor effectively communicates the idea of a worldwide struggle against disease. This thesis reveals not only the pervasiveness of the war metaphor in the examined speeches but also its prominence as the overarching theme, providing the foundation for argumentative and rhetorical strategies.

This metaphor proves useful in crisis management, serving a range of purposes: preparing the public for impending challenges, influencing behavioral change, fostering national unity and resilience, demonstrating compassion and empathy, deflecting accountability, constructing enemies, and assigning blame. These are all examples of what might be behind the employment of such a language. By harnessing the power of the war metaphor, political figures effectively communicate the urgency and seriousness of the pandemic, mobilizing public support and cooperation in the face of this unprecedented global health crisis.

The analogy of the struggle against COVID-19 to war raises ethical concerns. Medical practitioners are required to offer emergency care but are not required to work in hospitals that cannot sufficiently limit dangers to their own lives. However, if society fails to provide them with proper protective equipment, it is critical to convey their experience within its own framework and not degrade their profession by comparing it to being *a soldier in a battle*. So let us acknowledge what they have done for society given that they did not have to. That would bring about an additional trauma, one many soldiers are

familiar with: the moral pain of trying to fit back into a society that does not recognize what is expected of them.

First of all, it communicates a sense of urgency and increased risk. Political leaders can stress the necessity for quick action and raise public awareness of the pandemic's possible repercussions by depicting the virus as an aggressive enemy. This approach has the potential to enhance adherence to public health guidelines and preventive measures and ensure introduced measures are followed. Metaphors related to war have the power to elevate individuals' awareness of issues regarded as serious and pressing and to enhance their readiness to modify their actions accordingly. In this way, using military metaphors to describe the danger of the virus and to support the necessity of drastic lifestyle adjustments and a sense of shared responsibility can be appropriate during the early stages of a pandemic (Flusberg et al., 2018, p. 6).

When discussing COVID-19, political figures frequently employ military analogies to prepare the public for hardships and to justify extreme measures like lockdowns, states of alert, and emergencies. Because these measures and sacrifices are frequently associated with memories of war, this metaphor aids in gaining public support. Speeches frequently open with a war metaphor, which is then utilized repeatedly to set the scene (Seixas, 2021, p. 4).

Secondly, the war metaphor also encourages cooperation and group effort, as evidenced in the following excerpt from Boris Johnson's speech on COVID-19: *That is why we will **defeat** this coronavirus and **defeat** it together. We will **win** because our NHS is the beating heart of this country. It is the best of this country. It is **unconquerable**. It is powered by love* [rev.com, 12/04/2020]. By portraying the epidemic as a common enemy, people and communities can come together in support of a common goal, encouraging a sense of purpose, responsibility, harmony, and solidarity. When it comes to organizing resources and coordinating efforts to lessen the pandemic's effects, this can be especially successful. However, critics counter that such framing undermines nuanced conversations regarding the origins of the virus and prevention from spreading because it oversimplifies the complex nature of a public health issue and reinforces a binary *us versus them* mentality (Van Scoy et al., 2022).

To maintain morale and activate people during a crisis, community solidarity and resilience are required. The war metaphor encourages the public to mobilize against the *invisible enemy*, as evidenced by political leaders during the COVID-19 outbreak. In crises, spokespersons often sympathize with victims of the pandemic and their families, recognizing their fortitude using compassion, concern, and empathy to increase their credibility and legitimacy (Seixas, 2021, p. 4-6).

Last but not least, the war metaphor may highlight the importance of leadership and judgement. Political leaders might boost their power and influence by projecting themselves as key players in the fight against COVID-19 and positioning themselves as vital in the fight for public health. In an attempt to diminish the severity of the pandemic, Donald Trump used wartime jargon and even referred to himself as *a wartime President* [politico.eu, 18/03/2020].

Getting people to change their behavior and comply with measures is ensured by discourse strategies that combine elements of hard and soft power. To illustrate, spokespersons may use soft power to request that the public behave in a specific way while simultaneously threatening legal action against noncompliance (hard power) (Seixas, 2021, p. 5).

As a result, a European-style prohibition on public meetings and fines for visiting contaminated regions were part of the UK's counter-coronavirus strategy. Johnson was convinced that the nations needed to stop pursuing their own interests and acknowledge that sacrifice was a necessary part of fighting and winning conflicts. Since World War II, the coronavirus has been the greatest threat to civilian lives (Musolff, 2022, p. 78). Despite the gravity of the situation, critics levelled accusations at Johnson, asserting that his response was characterized by delays and a failure to institute specific measures for virus control. Of particular concern was Johnson's decision to postpone the implementation of a national lockdown in March 2020 because of his indecision, a choice experts argue might have contributed to the UK's elevated death toll (Johnston, 2023).

As a crisis management icon that Johnson should aspire to be, Churchill is thought to have inspired him throughout the pandemic. Johnson was seizing the opportunity to become the new Churchill in the fight against coronavirus (Roberts, 2020).

The opening words *We must act like any **wartime government*** [gov.uk, 17/03/2020] were uttered by Boris Johnson on March 17, 2020, in a press conference concerning the COVID-19 outbreak. Johnson declared global war supported by his statement, *We are engaged in **a war against the disease which we have to win*** [pressandjournal.co.uk, 17/03/2020] and warned of a significant spread of the virus in a matter of days. *A **fight** we never picked against **an enemy** we still don't entirely understand* [rev.com, 12/04/2020] encompasses the two concepts of *fight* and *enemy* which both reflect Johnson's perspective and his view of the whole situation as a *war*.

During a nationally televised speech on March 23, 2020, Boris Johnson poignantly used metaphorical language when he described the coronavirus as an *invisible killer* [gov.uk, 23/03/2020]. The UK started enforcing stricter safety measures in reaction to the COVID-19 epidemic because this speech was momentous. In addition to outlining the threat, he provides the British people with precise guidance on how to tackle it. Seixas accurately pointed out that the speaker employs deontic modalities – linguistic devices that suggest how the world should be following particular norms, expectations, and speaker's desires – by telling the public *to stay at home*, employing phrases like *I must give, we must do*, and *people will only be allowed*. These modalities serve to clarify what is required and feasible in the ongoing crisis, contributing to the speaker's aim of influencing the audience to modify their behavior (Seixas, 2021, p. 5). The use of such language conveys a sense of urgency and underscores the seriousness of the situation, emphasizing the collective responsibility to halt the spread of the virus.

*Good evening, the coronavirus is **the biggest threat** this country has faced for decades – and this country is not alone. All over the world, we are seeing the devastating impact of this **invisible killer**. And so tonight I want to update you on the latest steps we are taking **to fight** the disease and what you can do to help* [gov.uk, 23/03/2020].

In the aforementioned utterance, Boris Johnson metaphorically depicts the coronavirus as a *threat* that poses imminent danger to the nation. This concept evokes the idea of an adversary or danger that the country must confront and overcome. The phrase *invisible killer* serves as a metaphorical depiction of the coronavirus, portraying it as a lethal force with profound and widespread consequences. The metaphor underscores the severity of the situation, suggesting that the virus may cause significant harm and

devastation. By describing the impact as *devastating*, Johnson emphasizes the magnitude of the effects caused by the virus. This metaphorical language aids in conveying the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the urgent need for collective action and preventive measures to mitigate its harmful effects.

Johnson utilizes various rhetorical devices to convey the profound impact and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of Johnson's speeches covering the pandemic begins with the metaphorical expression that *the struggle against COVID is the single biggest crisis the world has faced in my lifetime* [gov.uk, 22/09/2020] which vividly compares the battle against the virus to a crisis of immense magnitude. This metaphor sums up the severity and unprecedented nature of the global predicament.

According to Johnson, the coronavirus resembles an *attacker*, who strikes unexpectedly and insidiously, and often from behind: *If this virus were a physical assailant, an unexpected and invisible mugger, which I can tell you from personal experience it is, then this is the moment we have begun together to wrestle it to the floor* [theguardian.com, 27/04/2020]. These crime metaphors evoke an extremely negative image because the attack is unexpected, one usually fears for one's own life when ambushed. Such metaphorizing of the coronavirus therefore logically induces anxiety and fear in the recipients.

In the utterance *This is a struggle that humanity will win, and we in this country will win* [gov.uk, 22/09/2020] Johnson invokes imagery of resilience, determination, and eventual victory, much like in a battle or war. This metaphor promotes a sense of unity and collaboration, indicating that humanity collectively faces common challenges.

Another metaphor may be seen in *We stayed at home, protected the NHS, and saved thousands of lives* [gov.uk, 22/09/2020], which represents the actions taken to support and preserve the National Health Service (NHS). This phrase mirrors the *Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives* slogan, which invokes wartime imagery and sacrifice. This image emphasizes the significance of collective actions in preserving lives, leading to the statement that highlights successful efforts in managing the spread: *And for months with those disciplines of social distancing we have kept that virus at bay* [gov.uk, 22/09/2020]. Through various measures, such as social distancing, wearing masks and hygiene practices, people prevented the virus from spreading widely or causing significant

harm within a particular community or population. This creates an image of active defence against the virus, much like containing an advancing threat or enemy.

*The British people will want their government to continue to **fight** to protect them, you, and that is what we are doing, night and day. And yet the single greatest **weapon** we bring to this fight is the common sense of the people themselves – the joint resolve of this country to work together to suppress covid* [gov.uk, 22/09/2020].

In the abovementioned utterance, Boris Johnson suggests that while the government plays an important role in protecting the population from the coronavirus, the most powerful *weapon* in the *fight* against the pandemic is collective wisdom and determination. Boris Johnson emphasizes the crucial role of individuals in adhering to anti-pandemic measures and actively participating in the fight against the virus.

In the utterance *The tragic reality of having covid is that your mild cough can be someone else's **death knell*** [gov.uk, 22/09/2020] Johnson compares a mild cough to a *death knell*. In its direct meaning, the death knell is a bell that traditionally announces someone's death. This metaphor emphasizes the gravity of the situation and suggests that even seemingly minor symptoms can have fatal consequences for others.

The utterance *But now is the time for us all to summon the **discipline**, and the resolve, and **the spirit of togetherness** that will carry us through* [gov.uk, 22/09/2020] comprises a list of qualities, emphasizing the need for personal discipline, determination, and unity during challenging times. Collectively, these expressions enrich the text, offering nuanced insights into the complexities of the COVID-19 discourse.

*But the way forward has been clear ever since the vaccines arrived, and as we inoculate more people hour by hour, this is the time to hold our nerve in the **end game** of the **battle against the virus*** [ukpol.co.uk, 28/01/2021].

*By harnessing our collective ingenuity, we can ensure we have the vaccines, treatments and tests to be **battle-ready** for future health threats, as we **beat** Covid-19 and build back better together* [ukpol.co.uk, 19/02/2021].

In the abovementioned statements, the concepts of *end game*, *battle*, *battle-ready*, and *beat* are employed to frame the discourse around the COVID-19 pandemic. The first metaphor portrays the fight against the virus as a strategic battle, emphasizing the need for determination and perseverance in reaching the *end game* or final stage of victory. The second metaphor likens preparedness for future health threats to being *battle-ready*, highlighting the importance of proactive measures and collective innovation in confronting potential challenges. These metaphors underscore the significance of resilience, collaboration, and strategic planning in navigating through the pandemic and preparing for the future.

Even though there have been numerous examples of military vocabulary, we would mainly emphasize the high occurrence of the terms *fight*, *beat*, *killer*, and *enemy*, which have been outlined throughout the thesis. Political leaders, in our case Boris Johnson, frequently use the lexicon of war during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic to convey hidden messages. To support the claim, the thesis endeavors to name a couple more instances from Johnson's statements on coronavirus:

*I want to go through our overall plan for **beating** this new coronavirus.*

*Ultimately, to **beat** this crisis we will need a combination of better science, technology, ... [ukpol.co.uk, 17/03/2020].*

*We will **beat** the coronavirus and we will **beat** it together [ukpol.co.uk, 23/03/2020].*

*Yes this **enemy** can be **deadly**, but it is also **beatable** – and we know how to beat it and we know that if as a country we follow the scientific advice that is now being given we know that we will **beat** it [ukpol.co.uk, 17/03/2020].*

*I have absolutely no doubt that we will turn the tide of this disease and **beat** it together [ukpol.co.uk, 22/03/2020].*

*And always remember – we will get through this, and we will **beat** it together [ukpol.co.uk, 22/03/2020].*

*I want to thank everyone who is working flat out to **beat the virus** [ukpol.co.uk, 23/03/2020].*

*This crisis is so difficult because the **enemy** is **invisible*** [gov.uk, 19/03/2020].

*There have been too many breaches – too many opportunities for our **invisible enemy** to slip through undetected* [gov.uk, 20/09/2020].

*We're **fighting an invisible enemy*** [ukpol.co.uk, 04/06/2020].

*We are shining the light of science on this **invisible killer*** [ukpol.co.uk, 10/05/2020].

*And we are buying millions of testing kits that will enable us to **turn the tide on this invisible killer*** [ukpol.co.uk, 23/03/2020].

*All over the world we are seeing the devastating impact of this **invisible killer*** [ukpol.co.uk, 23/03/2020].

*We're leading a campaign to **fight back against this disease*** [ukpol.co.uk, 16/03/2020].

*And however tough the months ahead we have the resolve and the resources to **win the fight*** (ukpol.co.uk, 17/03/2020).

*But in this **fight** we can be in no doubt that each and every one of us is **directly enlisted*** [ukpol.co.uk, 23/03/2020].

*And so tonight I want to update you on the latest steps we are taking to **fight the disease** and what you can do to help* [ukpol.co.uk, 23/03/2020].

In an interview published on 19 July, Johnson commented:

*I can't abandon that **tool** [a second lockdown] any more than I would abandon a **nuclear deterrent**. **But it is like a nuclear deterrent**, I certainly don't want to use it. And nor do I think we will be in that position again* [theguardian.com, 19/07/2020].

In this scenario, Johnson compares the second lockdown to a *nuclear deterrent* as a strategy ready to be used in an emergency. However, it is a tool that he does not want to employ regularly. Johnson appears reluctant to implement another lockdown, just as the nation does not want to resort to nuclear weapons. On top of that, Johnson wishes to think

that they will not need to reach for such a solution again, suggesting that they will be looking for alternative methods to handle the situation.

Johnson keeps emphasizing how persistent work, concentration, and vigilance are vital for stopping the spread of the virus asserting: *Most people in this country are following the rules and doing their bit to control the virus. But we must keep our **discipline**, we must be focused and we cannot be complacent* [ukpol.co.uk, 31/07/2020]. In a literal sense, *discipline* is important for soldiers to perform their duties under difficult conditions. Johnson's invocation of discipline reflects the war analogy, which stresses the importance of efforts by individuals to overcome a crisis. Just as soldiers must remain disciplined on the battlefield, individuals are urged to maintain discipline in their actions to confront the pandemic.

*But this virus is obviously not going to grant us a Christmas **truce**, it doesn't know it's Christmas Mr Speaker and families will need to make a careful judgement about the risk of visiting elderly relatives* [ukpol.co.uk, 23/11/2020].

The phrase *Christmas truce* refers to a temporary ceasefire in fighting. It represents a short period of peace and goodwill, enabling those on both sides to join together and celebrate the spirit of the holiday. Johnson stresses within the context of the statement that the virus is neither seasonal nor compassionate, meaning that it does not recognize any holidays, it remains a concern and does not go away just like that. Despite the desire for customary get-togethers throughout the holiday season, families are advised to carefully evaluate the potential risks associated before visiting older relatives.

*This vaccine could be both affordable and easy to use and highly effective ... We have ordered 100m doses and thanks to the work of the Vaccines Task Force we have secured more than 350m doses of potential vaccines of all kinds but we are not out of the **woods** yet, **we can hear the drumming hooves of the cavalry coming over the brow of the hill** but they are not here yet* [ukpol.co.uk, 23/11/2020].

In this case, Johnson delivers the message of proactive steps being taken towards vaccination. He recognizes efficient planning and collaboration, but he also stresses that obstacles to progress still exist. *We can hear the cavalry's drumming hooves coming over the brow of the hill, but they are not here yet* denotes the impending arrival of assistance or

relief; nevertheless, even though progress is underway, the situation is still not entirely taken care of. Johnson keeps talking about brighter days ahead, but in the meantime, he still points out the necessity of being cautious.

*And all the time we have (been) waiting and hoping for the day when the searchlights of science would pick out **our invisible enemy**. And give us the power to stop that **enemy** from making us ill – and now the scientists have done it. And they have used the virus itself to perform a kind of **biological jiu-jitsu**, to turn the virus on itself in the form of a vaccine ...*
[ukpol.co.uk, 02/12/2020].

Boris Johnson once and again uses metaphors involving an *enemy* since it is an effective method to frame a crisis. By conceptualizing the virus as an *enemy*, he appeals to human innate desire for protection, fortitude, and solidarity in the face of a common threat. The process of developing a vaccine is described scientifically as *biological jiu-jitsu* in the metaphor above. The martial art of jiu-jitsu places a strong emphasis on using an opponent's force against them. Similarly, with a better understanding of the virus, researchers have been able to develop a vaccine that effectively turns the virus against itself by using its features to initiate an immune response in the body.

5.1 METAPHORS OF TRANSPORT AND JOURNEY

In the context of the coronavirus, Boris Johnson often uses transport or journey metaphors. In his speeches, we may repeatedly observe concepts such as *brakes*, *brake pedal*, *engine*, *roadmap*, *dashboard*, etc. When informing the public about the stricter anti-pandemic measures, he often employs the metaphor of *brakes* and *accelerator* as evidenced by the following:

*That would mean not only a new wave of death and disease but also an economic disaster and we would be forced once again to **slam on the brakes across the whole country** [ukpol.co.uk, 27/04/2020].*

*If there are problems, we will not hesitate **to put on the brakes** [rte.ie, 10/05/2020].*

The virus is still with us and the spike in Leicester has shown that. If it starts running out of control again this Government will not hesitate in

putting on the brakes and re-imposing restrictions [ukpol.co.uk, 04/07/2020].

With those numbers creeping up, our assessment is that we should now squeeze that brake pedal in order to keep the virus under control [ukpol.co.uk, 31/07/2020].

But now is the time to ease off the accelerator because by being cautious now we have the chance – in the next four weeks – to save many thousands of lives by vaccinating millions more people [ukpol.co.uk, 14/06/2021].

Johnson illustrated the necessity of taking action to stop the spread of the virus by using metaphors relating to *brakes* and *accelerator*. This implies that the situation could quickly escalate and result in an increase in infections and deaths as well as serious economic repercussions if the proper actions are not taken. This metaphor emphasises the gravity and urgency of the crisis and the necessity of implementing strict precautions to stop additional harm and disruption. Johnson argues that it is critical to regulate the return to pre-pandemic life based on the number of infected individuals to prevent deaths, much like the brakes on a car are used to slow down the vehicle and make it safe to drive.

Boris Johnson uses the concept of a *roadmap* in his pandemic speeches to refer to his strategy to overcome the problems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

*We are continuing to follow our **roadmap**, while adjusting our approach as we need to, as we always said we would* [blunt4reigate.com, 10/06/2020].

*But I believe it will provide clarity and certainty about the way ahead, a **roadmap** that we can take together and use as a country to defeat the virus and begin steadily to reclaim our lives* [ukpol.co.uk, 27/01/2021]

*And next week I will be setting out a **roadmap** saying as much as we possibly can about the **route** to normality even though some things are very uncertain* [ukpol.co.uk, 15/02/2021].

Another reference to the coronavirus pandemic is the utterance: *These figures are flashing at us like dashboard warnings in a passenger jet* [gov.uk, 12/10/2020]. Just as dashboard warnings in an aircraft serve to provide critical information about the condition

of the plane and potential risks, *flashing lights on the dashboard* symbolise alarming statistics and data related to the spread of COVID-19. This metaphor emphasises the seriousness of the situation, where action must be taken to prevent further death. It communicates a sense of urgency and the importance of heeding these warnings, much as passengers and pilots would respond to dashboard warnings to ensure the safety of the aircraft. This metaphor thus underlines the necessity for vigilance, prompt action, and collective responsibility when addressing a coronavirus pandemic just as the metaphor of *brakes* does.

*This is not how we want to live our lives, but this is **the narrow path we have to tread between the social and economic trauma** of a full lockdown and the massive human and, indeed, economic cost of an uncontained epidemic* [theguardian.com, 12/10/2020].

The metaphor of a *narrow path* exemplifies the balance that must be achieved between the financial and human expenses of an uncontained outbreak and the social and economic devastation of a complete shutdown. It communicates the idea that even though neither choice is ideal, finding a medium ground is essential to minimising negative impact on the economy and society. The metaphor *the social and economic trauma* represents a total lockdown as a traumatic event and compares it to a serious injury or wound inflicted on society and the economy.

*All this means we have begun **our descent from the peak** of the epidemic, **but our journey** has reached the most perilous moment where a wrong move could be disastrous* [policymogul.com, 11/05/2020].

Through this comparison, controlling the epidemic is like *descending from a peak*. A feeling of relief that the worst may be over permeates the descent from the epidemic's peak, much like when one is climbing down a mountain. Despite the fact that better times are ahead, the metaphor highlights how perilous the current phase is. It is like being on a slippery slope, where one misstep could result in catastrophe. This suggests that despite the development, things are still precarious and susceptible to failures, therefore it is crucial to proceed cautiously and make thoughtful decisions at this point in order to prevent any setbacks or worsening of the situation.

In the following extract, Boris Johnson likened the progress in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic to traversing a challenging *alpine tunnel*:

*We have come through the **peak** - or rather we've come under what could have been a vast **peak**, as though we've been going through some huge **alpine tunnel** and we can now see the **sunlight** and **pasture** ahead of us. And so it is vital that we do not now lose control and **run slap into a second and even bigger mountain*** [news.sky.com, 01/05/2020].

Again, the course of the epidemic is compared in these metaphors to moving across mountains. *We have come through the peak* alludes to the worst of the pandemic being over. The phrase *we've come under what could have been a vast peak* signifies that the worst-case scenario was averted by likening the circumstances to travelling through a tunnel beneath a massive mountain. Moving forward, *We can now see the sunlight and pasture ahead of us* expresses hope that the crisis will pass eventually and that the UK moves towards a bright future. Johnson concludes his speech with a warning that *it is vital that we do not now lose control and run slap into a second and even bigger mountain*, rejecting carelessness and the likelihood of a crisis comeback.

*This will be still a hard Winter, Christmas cannot be normal, and there is a long road to Spring. **But we have turned a corner: and the escape route is in sight*** [ukpol.co.uk, 23/11/2020].

The phrase *There is a long road to spring* alludes not only to rebirth, hope, and a new beginning but also to the *journey*, a lengthy one, much like from winter to spring. Lastly, despite the difficulties, the phrase *But we have turned a corner: and the escape route is in sight* conveys confidence and progress. These metaphors depict tenacity in the face of hardship, acceptance of the changed present, and hope for a better future.

5.2 SUMMARY

The results of the present investigation demonstrate how, in the framework of COVID-19, war metaphors played a significant role in forming enemies and shifting the responsibility, as well as in preparing society for challenging times and demonstrating compassion, and empathy. Additionally, they assisted in getting the public to adopt new behaviors and accept stricter laws and sacrifices. Boris Johnson strategically employs figurative language in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic to emphasize its urgency and severity. Johnson becomes instantly more remembered when he plays with language and metaphorically refers to the established regulations. Using gentle language, he also appeals to emotions and manipulates listeners more easily by focusing on family, and the elderly.

Through expressions that evoke empathy, he highlights the human impact of the crisis, fostering a sense of shared experience among the public. The language choices also emphasize the interconnectedness of individual actions and collective well-being, encouraging compliance with safety measures. Furthermore, Johnson uses metaphors to create vivid images of potential consequences, aiming to discourage certain behaviors and promote adherence to recommended guidelines. His use of figurative language seeks to engage, inform, and influence public attitudes and behaviors toward collective efforts in mitigating the pandemic.

6 BREXIT THROUGH FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In this chapter, there needs to be a focus given on an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon known as *Brexit*. This term refers to the historical moment when the United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union. The research will specifically concentrate on exploring the metaphorical and figurative elements that emerge concerning this process. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and significance of Brexit through the language and symbolism surrounding this still-present topic of the conversation. This chapter concentrates on identifying and interpreting the metaphors that appear in the Brexit discourse, with an emphasis on their meaning and impact on the perception of this important political and social phenomenon.

Brexit, a combination word of *British exit*, refers to the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (EU), culminating in its official withdrawal on January 31, 2020. The decision was the result of a referendum held on June 23, 2016, in which a narrow majority of UK citizens voted to leave the EU. The primary intentions behind Brexit included reclaiming national sovereignty, asserting control over immigration policies, and gaining autonomy in decision-making without the constraints of EU regulations. The complex process involved negotiations on trade agreements, citizenship rights, and various other aspects of the UK's relationship with the EU. The ramifications of Brexit extend beyond economic considerations, impacting political dynamics and the broader European geopolitical landscape.

Boris Johnson, a prominent figure in the Brexit process, played a substantial role as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during the critical phases of negotiations. Johnson assumed office on July 24, 2019, succeeding Theresa May, and his premiership was marked by a commitment to deliver on the Brexit mandate. Johnson's ability to employ metaphors to engage apolitical audiences has made him the "mouthpiece" for conveying Brexit-related messages (Eriksson, 2021, p. 5). As a journalist, he satisfied and excited the interests of his middle-class readers, but his scepticism towards Europe was easily adjusted to provide alternative interpretations of the "national" narrative to his less affluent readers (Charteris-Black, 2019, p. 162).

One of Johnson's key contributions was renegotiating the withdrawal agreement with the European Union. He aimed to address controversial issues such as the Irish backstop, seeking adjustments that would be more acceptable to the UK Parliament.

Johnson advocates for a nuanced perspective on Brexit, rejecting the binary notions of a *hard* or *soft* approach. In articulating his vision, he introduces the metaphor of *slamming the door on the world* to address concerns about potential isolation post-Brexit. Johnson contends that reclaiming control of borders does not need to imply cutting off ties or opportunities, as he emphasizes Brexit to be *open*. Johnson's words that ***an open Brexit will unleash this country to go back to its roots as a great global trader, not just in goods*** [thetimes.co.uk, 18/06/2017] support this assertion. This concept envisions a departure from the EU without isolating the UK, promoting the idea of an interconnected and globally engaged Britain. By countering fears of separation with the metaphor of an *open* future, Johnson aligns with the conceptual metaphor that emphasizes boundaries as containers, suggesting a Brexit that maintains connections rather than erecting barriers.

Despite rejecting the dichotomy of Brexit, Johnson's approach was characterized by a willingness to pursue a *hard Brexit* if necessary, emphasizing the restoration of national sovereignty and control over immigration (De Landtsheer et al., 2021, p. 126). However, in April 2019, Johnson, when confronted with the accusation of wanting to *have his cake and eat it*, straightforwardly stated that he still adhered to this stance (Charteris-Black, 2019, p. 2-3). His metaphorical expression encapsulated the argument that, despite the withdrawal from the European Union, Britain could preserve many of the advantages it had experienced as a member. Yet, to EU negotiators, this seemed like an attempt to navigate a situation where one seeks to enjoy advantages from opposing sides simultaneously (Charteris-Black, 2019, p. 3).

By comparing Brexit to an oncoming, inevitable terrible weather condition in Johnson's utterance *Over the last three years, we have tended to treat Brexit like some impending adverse weather event* [ukpol.co.uk, 27/07/2019], he is conveying that the public and authorities have approached Brexit with a sense of anticipation, caution, and readiness for possible adverse consequences, much like they would have done in the case of an impending storm. This is accomplished by drawing such a connection. The metaphor highlights the gravity and unpredictability of the Brexit process by painting a clear and accessible picture.

German political thinker Ulrike Guérot argues that the UK has already been granted some privileges, including a rebate and the ability to remain outside the Schengen Area and the eurozone. Guérot suggests that it is now imperative for the UK to abandon an entitled attitude, cease acting like a *spoiled child*, and acknowledge the impossibility of

having it all. The metaphor of picking the European cherry tree without tending to its branches or nurturing the soil underpins the notion that the UK cannot expect to enjoy benefits without fulfilling corresponding responsibilities within the European Union (Guérot, 2018). The end of this self-centered tendency is fundamental, as it entails prioritizing their own interests over those of others.

Drawing on Haidt's insights, human beings have a natural tendency to form groups and communicate intentions through language and shared symbolic meanings. Key moral intuitions such as *care/harm*, *fairness/cheating*, *loyalty/betrayal*, *authority/subversion*, *sanctity/degradation*, and *liberty/oppression* are all powerfully evoked by Boris Johnson's rhetoric (Haidt, 2012, p. 32-62).

Boris Johnson passionately opposes the European Union and presents himself as an enthusiastic advocate, publicly fighting for the United Kingdom's independence. While this interpretation is valid, it is important to take other perspectives on the matter into account (Rodet, 2020).

Boris Johnson points out the benefits of the UK leaving the European Union in the following extract:

*I say to all the doubters, dude, we are going to **energise** the country. We are going to get Brexit done on October 31st, we are going to take advantage of all the opportunities it is going to bring in in a new spirit of can-do, and we are once again going to believe in ourselves and what we can achieve [ukpol.co.uk, 23/07/2019].*

He promises to grant the UK a boost for its future development. It is also noteworthy how casually Johnson uses his language, particularly the word *dude*. He intentionally adopts this manner in order to engage his audience and establish a deeper, personal connection with them.

*And we have a third invisible diaspora, far more important and more fruitful even than people or goods, and that is the vast dispersal of British ideas, and British values, puffed around the world like **the seeds of some giant pollinating tree**. I mean everything from habeas corpus and parliamentary democracy to freedom of speech and gender equality. Sometimes these ideas*

have flourished, and put forth great roots and branches. Sometimes, frankly, they still fall on stony ground [ukpol.co.uk, 16/03/2021].

The metaphor of British ideas, values and principles as *seeds of some giant pollinating tree* eloquently conveys the potential for growth, global dissemination, and difficulties faced in many cultural situations. Similar to *seeds dispersed by the wind*, these concepts spread throughout the world, taking *root* and *flourishing* where conditions are right – the development of branches signifying their impact on society. But in less fertile grounds, compared to *stony ground*, these concepts might not take root and might encounter resistance, which would limit their influence. The metaphor emphasises how difficult it is to share thoughts and establish relationships across cultural boundaries and how crucial context is to the acceptance and spread of ideas throughout the world.

Undoubtedly, Brexit was the main item on Johnson's political agenda. Johnson has frequently criticized the European Union in his speeches, mainly emphasizing the fact Britain had to submit to EU decisions that were, at the end of the day, detrimental to the UK. Since the UK was at the birth of the European Union, Johnson metaphorically points out that the British share the blame for their predicament: *We actually helped to invent it. We were the authors of our own incarceration* [BBC, 24/06/2019]. In the passage in question, Johnson uses the concept of *incarceration*, which, by being associated with the restriction of freedom, has a clearly negative pragmatic potential. Johnson uses it to appeal to the emotions of the recipients, who thus conceptualise the European Union practically as a prison that prevents Britain from prospering.

We were told that we could not have our cake and eat it—namely, that we could trade and co-operate as we will with our European neighbours on the closest terms of friendship and good will, while retaining sovereign control of our laws and our national destiny [ukpol.co.uk, 30/12/2020].

Have our cake and eat it reflects Boris Johnson's viewpoint about the Brexit negotiations, stating that the UK may continue to have close trade and cooperation with the EU (having the cake) while still retaining national autonomy, sovereignty, and control over its own laws (eating the cake). This metaphor indicates his optimism for a successful Brexit conclusion that meets both objectives.

In the utterance *We're going to get Brexit done with a deal that is **pre-cooked**, ready to go, **oven-ready*** [ukpol.co.uk, 26/11/2019] the metaphor *oven-ready* is used to underline the proposed Brexit deal's completeness and simplicity, resembling a pre-cooked meal. This type of rhetoric emphasizes the perceived convenience and completeness of the arrangement, which requires no additional negotiation and is ready for instant implementation. However, in his New Year's message in 2020 he addressed that *oven-ready deal* having its ***plastic covering pierced and been placed in the microwave*** [ukpol.co.uk, 01/01/2020] indicating that changes are being made before the deal is finalised or implemented.

The majority of what Boris Johnson says consists of metaphorical language. Even outside of the pandemic and Brexit contexts, metaphors are a part of his spoken word regularly. Likewise, Boris Johnson employed a lot of instances of figurative language that have aimed to be decoded in his first speech as Prime Minister.

*The doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters, they are going to get it wrong again. The people who bet against Britain are going **to lose their shirts** because we're going to restore trust in our democracy and we are gonna fulfill the repeated promises of parliament to the people* [bbc.co.uk, 24/07/2019].

Boris Johnson characterizes people who voice concern about Britain's future as *doomsters*, *gloomsters*, and *doubters*, among other analogies. The phrase *losing their shirts* refers to the financial risk incurred by individuals who do not believe in Britain's success. Johnson wants to highlight self-assurance, assertiveness, and a dedication to disproving sceptics encouraging resiliency, faith in democracy, and staying true to parliamentary commitments.

In one of his other speeches concerning the UK's ambition to secure a deal with the EU, he commented:

*But if there is one thing that can hold us back in these talks it is the sense in Brussels that MPs may find some way to cancel the referendum. I don't think they will. I hope that they won't. But if they do they will **plainly chop the legs out from under the UK** position and make any further negotiation absolutely impossible* [ukpol.co.uk, 02/09/2019].

The phrase *chop the legs out from under* is used by Johnson to imply that calling off the vote will seriously weaken the UK's negotiation position. Future negotiations would be difficult or impossible as a result of the UK's abrupt and strong action, which would also damage its position in the negotiations. The expression used metaphorically therefore alludes to an abrupt and powerful action.

In the passage from the speech on leaving the EU, Johnson makes use of metaphorical language to create an impression of a difficult and changing time: *This is the moment when **the dawn breaks and the curtain goes up on a new act in our great national drama*** [ukpol.co.uk, 31/01/2020]. The expressions *the dawn breaks* and *the curtain goes up on a new act* depict the present as a crucial, dramatic turning point in the history of the UK. Boris Johnson compares Brexit to *a national drama*. In a literal sense, every *theatrical production* needs to include conflicts, twists, and turning points. By framing Brexit as a *drama*, Johnson encourages the audience to imagine its tumultuous nature, characterised by numerous delays and uncertainties.

6.1 NAVIGATING CONSTRAINTS: METAPHORS OF MOVEMENT

During his tenure as Prime Minister of the UK, Boris Johnson often employed metaphors related to movement and machines to describe the constraints and challenges of Brexit. Johnson's discourse exhibits distinct features of figurative language, primarily characterized by frequent allusions to movement constraints and a recurring analogy portraying the European Union as a mechanical entity. The cited excerpts or sentences to be analyzed will prominently feature these elements intertwined, serving as demonstrative evidence within the context of his speech.

From the early initiation of the negotiations, Johnson employed figurative language that revolved around the sensations of being trapped and restricted. The use of first-person plural pronouns and the present tense emphasises that this predicament is current. Understanding Britain's lack of autonomy requires revisiting the immediate post-war period and the challenges of a broken continent.

Johnson employs the metaphor of *turbocharge* to convey an optimistic picture of the UK's future in the following part of the speech:

*Pioneered in a UK that is also free to do things differently, and if necessary better, than our friends in the EU. Free to do trade deals around the world. And free to **turbocharge** our ambition to be a science superpower* [ukpol.co.uk, 01/01/2021].

The automobile industry, where turbocharging is utilized to boost engine power, is where the metaphor originated. The idea alludes to a rise in effectiveness, speed, efficiency, and progress in a figurative sense. Johnson expresses in the excerpt above his belief that the UK has both the opportunity and freedom to significantly accelerate its efforts and investment to become a major leading force in scientific research and innovation. Johnson draws attention to the UK's huge potential for success and for being superior to its European allies who have hindered their growth.

The utterance *When I look at the potential of this country waiting to be unleashed, I know that we can turn this opportunity into a stunning success. And whatever the **bumps in the road ahead**, I know that we will succeed* [ukpol.co.uk, 31/01/2020] uses the metaphor of *bumps in the road ahead* to imply that obstacles may emerge but can be overcome. These metaphorical statements support a story of opportunity, resilience, and the beginning of a new phase in the growth of the nation.

*Because it will not be a bad thing for the EU to have a prosperous and dynamic and contented UK on your **doorstep**. And it will be a good thing – it will drive jobs and prosperity across the whole continent* [ukpol.co.uk, 24/12/2020].

The metaphor of a *doorstep* is employed in this phrase to illustrate the connection between the United Kingdom and the European Union. Johnson contends that the economic and social well-being of the EU would benefit from having a thriving, prosperous, functioning, and contented UK close by. It is comparable to having a kind neighbour living next door. The metaphor highlights the reciprocal benefits of collaboration and good relations as well as the interconnectedness between the nations.

The metaphor *doorstep* alludes to the concept of *door* that implies the process of departing from the European Union, encapsulating the notion that such an opportunity should not be missed. Johnson uses this rhetoric to alleviate concerns about Brexit, arguing that the vote to leave the European Union does not represent an intrinsic shift in British identity. Influenced by Winston Churchill's rhetoric, the metaphor envisions the British

people within a confined space, able to perceive a brighter outside. The symbolic *door* represents the opportunity for them to exit this territory, entering a more illuminated and liberated realm. This metaphor highlights the prospect of a transformative departure and a shift towards a brighter future, similar to Churchill's powerful communication style. By using the phrase, Boris Johnson appeals to the audience by first associating himself with a historical figure who is revered and, second, by evoking feelings of national pride from the original speech (Eriksson, 2021, p. 26).

Boris Johnson uses analogies with machinery and engines in his remarks to explain his outlook for the future of the United Kingdom. It is mentioned that the UK would become *an engine for the ideas of the future* [ukpol.co.uk, 01/01/2020], a metaphorical motor driving innovation and advancement, by changing the nation's attitude to science and research.

In the following utterance, Boris Johnson employs the metaphor *electoral bulldozer*: *It was your decisiveness at the ballot box, your determination to drive an electoral bulldozer through the deadlock and paralysis, that has unblocked parliament and delivered a people's government dedicated to serving you* [ukpol.co.uk, 01/01/2020]. This metaphor indicates that the collective will and determination of the people acted as a powerful and unstoppable force, like a *bulldozer* removing debris and obstacles in its path. This metaphor highlights the influence and effectiveness of the actions of the electorate in pushing for change and overcoming political deadlock and paralysis.

6.2 METAPHOR OF WAR

During his tenure as Prime Minister and before the Brexit process, Boris Johnson employed different military metaphors to depict the problems and strategies involved in negotiating the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. In political discourse, the term *war* is frequently used to characterize disputes between people, political groups, or governments. Politicians use physical battle metaphors and other military vocabulary to rationalize nonsensical arguments. When used in political speeches, these metaphors predominantly aid in expressing the sense of struggle (Rodet, 2020). This section explores the analysis of war-related terminology used by Boris Johnson in discussions over Britain's membership in the EU and its potential exit.

While initially intended to instill confidence, some hard Brexiteers used the Dunkirk spirit rhetoric to advocate against European integration, seeing the EU as a new threat. At first, it evolved to mythological significance as a symbol of British resilience. Political leaders, in particular Winston Churchill, used it to mobilize the public during times of crisis. Boris Johnson's comparison of the European Commission to a *Gestapo-controlled Nazi EU* exemplifies the use of World War II imagery and terminology in anti-European attitudes (MacShane, 2016, p. 10).

Boris Johnson used a war domain and an allegory of the nationalist battle for identity when he famously compared the day British voters rejected the EU (June 23, 2016) to *Britain's Independence Day* in the run-up to the Brexit referendum, evoking a historical analogy to a colony declaring its freedom from foreign domination. He claimed that Britain's demand for independence was being symbolized by the European Union forcing its will on the nation (Charteris-Black, 2019, p. 77).

Get Brexit Done [conservativehome.com, 02/10/2019], the catchphrase that served as the focal point of Johnson's 2019 general election campaign, might be initially read as an appeal to put an end to the perceived struggle and uncertainty surrounding Brexit, utilizing the language of completion and triumph associated with winning a war.

To Johnson, withdrawal of the UK from the EU was a matter of life and death: *We are getting ready to come out on October the 31st...Do or die, come what may* [theguardian.com, 25/06/2019]. Johnson is exaggerating his political objective with this metaphor in an attempt to appeal to Brexit supporters' emotions and highlight his commitment to leave the EU as soon as possible, namely on October 31, 2019, using the words *do or die*. This rhetorical phrase, reminiscent of wartime rhetoric, conveys a sense of urgency and determination. *We will leave the European Union on October 31st, no ifs or buts* [politico.eu, 24/07/2019], he added in reference to that. This phrase implies a non-negotiable commitment to the Brexit timeframe by stressing an exact date.

The following metaphor, concerning a potential Brexit delay, is equally dramatic: *I'd rather be dead in a ditch* [theguardian.com, 05/09/2019]. He reiterates that he will not compromise if Brexit is postponed, and that there is no other alternative for him.

We will not accept any attempt to go back on our promises or scrub that referendum. Armed and fortified with that conviction I believe we will

*get a deal at that crucial summit in October. A deal that parliament will certainly be able to scrutinise. And in the meantime let our negotiators get on with their work without that **sword of Damocles over their necks**. And without an election, which I don't want and you don't want* [ukpol.co.uk, 03/09//2019].

In the quote above, two choices of language that have been used need to be pointed out. First, the metaphor *armed and fortified* conveys a sense of power, resolve in the face of obstacles, and willingness to defend one's position by using a metaphor associated with war. Johnson suggests the UK is being equipped with strong belief and confidence. Second, the metaphor *sword of Damocles over their necks* emphasizes the constant threat or danger that the negotiators face, adding urgency and pressure to the scenario. It implies a fragile and potentially damaging situation that must be addressed in order for the negotiators to operate efficiently and without unnecessary restraints.

The figurative language *starting gun being fired on what promises to be a fantastic year and a remarkable decade for our United Kingdom* in Boris Johnson's statement alludes to the beginning of a new chapter or stage for the UK [ukpol.co.uk, 01/01/2020]. In this particular case, the metaphor emphasises the need for persistence and quick thinking in the hypothetical race of the next year and decade, while also signalling that the UK is about to enter a period of great potential and difficulties. Even though the *gun* in this case may not be related directly to war, the word itself evokes such a correlation.

Furthermore, there was an act introduced to prevent the United Kingdom from leaving the European Union without a deal. Johnson and some Brexit supporters nicknamed this the *Surrender Act* [theguardian.com, 29/09/2019]. By using the term *surrender*, he meant that people who opposed the Brexit policy were capitulating to the EU, presenting the issue as a *battle*. Johnson not only frequently referred to new legislation intended to prevent a no-deal Brexit as the *Surrender Act*, he referred to the meeting of parliament as a *zombie parliament*, and accused opposition parties of treason for their failure to *uphold democracy* [euronews.com, 26/09/2019], based on what he has been under fire for allegedly inflaming the fierce differences over Brexit in the UK and for using language that is hazardous and incendiary.

6.3 METAPHORS OF PARALYSIS

In the context of the Brexit negotiations, the metaphor of *paralysis* is used to symbolise the state of deadlock, uncertainty and stagnation that accompanied the Brexit process. This metaphorical construct illustrates the problems faced by policymakers and highlights the moments of stalemate that defined the UK's path to leaving the European Union.

*I want you to know of course that I don't want an early election. No one much wants to have an election in December. But we have got to the stage where we have no choice. Because our parliament is **paralyzed** ... I have been wanting to chew my own tie in frustration [ukpol.co.uk, 11/11/2019].*

As the excerpt demonstrates, Boris Johnson refers to the inability of Parliament to act and take new and constructive decisions as *paralysis*. This metaphor, although extremely frequent, has a negative pragmatic potential and Boris Johnson's aim is to defend his decision to dissolve parliament and call a snap election. It expresses frustration, and impatience accentuating his annoyance and perceived proximity to a desired conclusion.

The following statement highlights a captivating metaphor that Johnson used about Brexit:

*And they want to get it done in a way that allows us to move on which is why I think people are yearning, their yearning for this great **Incubus** to be **pitchforked off the back** of British politics [BBC, 24/06/2019].*

Boris Johnson uses the image of *Incubus*, a demon or evil spirit who was known in the Middle Ages to attack women in their sleep. Nowadays, the concept is associated with sleep paralysis or nightmares, in which the individual awakens in the middle of the night feeling as though there is tremendous pressure on their chest while remaining unable to move. Thus, we can perceive the idea of Brexit as *paralysis* once again. However, it is important to note that the metaphor of *Incubus* may not be widely understood by all audiences, which could diminish its effectiveness in conveying the intended message to everyone. Brexit is from Johnson's perspective, something that needs to be implemented as soon as possible because of its significant effect on British prosperity.

Boris Johnson takes an optimistic approach to the Brexit stalemate in the following passage excerpted from his 2019 speech on becoming Prime Minister:

*Like some **slumbering giant**, we are going to rise **and ping off the guy ropes** of self-doubt and negativity. With better education, better infrastructure, more police, fantastic full-fibre broadband sprouting in every household, we are going to unite this amazing country and we are going to take it forward [ukpol.co.uk, 23/07/2019].*

Individuals interpret this metaphor differently. Some perceive it as a reference to a scene in Jonathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels* when the Lilliputians bind Gulliver in his sleep with thick ropes, others perceive it as a boxer bouncing off the ropes in a ring. The inclusion of *guy ropes* is generally associated with tents, therefore Johnson's usage of the term may be deemed a linguistic oversight. Essentially, the metaphor depicts the process of overcoming self-doubt and negativity by drawing analogies to releasing or removing restraints, such as man ropes that hinder development. Fundamentally, according to the excerpt, Boris Johnson considers the UK and himself being Gulliver and the European Union to be the Lilliputians who restrict the freedom of Gulliver and the UK respectively. The metaphor aims to reassure the British people that their political choices are correct while also conjuring an optimistic vision of Britain's future in their thoughts.

6.4 SUMMARY

Considering the parameters of my paper, it would take a significant amount of work to compile a list of every metaphor Prime Minister Johnson used during his tenure. Nonetheless, it is clear given the evidence that has been collected that figurative language played, still plays, and will play a significant role in Johnson's interaction.

In conclusion, Boris Johnson's usage of metaphors pertaining to Brexit demonstrates a colourful and unique way of presenting the UK's relationship with the EU. His frequent references to movement restrictions, his belief that the EU functions as a machine, and his liberal use of military jargon altogether add to a story that emphasizes oppression, entrapment, and the need for liberation. Johnson uses military rhetoric and presents the EU as a repressive power to create a story that appeals to feelings of resistance, patriotism, and the desire for national autonomy. In addition to shaping public interaction, these metaphors highlight the intuitive aspect of his communication style,

which aims to invoke strong feelings and support the narrative of a free and independent UK.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis conducted for this thesis demonstrated the diverse interpretations of metaphorical language by Boris Johnson during his tenure as Prime Minister. After carefully looking through all of Johnson's speeches, it is apparent that he uses metaphor purposefully to accomplish certain rhetorical objectives, setting him apart in the political landscape.

The first key chapter presents an in-depth introduction to metaphor theory, encompassing philosophical foundations and historical evolution. Using insights from cognitive linguistics theory and conceptual metaphor, this chapter investigates how metaphor changes political language and its perception in media texts.

The next chapters focus on empirical research, examining metaphors in two distinct contexts: the COVID-19 pandemic and the Brexit discussions. In Chapter 5, Boris Johnson employs a rhetorical approach to navigate the complexity of the COVID-19 pandemic by using metaphorical language to explain public health initiatives, policies, and medical treatments. The sixth chapter, on the other hand, explores the Brexit discourse and analyses the metaphors Johnson employed throughout his negotiations with the EU. Johnson's use of metaphorical language gives insight into his strategic communication strategies and the larger discursive dynamics.

In an attempt to pinpoint the metaphorical frames that shaped public perception around, both chapters look at the speeches, press conferences, and public appearances that Johnson delivered.

It is evident that Winston Churchill's speech had a significant influence on Johnson's political discourse in the UK following Brexit. Inspired by Churchill's speeches, Johnson deliberately employs military terminology, portraying opponents of a hard Brexit as being involved in betrayal and conspiracy while often employing the evocative term *surrender*.

Johnson uses metaphorical language with a variety of intentions. He exhibits a fondness for altering language to create evocative and lasting expressions that speak to the general population. Through the use of metaphor, he has the power to influence public opinion and appeal to deeply established social and cultural norms. If the metaphor is interesting and unusual enough, the information is better remembered, and that is what

politicians try to achieve, with Johnson being no exception. Therefore, the more innovative the metaphor, the more compelling and easier it is to manipulate or influence the listeners.

The use of metaphorical language helps him connect with people on a deeper level, drawing on cultural references to establish a shared understanding. Employing vivid imagery helps to make complex issues more relatable which resonates with the public better and at the same time shapes the narrative to align with Johnson's own viewpoints.

After an in-depth examination, our findings have validated the hypothesis that Boris Johnson regularly employs the metaphor of *war* in his discussion concerning both COVID-19 and Brexit. Johnson perceives the epidemic and the EU withdrawal as a major conflict or struggle, which is highlighted by this metaphorical framing that has an impact on public discourse and policy actions.

He encourages the country to face those struggles with a strong sense of purpose by using vocabulary pertaining to war. Studying his expressions extensively reveals that he frequently uses phrases like *enemy*, *beat*, *killer*, and *fight*, stressing how serious the situation was, evoking a hint of fear and so mobilizing the public to take action and confront the pandemic. He conveys a sense of urgency, collective responsibility, and the need for sacrifices.

Johnson's description of COVID-19 as a *fight* is intended to rally public support and demonstrate the government's active role in combatting the virus. This metaphor can inspire people to follow health guidelines, make sacrifices, and trust the government's policies. However, it could also be interpreted as emotional manipulation or a diversion from specific government acts since it instills a bit of fear in people.

In the context of COVID-19, Johnson enjoys employing the metaphor of *brakes* to communicate confinement and control. Implementing measures like lockdowns or other restrictions that have been introduced in the middle of the crisis might slow down the spread of the virus and keep it from overwhelming healthcare systems, just like brakes are used to stop or slow down a car. It highlights how urgent action is required to effectively handle the epidemic.

In addition, the collective experience of navigating through the epidemic is framed by the metaphor of the *journey*. Given that a journey denotes a path or process with a beginning, middle, and end, coping with COVID-19 is likely to be a dynamic and ever-changing experience. It emphasizes the notion that improvement might not always be straightforward and that there will be obstacles and turning points along the way.

The words he used to rally people in the event of a pandemic may not have been applicable to his own actions, after all. Not to mention, Johnson has a public record of his controversies due to multiple instances of violating established protocols.

Concerning COVID-19 and Brexit, we may have seen several parallels since certain metaphors are repetitive in both contexts, meaning the hypothesis indicating a pattern in Boris Johnson's speech – that is, the usage of identical metaphorical frames consistently in both the COVID-19 and Brexit contexts – has been substantiated. One of them is particularly the metaphor of a *journey*. By repeatedly using the metaphor of *paralysis*, Johnson highlights the need and urgency of overcoming the political deadlock in the context of the Brexit process. He evokes the impression that the situation is stuck, possibly as a result of difficulties, or impediments in reaching a compromise. This way he conveys a sense of stagnation, and incapacity to move forward so he attempts to mobilize people in favor of his suggested course of action and illustrate the negative effects of inaction. Furthermore, Johnson's portrays the UK's exit as an adventure full of chances and opportunities.

Johnson's leadership style, political strategies, and communication skills played a significant role in shaping the trajectory of the Brexit process. His ability to rally support, articulate a vision for post-Brexit Britain, and navigate the intricate negotiations contributed to the outcomes observed during his tenure as Prime Minister. However, politically, a substantial lack of trust in Boris Johnson was evident among many on the metropolitan left.

Johnson uses metaphors as a versatile communication tool that combines engagement, persuasion, emotional appeal, and cultural affinities to successfully deliver his ideas and establish an emotional connection with the audience.

Boris Johnson exhibits a profound understanding of the power of words to shape public discourse and impact political results, whether negotiating the complexities of an epidemic or the nuances of international negotiations. Therefore, additional research into the linguistic practices implemented by political figures is necessary to build on our comprehension of the complex connection between language, metaphor, and politics.

RESUMÉ

Výskum metaforických procesov v komunikácii má veľký vedecký prínos, najmä pri analýze medzinárodne významných udalostí, ako je Brexit alebo globálna pandémia. Skúmanie toho, ako sa britský expremiér vyjadruje o týchto dvoch diskurzívnych udalostiach pomocou metafor, nám umožňuje nahliadnuť nielen do jeho vlastného vnímania situácie, ale aj do vnímania spoločnosti. Tento výskum tiež vrhá svetlo na mentálne procesy spojené s obrazným jazykom a na celkový vplyv jeho použitia na verejné konanie. Štúdium obrazného jazyka je mimoriadne dôležité, keď sa metafory stávajú kľúčovým nástrojom rečovej manipulácie v mediálnom a politickom diskurze. Zároveň považujeme daný výskum za veľmi aktuálny vďaka kognitívnej revolúcii, ktorá v 70. rokoch dvadsiateho storočia, priniesla nový pohľad na metafory. Metafory už nie sú považované iba za ornamentálny jazykový prostriedok, ale za súčasť nášho myslenia.

Táto práca sa zameriava najmä na metafory a jej cieľom je preskúmať a analyzovať obrazný jazyk, ktorý Boris Johnson používal počas výkonu funkcie predsedu vlády. Keďže rozsah práce nám neumožňuje podrobne sa zaoberať všetkými obraznými jazykovými prostriedkami, ktoré Boris Johnson používal, rozhodli sme sa zamerať na metafory. Táto práca, štruktúrovaná do síce šiestich, no troch kľúčových kapitol, analyzuje teoretické základy metafory spolu s jej empirickými aplikáciami v rôznych kontextoch. Púšťa sa do skúmania obrazného jazyka s osobitným zameraním na metafory s cieľom odhaliť zložité mechanizmy, ktoré sú základom ich vzniku, kognitívne procesy, ktoré sa na nich podieľajú a dôsledky, ktoré majú pre jazyk i poznanie.

Prvá kapitola poskytuje dôkladný úvod do teórie metafory vrátane jej filozofických základov a historického vývoja. Na základe poznatkov z teórie kognitívnej lingvistiky a konceptuálnej metafory táto kapitola skúma, ako metafora formuje politickú reč ako takú a jej vnímanie v mediálnych textoch. Práca sa okrem toho zaoberá viacerými prístupmi ku kategorizácii metafor, čím poskytuje základ pre ďalší výskum.

V nasledujúcich kapitolách sa pozornosť obracia na empirické skúmanie, pričom sa analyzujú metafory v dvoch rôznych kontextoch: epidémia COVID-19 a rokovania o Brexite. V piatej kapitole sa pozornosť sústreďuje na to, ako Boris Johnson použil rétorickú stratégiu na artikuláciu opatrení, politik a nápravných opatrení v oblasti verejného zdravia tým, že sa orientoval v zložitosti krízy COVID-19 prostredníctvom

používania metaforického jazyka. Táto kapitola sa zaoberá prejavmi, tlačovými konferenciami a verejnými vystúpeniami, ktoré Johnson predniesol, v snahe identifikovať metaforické rámce, ktoré ovplyvnili verejný diskurz o pandémie.

Šiesta kapitola naopak načiera do diskusií o brexite a skúma metafory, ktoré Johnson použil počas rokovaní s Európskou úniou. Johnsonovo používanie metaforického jazyka poskytuje pohľad na jeho strategické komunikačné techniky a širšiu diskurzívnu dynamiku.

Boris Johnson je kontroverzná, ale charizmatická osobnosť, ktorá je známa svojím obrazným a často nediplomatickým jazykom. Svojimi slovami maľoval obrazy, používal opisné metafory a prirovnania, ktoré oživovali jeho posolstvá. Počas svojho pôsobenia vo funkcii predsedu vlády Boris Johnson koncipoval a vyjadroval ťažkosti, ktoré spôsobila epidémia COVID-19, ako aj nuansy Brexitu pomocou metafor, ktoré pripomínali vojnu. Takéto metafory používa zámerne z rôznych dôvodov, od sprístupnenia zložitých tém širokej verejnosti na pochopenie až po vyvolanie rôznorodých pocitov. Cieľom tejto práce je preskúmať konkrétne využitie, okolnosti a dôsledky Johnsonovho metaforického jazyka z hľadiska ovplyvňovania politického diskurzu, vytvárania pocitu naliehavosti a ovplyvňovania názorov verejnosti na tieto významné udalosti.

Na záver možno konštatovať, že analýza vykonaná v rámci tejto práce preukázala rôznorodosť interpretácií metaforického jazyka Borisa Johnsona počas jeho pôsobenia vo funkcii predsedu vlády. Po dôkladnom preskúmaní všetkých Johnsonových prejavov z daného obdobia je zrejmé, že metaforu používa cielene na dosiahnutie určitých rétorických cieľov, čím sa odlišuje v politickom prostredí od ostatných politicky motivovaných osobností.

Johnson vyjadruje svoje myšlienky prostredníctvom netradičných a inovatívnych metafor, pričom často využíva humor, aby zaujal svoje publikum. Prostredníctvom používania metafory má moc ovplyvňovať verejnú mienku a apelovať na hlboko zakorenené sociálne a kultúrne normy. V prípade, že je metafora dostatočne zaujímavá a nezvyčajná, informácia sa lepšie zapamätá, a o to politikom ide, pričom Johnson nie je výnimkou. Preto platí, čím je metafora inovatívnejšia, tým je presvedčivejšia a ľahšie sa ňou dá manipulovať alebo ovplyvňovať poslucháčov. Používanie metaforického jazyka umožňuje naviazat' hlbšie spojenie s ľuďmi a vytvoriť spoločné porozumenie

prostredníctvom kultúrnych odkazov. Používanie obrazov a prirovnaní pomáha zjednodušiť zložité problémy a urobiť ich prístupnejšími a pochopiteľnejšími pre verejnosť, zároveň umožňuje vyjadriť názory autora formou, ktorá je v súlade s jeho vlastnými presvedčeniami.

Po hĺbkovom skúmaní naše zistenia potvrdili hypotézu, že Boris Johnson pravidelne využíva metaforu vojny vo svojej diskusii týkajúcej sa COVID-19 aj Brexitu. Johnson vníma epidémiu a vystúpenie z EÚ ako veľký konflikt alebo boj, čo je zvýraznené týmto metaforickým rámcovaním, ktoré má vplyv na verejný diskurz a ďalšie politické kroky.

Pomocou slovníka vzťahujúceho sa na *vojnu* povzbudzuje krajinu, aby týmto bojom čelila so silným zmyslom pre víťazstvo. Rozsiahle štúdium jeho vyjadrení ukazuje, že často používa výrazy ako *nepriateľ*, *poraziť*, *zabijak* a *boj*, čím zdôrazňuje, aká vážna je situácia, vyvoláva náznak strachu, a tak mobilizuje verejnosť, aby konala a čelila pandémie. Vyjadruje pocit naliehavosti, kolektívnej zodpovednosti a potreby robiť isté obety. Táto metafora môže inšpirovať ľudí, aby dodržiavali zdravotné nariadenia a dôverovali vládnej politike. Mohla by sa však interpretovať aj ako emocionálna manipulácia alebo odvádzanie pozornosti od konkrétnych vládnych činov, keďže v ľuďoch vzbudzuje menší strach.

V kontexte COVID-19 Johnson s obľubou používa metaforu *brzd* na komunikáciu obmedzenia a kontroly. Zavedenie opatrení by mohlo spomaliť šírenie vírusu a zabrániť tomu, aby zahltil systémy zdravotnej starostlivosti, podobne ako sa brzdy používajú na zastavenie alebo spomalenie auta. Zdôrazňuje, aké naliehavé je dodržiavanie opatrení na účinné zvládnutie epidémie.

Okrem toho je kolektívna skúsenosť s prechádzaním epidémiou zarámovaná metaforou *cesty*. Vzhľadom na to, že cesta predstavuje proces so začiatkom, stredom a koncom, vyrovnávanie sa s pandemiou bude pravdepodobne podobne dynamickou a neustále sa meniacou skúsenosťou. Johnson zdôrazňuje fakt, že progres nemusí byť vždy jednoduchý a že na ceste budú prekážky a zlomové body, ktoré je nutné prekonať.

V prípade oboch diskurznych udalostí sme mohli vidieť niekoľko paralel, čo znamená, že hypotéza poukazujúca na vzorec v prejave Borisa Johnsona - t. j.

frekventované používanie rovnakých metaforických rámcov v kontexte COVID-19 aj Brexitu - sa potvrdila. Jedným z nich je napríklad aj spomínaná metafora cesty či vojny.

Opakovaným používaním metafory *paralýzy* Johnson zdôrazňuje potrebu a naliehavosť prekonania tejto zdanlivej paralýzy. Vyvoláva dojem, že situácia stagnuje, v dôsledku potenciálnych ťažkostí, resp. prekážok pri dosahovaní kompromisu. Týmto spôsobom navodzuje pocit stagnácie a neschopnosti pohnúť sa vpred. Pokúša sa tak zmobilizovať ľudí v prospech ním navrhovaného postupu a ilustrovať negatívne dôsledky nečinnosti.

Okrem toho Johnsonovo používanie metafory presahuje kontext mimoriadnych udalostí v oblasti verejného zdravia a zahŕňa aj ľud-rozdeľujúcu tému Brexitu. V tejto súvislosti často opisuje Európsku úniu ako stroj, pričom odchod Spojeného kráľovstva z EÚ vykresľuje ako dobrodružstvo plné príležitostí. V snahe ovplyvniť verejnú mienku a získať podporu pre svoje iniciatívy Johnson prirovnáva Brexit k iným historickým naratívom.

Johnsonov vodcovský štýl, politické stratégie a komunikačné schopnosti preto zohrali významnú úlohu pri formovaní trajektórie procesu Brexitu. Jeho schopnosť mobilizovať podporu, formulovať víziu pre Britániu po Brexite a navigovať zložité rokovania prispela k výsledkom, ktoré sme zaznamenali počas jeho pôsobenia vo funkcii predsedu vlády.

Johnson používa metafory ako univerzálny komunikačný nástroj, ktorý kombinuje angažovanosť, presvedčivosť, emocionálny apel a kultúrnu príbuznosť, aby úspešne predniesol svoje myšlienky a nadviazal emocionálne spojenie s publikom. Táto práca zdôrazňuje význam metafory v politickom diskurze Borisa Johnsona, keďže preukazuje silné pochopenie sily slov pri formovaní verejného diskurzu a ovplyvňovaní politických výsledkov, či už ide o vyjednávanie o zložitosti epidémie alebo o nuansy medzinárodných rokovaní. Z tohto dôvodu je potrebný ďalší výskum jazykových postupov uplatňovaných politickými osobnosťami, aby sme mohli budovať naše chápanie komplexného prepojenia medzi jazykom, metaforou a politikou.

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