

Metaphor scenarios in discourses on menopause:  
a critical metaphor study of online articles of women's  
magazines and medical websites from Denmark and the US

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## Abstract

In this thesis, I identify and analyse metaphor scenarios which represent menopause and those experiencing it in selected articles from online women's magazines and medical websites from Denmark and the US. My aim is to determine how metaphor scenarios convey beliefs, norms and values through information about a prevalent women's health issue. I outline and identify four elements of metaphor scenarios: metaphoric expressions, agency, narrative structures, and appraisal. Through an analysis of these, I identify patterns of metaphoric schematicity, agency and appraisal, all of which contribute to the characterisation of menopause and those experiencing it. I observe differences between the genres and languages.

I explain my findings by contrasting them with previous studies of metaphor in discourses on health and studies of menopause specifically. Further, I discuss my findings in relation to ideologies of health and health marketisation in the two cultures. I argue that discursive traces of the medicalisation of menopause are present across the data, but that the Danish medical website conveys the least commercialised view of health. This, I argue, is consistent with the public health model in Denmark.

Compared to the metaphor scenarios on medical websites, those in the women's magazines are more oriented towards outer signs of health, such as skin. The US magazines represent those experiencing menopause as empowered, while the Danish magazines represent a belief in fate. I conclude that the menopause and those experiencing it can be represented in many different ways, with some encompassing greater flexibility than others, which could be of value for articulating different experiences and values connected to this important health concern.

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree elsewhere. The thesis does not exceed the permitted maximum word length of 70,000 words.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is about metaphor used to describe menopause in two different countries: the USA and Denmark. Further, it is concerned with comparing metaphor used in two different genres, namely women's magazines and medical websites. A comparison of these US and Danish data may bring to light different approaches to menopause. Considering the different cultures and healthcare structures represented by these contexts, I aim to provide a nuanced picture of conceptualisations of 'menopause' and those who experience it. Differences between the health care systems in the US and Denmark are presented in Chapter 2. Comparing data from these two countries and genres may reveal differences and similarities in how metaphor scenarios are used and how menopause and people experiencing it are portrayed. The comparison is intended to provide evidence for discussions about ideologies prevalent in a predominantly private versus a largely public healthcare system.

This chapter introduces my topic and indicates my theoretical and methodological approach. In Section 1.1, I argue why I think women's health in general, and menopause in particular, should be given more attention from a linguistic discourse studies perspective. In Section 1.2 and 1.3, I introduce some constructs that are central to my topic; namely, health as an ideological construct and menopause and women as discursive constructs. In Section 1.4, I introduce meanings of 'normal' and 'natural' as these evaluative terms characterise the discourse under investigation. Section 1.5 introduces some of my data and methodological choices, while Section 1.6 presents my research questions. In Section 1.7, I reflect on my position as a researcher and I provide a few notes on terminology and translation choices in Section 1.8. Finally, I present the structure of this thesis in Section 1.9.

### 1.1 Why study menopause?

Research into menopause is relevant to a large number of people because an increasing number of women are spending a third or more of their lives after menopause as a result of a longer lifespan in the general population (Sood et al., 2016). Since menopause affects everyone with a female reproductive system, it is likely that most people at some point in their lives will be close to someone going through menopause.

Further, women are less likely to benefit from healthcare systems in many 'Western' countries compared to men (Marcum, 2017). This is a consequence of a view in medical sciences of the man as the stereotypical human and women and children considered exceptions. This has led to a lack of research into medical conditions in women and children and consequently there is less evidence available to provide an understanding of differences between the genders and across ages. This makes research into women's health an urgent priority (Barthold et al., 2014; Marcum, 2017, see chapter 2).

Menopause has been subjected to medicalisation, in the sense of a process that constitutes 'medicine as an institution of social control' (Zola, 1972). Menopause and other health conditions that affect female bodies such as childbirth and menstrual discomfort (PMS) have subsequently been surrounded by controversy (Ussher, Hawkey, & Perz, 2018). Indeed, medicalisation is pervasive in 'Western' society, assigning power to a limited number of people who can construct diagnosis and treatment and hence make decisions about who is considered sick and how people should live their lives (Zola, 1983).

This can be beneficial to society, but may restrict the freedom of individuals (Contino, 2016). An example given by Contino is the regulation of smoking, which may include warnings about health dangers of smoking but also lead to companies refusing to hire smokers. Contino questions the legitimacy of these consequences of the medicalisation of smokers and raises concerns of discrimination (p. 49). Similarly, stigmatisation<sup>1</sup> of menopause could lead to employers wishing not to hire women between the ages of 45 and 55. According to a survey of Danish women around the age of menopause, there is a concern that employers prefer to hire people younger than 50 (L. Hvas & Gannik, 2008, p. 185). Stigma associated with menopause might exacerbate this perception. Thus, a study of the medicalisation of a prevalent health concern from a critical discourse perspective can reveal aspects of contemporary society that may be of interest across disciplines.

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, I consider stigma a mark that attributes negative evaluation to a group of people.

Further, menopause is surrounded by taboo and misinformation (Hardy et al., 2019; Rubinstein, 2014) and research into the topic can hopefully increase awareness about the experiences women have and how they may affect relations to their workplaces, families and the healthcare system as well as broader society. Critical discourse studies (CDS) in particular can provide empirical evidence because it is grounded in linguistic analysis and aims to present how language of a specific discourse functions within its social and institutional context. CDS has been defined as ‘a transdisciplinary, text-analytical approach to critical social research’ (Cap, 2019a; Hart & Cap, 2014 among others; see also Section 3.3.1).

I will focus on the role of metaphor in the social construction of the concept of menopause because linguistic research has indicated the significance of metaphor in a wide range of discourses, including healthcare (Creed & Nacey, 2020; Deignan & Semino, 2019; Hommerberg et al., 2020; Reijnierse et al., 2019). Metaphor has been shown to help cancer patients reconcile the scientific knowledge of their illness with their experience of illness (Laranjeira, 2013; Magaña & Matlock, 2018). Studies of metaphor may reveal assumptions, beliefs, values and norms that are taken for granted, and this study will compare such indications of ideology expressed across countries and healthcare systems. In this research, I want to see how metaphor plays a role in the representation of menopause and menopausal women’s experience in medical information addressed to the public.

I became interested in the topic of menopause after having worked with product information for estrogen replacement therapy in the pharmaceutical industry and noticed some of the stigma associated with women reaching that age. My starting point was therefore a medicalised worldview with a focus on what pharmaceuticals can do for menopausal women. I have no personal, first-hand experience with menopause, but through this work I have become familiar with an increasing range of distinctive perspectives on the topic, which has thus expanded my own view.

## 1.2 Health as an ideological construct

This section will define ‘health’ and give examples of how the concept can serve ideological purposes. Here, I see ideology as summarised by Koller (2014b, p. 155) as a ‘(metaphorical)

network of beliefs that gives rise to expectations, norms and values about events, ideas and people'. Verschueren (2012) points out that ideology is socially constructed yet perceived to be 'common-sense', i.e. taken for granted assumptions (see also Fairclough, 1989). As Declercq (2018, p. 17) suggests, this makes health a dynamic notion that changes with shifting contexts.

Nonetheless, the World Health Organisation defines health as follows: 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (World Health Organization, 2020). The concept of health in their view thus includes discourses of disease but also more broadly other aspects of well-being. As observed by Declercq (2018, p. 27) this has been their definition since 1948 despite societal changes, such as more people living with chronic illnesses that would previously have been fatal (Huber et al., 2011, p. 3). This makes the 'state of complete physical, mental and social well-being' an unattainable goal for many people and Huber suggests a redefinition that emphasises 'the ability to adapt and self manage in the face of social, physical, and emotional challenges'.

### 1.3 Menopause and women as discursive constructs

This thesis addresses discourses on menopause from the assumption that language is socially constructed but also constructive of social power relations. The aim of an analysis of language from this perspective is to reveal how unequal power relations are created, sustained and how they may change (Fairclough, 1989). When an individual is trying to make sense of the unfamiliar experience, i.e. the bodily changes that occur during menopause, they are influenced by discourses on gender, age and reproduction as well as other cultural discourses. Culture in this sense is 'a way of dividing people up into groups according to some feature of these people which helps us to understand something about them and how they are different from or similar to other people' (Scollon & Scollon, 2012, p. 3). Following this, a cultural discourse is influenced by a feature shared among discourse participants, which could for example be their nationality or gender.

The way menopause is discursively constructed can affect experiences (Hunter & O'Dea, 1997). Conventionalised constructions of menopause are a starting point that may show a representation many people share. The Macmillan Dictionary (MD; Macmillan Education

Limited, 2022) defines 'menopause' as 'the time in a woman's life when her periods stop and she is no longer capable of getting pregnant.' This frames menopause as a life-event in terms of a woman's fertility function. A list of related topics revolves mostly around sexuality and fertility. With a focus on menstruation, sexuality and fertility, this frames menopause as a very personal thing and such a view may explain why it can be a taboo subject, as mentioned in section 1.1.

In Danish, the latin term 'menopausen' is used rarely compared to the Danish term 'overgangsalderen'. A direct translation of this term is 'the transition age'. While the latin term is most commonly used in English, that is not the case in Danish. To verify this claim, I searched for 'menopause' and 'overgangsalder' in KorpusDK (Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022b). This is a general corpus of the Danish language, although it mainly contains text from news outlets, Wikipedia, blogs and internet fora. In Section 4.2.1.2, I introduce it in more detail. The search for 'menopause' returned 14 hits, while 'overgangsalder' returned 184 (all possible inflections). While these numbers are small, the difference in their frequencies is considerable and thus supports my claim that 'overgangsalder' is the preferred term.

I searched for the same terms in a health-focused reference corpus (Olsen, 2011). This corpus contains pages from the domain 'sundhed.dk', which is the official portal to the healthcare system in Denmark online (see Sections 4.1.2 and 4.2.1.2). In this corpus, the results were 88 for 'menopause' and 178 for 'menopausen', adding up to a total of 266. The Danish term 'overgangsalder' returned 42 hits, while 'overgangsalderen' returned 285 hits, adding up to a total of 327. This suggests that the latin term is indeed less commonly used in Danish, even within communication written by medical professionals, although the difference is small. The dictionary (Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a) describes the Danish term, 'overgangsalder', as follows:

fase i en kvindes liv omkring 50-årsalderen hvor menstruationerne efterhånden ophører som følge af formindsket produktion af kvindeligt kønshormon<sup>2</sup>

phase in a woman's life around the age of 50 where menstruation gradually ceases due to decreased production of female sex hormone

An example given with the above definition presents some possible physical manifestations of menopause:

Overgangsalderen kan ... præges af de såkaldte hedestigninger og svedeture, træthed, indre uro og irritabilitet

Menopause can ... be characterized by the so-called 'hot rises' and 'sweating flashes', fatigue, inner unrest and irritability

Both the Danish and US definitions mention that menstruation stops but only the Danish version states that the end of menstruation is gradual and refers to it as a 'phase'. The term itself 'overgangsalderen' (the transition age) also suggests this idea of menopause as a phase. Meanwhile, the US definition uses the terms 'time', which could be short or long, but the term 'stops' signals a point in time. Further, the focus in the Danish definition is on the cause of menopause (decreased production of female sex hormone) rather than the effect (no longer capable of getting pregnant). The Danish definition also has information about expected age and, unlike in the US version, fertility is not mentioned. By referring to inner unrest and irritability, the example also hints at mental health.

The Danish version is more focused on the physiological aspects, while the American version addresses the assumed concern a woman may have about her 'capability' to have children.

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<sup>2</sup> I present my translations of all Danish quotes in this way in this thesis.

The Danish definition represents women as a system where things happen during her life, while the American women are represented as capable or incapable of having children.

Much of the literature I reviewed as well as the data I analysed within this study refers to women with the assumption that women produce their own female hormones and menstruate monthly between puberty and menopause. The terms 'woman' and 'female bodies' in this thesis then denote someone experiencing menopause at some point in their life. It reflects a medical binary construction of 'biological sex', which I detail and critique in Section 2.2.4.

The medical construction of the biological sexes defines women and men according to anatomy as well as the respective roles in reproduction and conventional sexual relation to the opposite sex (Butler, 1990). This is one discursive construction of 'women', a construction that constitutes a norm in 'Western' societies, which has been challenged by feminists since de Beauvoir (2019; original work published 1949). More recently, a distinction between gender as conventions for expressing identity on one hand and sex as a category assigned at birth was advanced by Butler (1990). In her view, both gender and sex are social constructions which are constantly challenged and renegotiated as part of the emancipatory struggle for social justice for women as well as gender-queer people.

This section has demonstrated different representations of menopause and the people experiencing it and it indicates potential differences between Danish and US perceptions of menopause.

#### 1.4 Normal and Natural

The North American Menopause Society (NAMS; 2022) and the healthcare provider, Mayo Clinic (2020b), represent menopause as 'normal' and 'natural' (see Section 2.2.3). This is in line with other public representations of menopause (Hardy et al., 2019; World Health Organisation, 1996). But what is meant by normal and natural? According to the dictionary, 'normal' can mean conforming to expectations or being 'like most people' – two meanings that

are linked by the idea that what most people experience is what is expected ('normal', adj., Macmillan Education Limited, 2022).

The evaluative nature of 'normal' is indicated in the meaning, 'not mentally or physically disabled', which is marked 'offensive' because it implies a negative evaluation of those 'not normal' ('normal', adj., Macmillan Education Limited, 2022). However, menopause is normal in the sense that it happens to most women and is expected. For many such women, it is perhaps reassuring to have their experiences evaluated as normal.

One meaning of the term 'natural' is 'expected' ('natural', adj. Macmillan Education Limited, 2022). Another meaning is 'not caused by people', which in this context could mean that no one causes menopause with their actions or lifestyle. Appraising menopause with the term 'natural' in this sense might address any feelings of shame as it relieves the individual of responsibility for the condition. Coupland and Williams (2002) report on the representation of menopause as part of the ageing process and demonstrate how 'natural' is used to promote pharmaceuticals, supplements positioned as alternative to conventional medicine and an emancipatory view of menopause as a natural physiological restoration (see Section 3.1.4). This demonstrates the flexibility of the term. Van Poucke<sup>3</sup> (private correspondence, 2023) questions 'the argument that menopause should be viewed solely as part of the natural ageing process' as it may be alienating for those who have undergone a total hysterectomy, e.g. for cancer or severe endometriosis.

A corpus linguistic study of emails sent to a health website operated by two doctors demonstrated that teenagers use the term 'normal' to refer to and modify specific concerns related to health (Harvey et al., 2007, p. 775) as well as in a general sense, for example by asking: 'Am I normal?'. A key topic in the corpus is sex, which is not surprising for this age group. As we shall see in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, sexuality is also represented as changing for women in menopause and the question of what is normal is addressed.

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<sup>3</sup> A computational linguist, who also researches the topic of menopause.

## 1.5 Selection of data and method

I wanted to compare health discourses in Denmark with those in an English-speaking country that has a different healthcare model in order to see how commercialised ideas might be reflected in similar or different ways and whether I could relate any differences to the healthcare systems. Denmark was selected, first of all because Danish is my first language, and secondly because I am familiar with the Danish healthcare system. I also selected the US for two reasons. First, because English data are accessible to me. The second reason is because the healthcare system differs from the Danish, as the US system is a market-driven insurance system.

After I had decided to investigate discourses of menopause in Denmark and the US, I wanted to get an idea about where people get their information about menopause. Therefore, I conducted two small surveys; one in Danish and one in English. I distributed them via social media and my own network.

Twenty-nine women responded to the Danish questionnaire, 20 of whom were aged 45-64, 5 younger and 4 older. Eighteen of the respondents have attended further education, which is 5-6 years of university. Ten have a medium length, 3-4 years of study of university or vocational study. One had Studentereksamen, which corresponds roughly to US high school. Denmark is small and has little social variation compared with the US. I asked Danish respondents which region they were from to get an idea of the spread. The last category is 'udenfor Danmark' (outside of Denmark) and one respondent chose that<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> I can see she was based in Oslo and I chose not to exclude her answer because the languages are so similar, even if she is Norwegian she can probably read Danish.

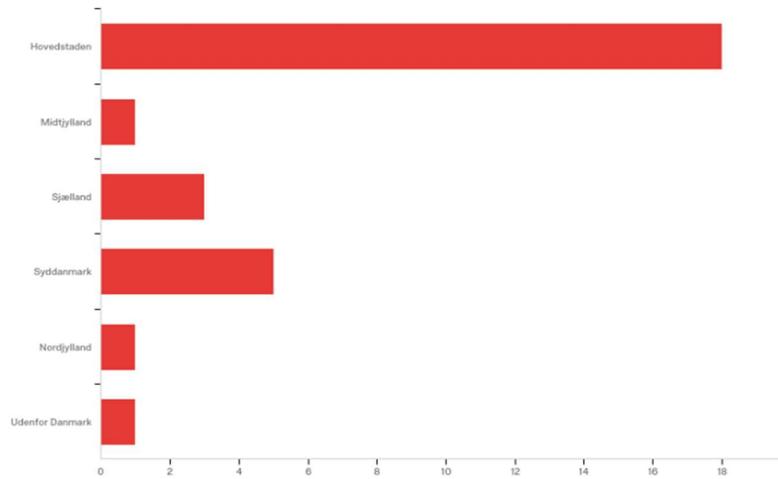


Figure 1.1: Graph indicating number of answers from each Danish region

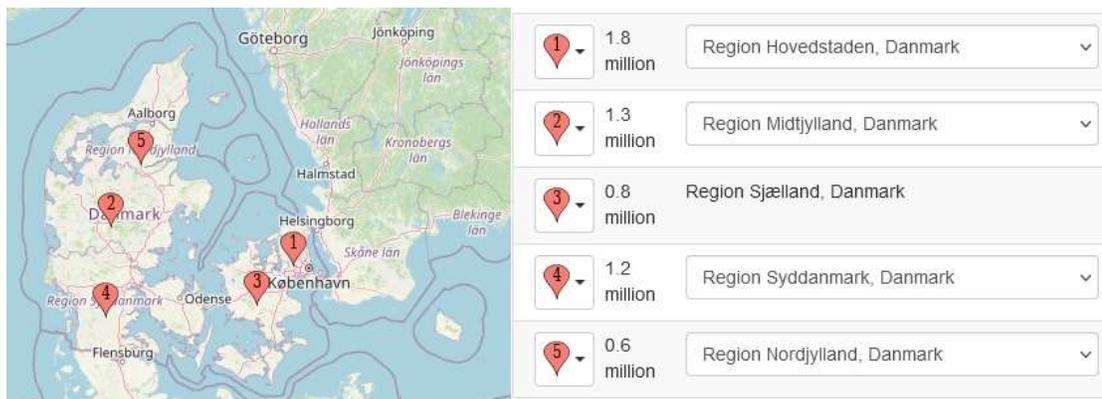


Figure 1.2: The five regions of Denmark with population density

Fifty-five American women responded to the English questionnaire, 49 of whom are aged 45-64, 5 are younger and 1 older. To the question: 'What is your highest educational degree?', 27 answered that they have an undergraduate degree, 16 completed high school, 10 have a masters and 2 a doctorate. None have less than high school level education. The map below shows the geographical spread of the US respondents. I did also receive a response from Alaska/Hawaii (sic) but that is not included on this map as a view that included it would have given less detail.

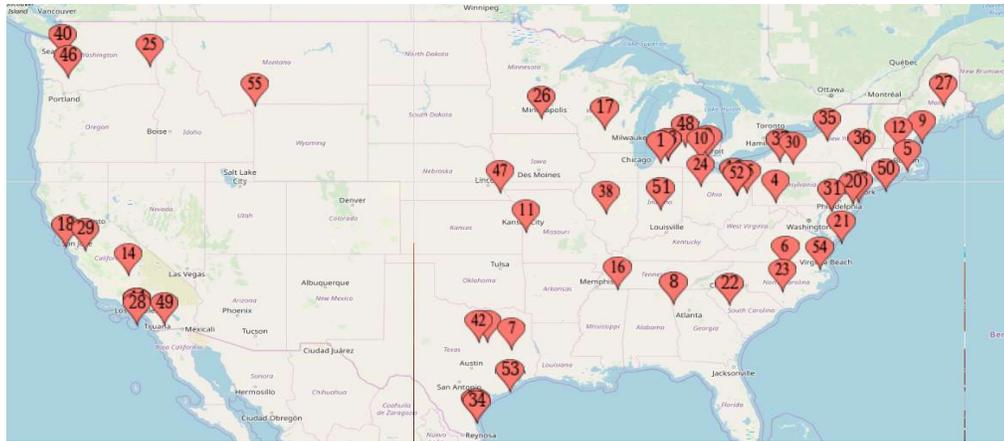


Figure 1.3: Distribution of respondents from the US

Most Danish women find information through private conversation or online. While 11 out of 29 had selected ‘private conversations’, 10 out of 29 indicated that they found information online. There may be a selection bias because I recruited the Danish respondents through my personal network online and in real life. With regards to the American respondents, I shared the questionnaire with friends in five states, which may account for a few responses and the rest are likely to have seen a post in a group on Facebook. This may explain why most of the US respondents state they find their information online, 35 out of 55. Only 15 of US respondents indicated that they get information about menopause from private conversations.

Subsequently, I tried to find data from internet forums or Facebook pages, but was unable to find any group in Danish that did not prohibit use of its content by researchers. Therefore, I chose to include a genre that includes personal narratives from menopausal women, namely women’s magazines. Finding that not much research has addressed public medical information websites, I chose these to contrast with the articles from the women’s magazines.

I decided to concentrate on metaphor scenarios for three reasons. First, they span cognitive and discursive methods which allows me to consider the nature of metaphor as well as the context in which they are used. Secondly, operationalising metaphor scenarios allows me to experiment with combining different linguistic analysis frameworks to investigate agency, narrative, appraisal and metaphor and how they interact. Finally, the comparative analysis of

two languages and genres allows me to make observations about menopause and have a meaningful discussion about how it is represented across these contexts.

## 1.6 Research questions

This thesis will address the following research questions:

1. How do metaphor scenarios represent menopause and those experiencing it in Danish and US American texts published between 2013 and 2021? In particular, how is menopause represented in:
  - i. Articles mentioning menopause in women's magazines.
  - ii. Medical websites written with the aim of informing the general public about menopause.
2. How do metaphor scenarios differ across the two genres and across the two countries? How can any such differences be accounted for?

When I consider metaphor scenarios, I address their metaphoric, narrative and evaluative elements. I describe and discuss how menopause and those experiencing it are represented as engaged in different actions, as detailed in Chapter 4. In the discussion Chapter 7, I infer ideologies relating to health and consumerism based on the findings.

## 1.7 Reflections on my position as a researcher

I am a woman with no personal experience of menopause. I have second hand experience from family members and professional experience with product information for hormone therapy for menopausal symptoms. During my work with this topic, I have become aware that menopause is a topic of interest for a broader group of people than I first anticipated. This has become clear during presentations of my work or informal conversations about it, since I received many questions from younger people, including men. Further, some non-binary people have expressed their appreciation of gender-neutral terms, as the assumption that only women experience menopause can be alienating to them.

## 1.8 Notes on terminology and translation choices

Previous research on menopause and other health conditions, discusses gender in terms of the binary conceptualisation of biological sex, expressed with terms such as ‘male’/‘female’ and ‘men’/‘women’. Some refer to socially constructed gender representations in discourse, while others refer to biological features of bodies that have a uterus and female hormone production. For purposes of clarity, I use the same terms as the studies when referring to them. In my data, the term ‘woman’ is used to refer to people who will experience menopause, are experiencing it or have experienced it.

Genderless references also occur in my data and, whenever possible, I strive to use such. However, menopause is conventionally a defining feature of the female sex so it is sometimes a convenient shorthand to refer to people who experience menopause as female or as women. Hence, I sometimes use these terms from a linguistic efficiency point of view to refer to people with female hormone production. This is not a comment on the validity of other gender identities or whether social structures should adapt to more flexible constructions of gender.

When I present Danish examples, I aim for an idiomatic translation into English while retaining – as far as possible – the relevant linguistic details. This is not always possible because polysemy varies between the languages under study. Largely, though, Danish and English are similar so, in the few cases it is needed, I have added any needed clarifying comments.

## 1.9 Outline of the thesis

This Chapter has introduced the topic and aims of this thesis and set the expectations for the next seven chapters. Chapter 2 of this thesis will draw on insights from sociology, politics, psychology and other fields as the institutional and social contexts of the data are outlined. Chapter 3 will review linguistic literature on women’s health, in particular metaphor-focused research and the theoretical framework of critical metaphor analysis, while Chapter 4 outlines data selection, collection and methods of analysis. The linguistic analysis of metaphor will follow in two chapters; Chapter 5 presents the analysis of Danish and English metaphors from a selection of articles from online women’s magazines and Chapter 6 presents the analysis of metaphors in two medical websites. Chapter 7 will discuss the findings from this thesis in

relation to the contexts of the data, as well as previous research, in order to address explicitly the research questions set out above. Chapter 8 will conclude the thesis by suggesting implications, reflecting on limitations and gesturing towards further research ideas.

## Chapter 2: Social and institutional context

In this Chapter, I explore the social and institutional contexts of the data I investigate in this thesis. The topic is ‘representations of menopause in Danish and US American discourses’. Since menopause has been medicalized in these countries, I present the Danish and US healthcare systems and ideologies which underpin approaches to healthcare in these two countries. Further, accounts of lived experiences are key to the discursive construal of any health condition. Therefore, I also present an overview of lived experiences of menopause.

Linguistic discourse studies is an inherently interdisciplinary field of inquiry (Van Dijk, 1991). Accordingly, I will draw on academic work from other disciplines; including sociology, medicine and psychology as well as accounts of healthcare policies provided by social and political commentators to describe the context and introduce the topic. The aim is not to critically assess methods from other disciplines but rather to present the discursive landscape in which the data selected for analysis are produced and used.

First, I present the healthcare models of the two countries considered in this thesis, Denmark and the US, and discuss some of their more recent developments in Section 2.1. I also address women’s health specifically and present recent public discourses on menopause. In Section 2.2, I address medicalization of society in general and menopause in particular and some associated ideologies. I also address some research on ‘biological sex’ as a construct because menopause often is represented as affecting ‘women’. I present lived experiences of menopause in Section 2.3 and provide a short summary in Section 2.4.

### 2.1 Healthcare systems in the US and Denmark – a comparison

While the US operate a health insurance model with private healthcare providers, the system in Denmark is largely publicly funded and administered. I will describe the Danish system first as it is historically older and then turn to the US system.

In Denmark, the first subsidisation specifically for medical support was introduced in 1891 but the system was still largely insurance-based at that time (Bejder & Kristensen, 2016). In 1933, the system was centralised and criteria for who should receive support were aligned across the

country, as they had been largely decided by local councils up until then. The new form of assessment was argued to be more dignified because each case was no longer subject to an individual judgement but relied on documented standards. As the state financed an increasingly larger part of the health insurances over time, differentiation was introduced with the aim to support those most in need (Yde & Jensen, 2012). Since 1973, the healthcare system has been funded and administered as part of the public sector (Lov om offentlig sygesikring [Law about public health insurance], 1973).

As of 2022, the stated purpose of the Danish healthcare system is as follows:

Sundhedsvæsenet har til formål at fremme befolkningens sundhed samt at forebygge og behandle sygdom, lidelse og funktionsbegrænsning for den enkelte.  
(Sundhedsloven, 2022)

The healthcare system aims to promote the health of the population as well as to prevent and treat illness, suffering and disability for the individual.

Hence the aim of this system is to address public health as well as individual health issues, including illness, suffering and disabilities. Further, the Danish healthcare system is legally obligated to provide easy access to information for the individual (Sundhedsloven, 2022, §2). Part of meeting this requirement is fulfilled online through the platform Sundhed.dk which provides generic information about various conditions (see also Sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.4) and functions as a communication channel between Danes and the healthcare system.

In the US, a private insurance-based system of healthcare is regulated at state level in some cases and federally in others. For example, the assessment and approval of pharmaceuticals is carried out by the federal agency the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Health insurance plans are regulated according to standards set by the federal and state governments. Americans buy health insurance coverage through an online 'marketplace', which should be managed at state level. However, not all states have implemented it 12 years after the law was enacted (S. Anderson, 2022).

The Affordable Care Act (ACA; Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 2010) was enacted to make healthcare more accessible to people who previously could not afford it and to provide coverage to people with pre-existing conditions. Before the ACA, health plans would decline to provide medical cover to expectant parents and force higher premiums on women. This has become illegal with the introduction of ACA, which also requires full coverage of birth control measures. The ACA is commonly referred to as *Obamacare*, named after the Democratic president who was a driving force behind it. The law reduced the number of uninsured Americans despite a rise in the number of uninsured in the years 2016-2020 under the Republican administration (S. Anderson, 2022). This demonstrates the political nature of healthcare regulation in the US, where the Republicans traditionally want less government interference in their lives, while the Democrats work towards a public welfare system that resembles those in Europe.

This insurance-based system is based on the belief that free competition between healthcare providers leads to better and more cost-efficient healthcare because consumers will choose to buy from the best and cheapest provider. The providers then try to convince the consumers to choose their service among many options. Prices for healthcare in the US have long been high compared to other countries in the OECD even if the system does not seem to provide better healthcare (G. F. Anderson et al., 2019). The idea of the healthcare user as a consumer has been described as an Anglo-centric argument based on the logic of 'quid-pro-quo' which underpins the market economy (Hindhede, 2011, p. 551). According to this logic, you get what you pay for as an individual.

In Denmark, the healthcare system is based on an egalitarian ideology. Hindhede (2011) refers to this as a 'gift economy'. In contrast to the US, Denmark is a welfare state with universal healthcare financed through taxes. She argues that while healthcare is given to citizens in the Danish system, there is an expectation that gifts from the welfare system are reciprocated with social obligation and responsibility. In order to investigate to what extent Danish consumers of healthcare adopt market rationality as described in the previous paragraph, she undertook observations and interviews in a hearing clinic in Denmark and found resistance to the idea of the hearing aid user as a consumer. Further, hearing aid users were found to experience an internalised moral pressure to use the free hearing aid, a pressure she claims

consumers of goods normally do not feel. It follows that everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the system as well as to take care of their own health in order to minimise their reliance on the system.

However, recent years have seen changes to the Danish healthcare system, with increasing privatisation. In addition to state-funded healthcare provision in Denmark, private healthcare providers offer various treatments. According to [sundhed.dk](http://sundhed.dk), 114 private hospitals are offering treatment in Denmark as of 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (*Find behandler*, 2022). Indeed in Denmark, a theme of the 2022 general election debate was the privatisation of healthcare. Doctors pointed out that the current practice of sending patients to private healthcare providers is draining the public system from resources, financial as well as professional. Challenges such as more complex patient needs, fewer employees and dissatisfaction about pay and working conditions in the healthcare system in general, were all discussed in the TV programme 'Debatten', aired on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022. This is a weekly debate programme, bringing together different interested parties, including professionals, politicians and members of the public, to discuss a current topic. In the following, I refer to comments made by a nurse and two doctors in this programme. Better working conditions in the private sector are one reason why some qualified professionals choose not to work in the public sector according to a nurse, Andreas Vestergaard Kjær. A doctor, Grethe Olivia Nielsson, says doctors do not need better pay, but more colleagues. She also criticises private healthcare providers for not contributing to research and education, and for only taking resources away from the public sector. They discuss the rights of the patient, which have been codified as 'behandlingsgarantien' (the treatment guarantee). This guarantee ensures that a patient receives treatment within a set time frame. If that is impossible within public sector provision, the patient is referred to a private provider. It is financed by taking money from the public sector that should have treated the patient in the first place. This approach is criticised as it favours the less complicated clinical cases because the private providers are only able to handle simple cases, so people who are most ill end up in the public system anyway (see also Kirurgisk Forum, 2022).

Another topic briefly mentioned in the TV programme mentioned above is the question of who decides the course of treatment. Is it a doctor, the patient or automatic procedures? This question illustrates changes to the medical professional role that have happened over time.

The relation between the doctor and those they treat has changed, diminishing the authority of the doctor (see also Section 3.3.2.3). A more equal doctor-patient relationship and more dialogue is strived for as the doctor is encouraged to consider the expertise obtained through lived experience of a health condition. Further, the healthcare system is regulated by rules and standards, which sometimes stand in the way of the most optimal care according to Ida Donkin, M.D. and member of the national ethical council (Etisk Råd). This is an opinion shared by the Organization of Danish Medical Societies, who encourage doctors to reflect more on whether their actions will benefit the patient and request fewer test out of habit (Lægevidenskabelige selskaber, 2022).

According to the American Medical Association, 36% of physicians in 2018 were women, compared with 6% in 1950 (American Medical Association, 2018). According to the Danish organisation for GPs, the number of female GPs superseded that of their male colleagues at 51.2% for the first time in 2017. Since 1977, when the number was a mere 10%, the rise has been steady (Praktiserende Lægers Organisation, 2017). According to the Danish Health Agency, the gender distribution of all doctors in Denmark was 50/50 in 2015 (Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2016). These numbers are not directly comparable but they show an increasingly balanced workforce in terms of gender among doctors in both countries, albeit changing more slowly in the US compared to Denmark. It is possible that this has contributed to increased attention to women's health in both countries, but I have not found evidence to support this.

#### 2.1.1 Women's health in the US and Denmark

There are several reasons to prioritize research on female health as mentioned in Section 1.1. Historically, medical research into women's health has been neglected with the exception of reproduction (Institute of Medicine (US), 2010). Further, safety concerns in relation to pregnancies led to the exclusion of all women in the fertile ages from clinical studies in the US from 1977 to the early 1990s (see National Institutes of Health, 2023 for a review). Consequently, a lack of knowledge about women's health leads to the problem of clinicians who misdiagnose or treat their patients because they are not aware of the exact differences between men and women (Marcum, 2017). Taking a different perspective, societies have long

regulated female bodies through policies governing reproduction through a medicalization of pregnancy (Ussher et al., 2018). In this section, I will first address gender bias in the clinical encounter, and secondly, I discuss abortion policies in the US and Denmark. This is an example of how women's bodies have been regulated with political consequences and it illustrates a view on women that is pervasive, yet contested, in Western countries.

Marcum (2017) discusses different kinds of gender bias and how doctors can overcome them. He describes three types of bias: (i) a male perspective for defining health and illness, (ii) gender blindness and (iii) gender stereotyping. The first bias considers the male body as the norm, which has contributed to the exclusion of women from clinical trials for decades. Consequently, medical knowledge of women's bodies is comparatively smaller than that concerning men's. Gender blindness and stereotyping describe when the clinician wrongly assumes no gender difference or assumes a difference when there is none. Marcum (2017) illustrates how such biases affect clinical decisions drawing on the example of cardiovascular disease. This condition has been overlooked in women due to the assumption that this type of disease mostly affects men as well as the diffuse presentation of pain in women, some with no symptoms until it became an emergency. Heart disease is the leading killer of women in the US (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion & Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, 2022). This illustrates why research into women's health beyond the reproductive system is important.

Another reason to research women's health is that regulating conditions which only affect female bodies, such as menopause and pregnancy, enables a regulation of women. In the following, I will discuss how the US and Denmark have regulated abortion and consider the ideologies underpinning such regulations. This discussion serves to demonstrate how societal values and beliefs have impacted individual women.

Abortion in the first trimester had been a constitutional right in the US since the 1973 Roe vs. Wade trial. Before that, people tried to perform abortions by various methods, many of which were unsafe and resulted in death, for example from infection or excessive bleeding (Gold, 2003). The topic has been controversial in the US since shortly after the country was founded (Gold, 2003; Holland, 2023). In 2022, the question of whether abortion should be regulated at

the federal level went to the Supreme Court, who ruled 5-4 that abortion bans were not a constitutional question. This means that the individual states now decide whether or not to allow abortion. While some states issued an immediate ban, others allow abortion for the first six weeks only. Healthcare providers may be criminally charged if they perform abortions in some states, but it is unclear whether the states can ban oral abortions, which is a medication that can be taken at home and has been approved by the federal agency, the US Food & Drug Administration (Levitt, 2022). The bans on abortion affect poor and marginalized people disproportionately, as they might not be able to afford another child or travel to access safe medical help according to social scientists' statements in various media outlets (Barber, 2022; Berger, 2022; Suleymanova, 2022). Further, these women may have reduced access to healthcare to begin with, including access to means of contraception (Barber, 2022), although the FDA approved over-the-counter contraception pills (The US Food and Drug Administration, 2023) a year after the Supreme Court ruling. This makes abortion an issue of socio-economic disparities as well as one which concerns gender.

In Denmark, abortion is also surrounded by controversy and, of course, abortion bans have posed the same risks for women's health (Sørensen, 2023). Abortion was formally legalised in 1973 after having been permitted under certain conditions since the 1930s. These conditions included health concerns (both physical and mental), incest, rape and eugenics. According to historian Lene Koch, some public voices spoke for the free choice to have abortion and sterilisation for individuals with hereditary diseases. However, these procedures became ethically dubious in Denmark when they were forced onto people who were in weak positions in society due to poverty, mental health or capacity (Holm, 2022). In the 1970s, the political debate centred around whether children were wanted. Simply not wanting to be a parent became an accepted argument for abortion. In recent times, the debate considers the rights of women to decide over their own bodies versus the right for the child to be born, with questions mainly revolving around the time limit for abortion (Dahlgaard, 2007). It is currently a free choice until the 12<sup>th</sup> week, i.e. the first trimester of pregnancy (Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2019). Efforts to limit abortions now focus on educating people about contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancies in the first place. According to a survey from 2013, around 80% considered abortion a difficult ethical question, yet 90% of the Danish population was supportive of a woman's right to choose (Britta Søndergaard, 2013). Abortion regulations in

Denmark have been used to control parts of the population based on ideological goals. These goals have changed over time from creating an 'ideal' population, sometimes through use of force towards women who were ill, to the rights of the individual – whether that of the pregnant woman or the unborn.

This shift towards individualism is seen in broader health discourses and ideologies as I will discuss in Section 2.2. In both countries, abortion has been framed as a question of the rights of the unborn child versus women's health. As described at the beginning of this section, Western medical science for many years was primarily concerned with women's health when it came to the ability to create babies (Institute of Medicine (US), 2010). This is a rather dystopian view of women, and one consequence of this view is that women lose their value when they are no longer able to bear children. In other words, menopause when framed as the end of her ability to become pregnant (see Section 1.3) marks the end of her relevance to this medical view. Contrary to this view stand the calls and efforts for better healthcare for women, including access to contraception, safe abortion and well-informed healthcare in general (Levitt, 2022).

## 2.2 The medical approach

In this section, I present ideologies that affect how we talk, and potentially think, about health in the Danish and US societies. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I take the view that ideology comprises beliefs which prompt expectations, values and norms (Koller, 2014b, p. 155). I discuss how menopause has come to be represented as a medical problem as a part of the broader process of the medicalization of society. In addition to an experience, menopause can be understood as a dynamic construct, that is renegotiated by various discourse participants, including but not limited to those experiencing menopause and healthcare professionals.

In Section 2.2.1, I discuss externalisation and othering of the body. This will be followed by Section 2.2.2 on healthism, medicalization and pharmaceuticalization. In Section 2.2.3, I present literature on the medicalization of menopause. Finally, I report on critiques of the belief in a biological sex-binary in Section 2.2.4.

### 2.2.1 Mind-body dualism and the externalisation of experience

A common belief in Western cultures separates physical health from mental health (for a review over literature that argues how this has associated mental health problems with more stigma compared to physical health problems, see Declercq, 2021). In this view, physical health can be measured and treated in the body, while mental health is considered separate, residing in the mind. This mind-body dualism has been traced back to Descartes (2017/1641). In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, medical sciences became able to detect disorders in the body as they started investigating and treating it as separate from the rest of the self according to Foucault (2001/1961, 2014/1963).

Together with this objectification of the body, Foucault (2001/1961, 2014/1963) suggests two other concurrent developments that ultimately lead to the integration of experience into people's identity. One of these developments was the practice of judging normality in reference to standards set by a profession, one of these being medicine (see Section 1.4 for details about 'normal'). The second of these developments was a practice of dividing the population so as to separate people who were homeless, poor, mad, disabled or ill from the general population. These groups of people were considered to have a 'spoiled identity'. The belief that such experiences are indeed part of a person's identity can stand in the way of finding solutions to any such problems according to the psychotherapist White (2007). Therefore, White (1990) proposed the idea of 'externalisation' of such experiences as part of what he called 'narrative therapy'.

Externalisation entails reframing the experience, which is seen as an integral part of the identity, to exist outside of the person experiencing it. To illustrate externalisation, White (2007, pp. 10–23) describes how therapy with a child with ADHD became possible as he started to talk to the child and parents about the condition as a separate being. This makes it possible for the child to distinguish between what he wants, e.g. play with the other kids, and what the ADHD wants, e.g. for him to be isolated. In the context of menopause, a parallel could be when an interviewee in my data says she 'kæmpede med overgangsalderen' (struggled with menopause). She goes on to describe how it entails sleeplessness for her, which suggests that menopause keeps her awake when she wants to sleep, like the child in

White's consultation is kept from playing with the other kids by his ADHD. Naturally, the idea of ADHD and menopause as separated from the identity of the person experiencing it is expressed differently by a child in a consultation setting compared to an adult woman interviewed for a magazine article. But the idea of seeing the experience as separate to the person experiencing it seems to be a coping strategy in both cases (see also Gustafsson et al., 2019).

### 2.2.2 Healthism, medicalization and pharmaceuticalization

Zola (1972) describes medicalization as a process that constitutes 'medicine as an institution of social control'. Zola (1983) describes how contemporary society has been medicalized to the degree that potentially anything can be considered a disorder and health in itself is a value. Crawford (1980, p. 368) names the ideology underpinning this process *healthism*. He defines it as 'the preoccupation with personal health as a primary - often *the* primary – focus for the definition and achievement of well-being; a goal which is to be attained primarily through the modification of lifestyles, with or without therapeutic help'. This makes the individual responsible for their own health and encourages changes to their behaviours, attitudes and emotions to achieve better health. While this may seem to empower the individual to make choices related to their own life, Zola (1983) also argues that a corollary of the increasing medicalization of society is the expansion of the power of the medical profession onto previously non-medical areas of life. This replaces or incorporates the power that religious and legal institutions had in the past in terms of regulating people's lives. In the medicalized society, as long as a certain group defines diagnosis and treatment, that group wields immense power over who is considered sick and how people live their lives, regardless of whether or not that group is fully aware of this power (Zola, 1983). Indeed, Zola (1972) argues that the reason for medicalization is a reliance on technology, bureaucracy and expertise, at least in the US and possibly elsewhere.

In Denmark, medicalization is also part of a debate about new developments within medical treatments and diagnostics. In the Danish medical weekly, Hvas (1999) argues that a distinction is needed between the Danish terms 'medikalisering' and 'sygelliggørelse'. The former refers to the process of medicalization as described above, whereas the latter refers to

the experience an individual has when they are 'made ill' by someone else. For example, if someone experiences the typical signs of menopause and feels ill after being told they are experiencing 'symptoms' and given the 'diagnosis' of menopause. This emphasises the importance of language.

Zola (1983) argues that whenever anything is defined as an illness, the option to leave it be is no longer there; it has become a problem that must be addressed and the debate is over 'how' and 'when' this is addressed rather than 'if'. He provides an example of how this has affected women's health; one side of the discussion surrounding abortion focuses on defining what abortion is while ignoring the question of what freedom an individual should have over their own body. In this way, medicalization can lead to the stigmatisation and social control of medicalized individuals (Conrad, 1992). The woman who wishes to have an abortion is stigmatised and becomes subject to gender-biased social control in any society that bans or even socially sanctions abortion. This gender-bias occurs because of the biological differences between male and female roles in the production of babies and the lack of recognition that abortion bans disproportionately endanger women's health as a consequence.

A concept related to medicalization is pharmaceuticalization. Abraham (2009) defines this as 'the process by which social, behavioural, or bodily conditions are treated, or deemed to be in need of treatment, with medical drugs by doctors or patients' (p. 100). While medicalization, as described above, is a way of thinking about a problem, pharmaceuticalization orients to how such problems are addressed, specifically with pharmaceutical drugs. Abraham (2010) has suggested that medicalization has contributed to an increased pharmaceuticalization overall, a trend that has been enforced by promotion from the pharmaceutical industry. This form of pharmaceuticalization may look differently in Denmark and the US due to the different healthcare systems and political ideologies underpinning them, as described in Section 2.1. In addition to different healthcare systems, the regulation of promotion of pharmaceuticals vary, most notably when it comes to prescription drugs as these can be advertised directly to consumers in the US (Biegler & Vargas, 2013) but not in the EU (Abraham, 2009).

### 2.2.3 Medicalization of menopause

Although medicalization has developed and changed over time and across countries, the central definition proposed by Conrad (1992) remains: addressing a problem with medical language, as described in the beginning of Section 2.2.2. This present section will briefly discuss representations of menopause since the 1930s. This historical view will enable a better understanding of contemporary discourses.

The idea of menopause as a failure seems to be characteristic of medical discourse in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as menopause has been described as a 'deficiency disease' since the 1930s (Bell, 1987). The book, 'Feminine Forever' describes menopause in dramatic language, most notably as 'the horror of this living decay' and addresses how menopause makes it difficult for a woman to love her husband, cook for him and stay faithful (Wilson, 1966). The book also claims that women with power in the workplace display erratic behaviour towards colleagues. Increasing estrogen levels through hormone therapy is presented as the solution to these problems through anecdotes about how women who received treatment could continue to be good wives and pleasant co-workers (Wilson, 1966).

Unsurprisingly, this book has been subject to feminist critique (Perz & Ussher, 2008). In contrast to the book, which is based on the experiences of a male gynaecologist, more recent studies of menopause are based on interviews with menopausal women and show that multiple factors influence experiences of menopause and hormone levels alone should not be considered accountable (L. Hvas & Gannik, 2008; Perz & Ussher, 2008; Utz, 2011).

The medicalization of menopause has been tied to the scientific advancement in understanding hormones and the development of new drugs (Bell, 1987). Hormone therapy became the standard response to menopausal symptoms from the global medical profession (L. Hvas & Gannik, 2008) until the Women's Health Initiative Study revealed safety issues. These were so severe that the trials with hormone therapy were terminated early (Rossouw et al., 2002). This changed prescribing practices, although it has later been suggested that authorities and prescribers may have overreacted to this event (Atwood & Ekstein, 2019). More recently, an increase in prescribing practices of hormone therapy indicates a possible re-pharmaceuticalization of menopause (Rubinstein, 2014).

Due to the medicalization of menopause, definitions of menopause provided by medical institutions are likely to be normative for discursive representations of menopause. Definitions from organisations that are medical authorities in the US and Denmark may then indicate normative representations of menopause.

The North American Menopause Society (NAMS; 2022) defines menopause as follows:

The final menstrual period, which can be confirmed after 12 consecutive months without a period. This time marks the permanent end of menstruation and fertility. It is a normal, natural event associated with reduced functioning of the ovaries, resulting in lower levels of ovarian hormones (primarily estrogen).

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA; 2019) defines it as follows:

Menopause is the time in your life when your period stops for at least 12 months. During menopause, some women have problems like hot flashes, vaginal dryness and irritation, and thin bones. Talk to your healthcare provider if your menopause symptoms don't go away or get worse.

Both of these definitions characterise menopause as the end of menstruation. While the NAMS mentions fertility and appraises menopause as a 'normal, natural event', the FDA emphasizes potential problems and advises consultation with a healthcare professional if symptoms persist or 'get worse'. The text producer is addressing the reader directly using the imperative, 'talk' and the second personal pronoun. It is not surprising that the regulator of pharmaceuticals focus on the problematic parts of menopause and the healthcare professional's role (Bogø Jørgensen, 2018). The medical professional organisation NAMS on the other hand normalises the bodily changes, which may have a reassuring effect on some readers (see Section 1.4). The healthcare provider, Mayo Clinic (2020b), also defines menopause as the end of menstruation, appraises it as 'natural' and mentions potential symptoms:

Menopause is the time that marks the end of your menstrual cycles. It's diagnosed after you've gone 12 months without a menstrual period. Menopause can happen in your 40s or 50s, but the average age is 51 in the United States.

Menopause is a natural biological process. But the physical symptoms, such as hot flashes, and emotional symptoms of menopause may disrupt your sleep, lower your energy or affect emotional health. There are many effective treatments available, from lifestyle adjustments to hormone therapy.

In addition, they provide important information concerning *when* the menopause occurs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Danes younger than 40 do not know when to expect menopause. This is also the case in a British study of predictors of treatment uptake in relation to menopause (Rubinstein, 2014). The author suggests this may be because childbirth in the 30s and 40s is perceived as less risky compared to previous recommendations to have children in the 20s. This may be transferred onto expectations of later menopause.

NAMS gives the only definition out of the three that refers to the end of fertility. This information is also mentioned in the dictionary definition, I provided in Section 1.3: 'she is no longer capable of getting pregnant'. However, it is potentially misleading, as pregnancy is possible during perimenopause. The point in time that is menopause is clearly defined by NAMS as: 'The final menstrual period, which can be confirmed after 12 consecutive months without a period.' The US dictionary on the other hand vaguely suggests it as 'the time in a woman's life when her periods stop' ('menopause', n., Macmillan Education Limited, 2022). Both the FDA and Mayo Clinic use the term 'symptom' and Mayo Clinic also represents menopause as a 'diagnosis'. The causal link between hormones and menopause is mentioned by NAMS and Mayo Clinic, but not by the FDA, even though this is the agency that regulates marketisation of hormone therapy. This medical language construes menopause as an illness and hence maintains the medicalization of menopause.

The symptoms mentioned by Mayo Clinic include emotional health whereas the FDA only mentions 'hot flashes, vaginal dryness and irritation, and thin bones', i.e. symptoms that are more visible or measurable compared to 'levels of energy' and 'emotions'. To address the

symptoms, Mayo Clinic suggests lifestyle adjustments or hormone therapy. This speaks to an individual who can act independently of the healthcare professional, although they will need to persuade a prescriber if they want systemic hormone therapy. In contrast, the FDA suggests a conversation with a healthcare provider. It is interesting that Mayo Clinic, who is a healthcare provider, backgrounds itself in this way.

The Danish public health portal, sundhed.dk (Trolle, 2019b), defines menopause as follows:

Overgangsalderen er perioden omkring den sidste menstruationsblødning. Det tidspunkt menstruationerne ophører, kalder man for menopausen. Klimakteriet er et andet navn for overgangsalderen. Forandringer og symptomer i overgangsalderen skyldes, at æggestokkene holder op med at danne det kvindelige kønshormon, østrogen.

Menopausen kommer i 45-55 årsalderen hos langt de fleste kvinder. Overgangsalderen starter nogle år før den sidste menstruation. Når man nærmer sig menopausen, kan der være forvarslere i form af blødningsforstyrrelser og symptomer som hedeture. Nogle kvinder har ingen gener overhovedet i forbindelse med overgangsalderen - blødningerne holder bare op, enten gradvist eller pludseligt. De fleste har dog symptomer i en eller anden udstrækning, og nogle er så generede af det, at de har behov for behandling.

Kvinder, der har fået livmoderen fjernet før overgangsalderen, får overgangsaldersymptomer i samme udstrækning som andre kvinder. Hvis æggestokkene ikke fjernes ved operationen, beholder de deres normale hormoner, og kvinden får først overgangsaldersymptomer på samme tidspunkt som andre kvinder.

The 'overgangsalder' is the time period around the last menstrual bleeding. The point in time when menstruations cease is called the menopause. 'Klimakteriet' is another name for 'overgangsalder'. Changes and symptoms during menopause are due to the ovaries ceasing to produce the female sex hormone, estrogen.

The menopause occurs at the age of 45-55 in the vast majority of women. The 'overgangsalder' starts a few years before the last menstruation. When one approaches the menopause, some pre-warnings may occur such as abnormal

bleedings and symptoms like hot flashes. Some women have no bothers at all in connection to 'overgangsalderen' – the bleedings just stop, either gradually or suddenly. However, most [people] have symptoms to some extent, and some are so bothered by it that they need treatment.

Women, who have had the uterus removed before 'overgangsalderen', have symptoms of 'overgangsalder' to the same extent as other women. If the ovaries are not also surgically removed, they keep their normal hormones, and the woman will have symptoms of 'overgangsalder' at the same time as other women.

This definition makes the distinction between menopause as a point in time and 'overgangsalderen'/'klimakteriet' as a period of time. The term 'klimakteriet' comes from Greek and means to move up the steps on a ladder (my translation from Danish, 'klimakterie', noun, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a). While the US American definitions presented above also represent menopause as a point in time, the mentioning of menopause symptoms by the FDA and symptoms of menopause by the Mayo Clinic introduce ambiguity because the symptoms can last for years.

The Danish medical website Netdoktor.dk (Felding, 2019) conflates 'overgangsalder', menopause and 'klimakteriet':

Overgangsalderen kaldes også menopausen eller klimakteriet. I begyndelsen af overgangsalderen er menstruationerne tit lidt uregelmæssige, og dette skyldes, at æggene i æggstokkene er ved at slippe op, og at ægløsningen derfor ikke fungerer helt som før. Man danner derfor heller ikke det ene kønshormon – progesteron – på normal vis. Progesteron er det hormon, som dannes efter ægløsningen, og som 'forbereder' (sic.) livmoderen på at modtage et befrugtet æg. Det andet kvindelige kønshormon – østrogen – dannes først i normal mængde, men efterhånden slipper det også op. Man ser ofte, at menstruationerne bliver kraftigere når overgangsalderen nærmer sig – og ikke svagere, som man umiddelbart skulle tro.

The 'overgangsalder' is also called 'menopause' or 'klimakteriet'. At the beginning of the overgangsalder, menstruation is often a bit irregular, and this is due to the fact

that the eggs in the ovaries are about to run out, and that ovulation therefore does not work quite as before. Therefore, one sex hormone - progesterone - is not produced in the normal way. Progesterone is the hormone that is formed after ovulation and which 'prepares' (sic.) the uterus to receive a fertilized egg. The second female sex hormone - estrogen - is at first produced in normal amounts, but eventually it also runs out. It is often seen that menstruation becomes stronger as the overgangsalder approaches - and not weaker, as one might think.

This definition combines information about the experience (e.g. that menstruation may be irregular or become stronger) with scientific information about how the hormones work in general and in connection to menopause. The dominant framing is similar to the Danish dictionary definition ('overgangsalder', n., Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a) with a focus on the scientific explanation:

fase i en kvindes liv omkring 50-årsalderen hvor menstruationerne efterhånden ophører som følge af formindsket produktion af kvindeligt kønshormon

phase in a woman's life around the age of 50 where menstruation gradually ceases due to decreased production of female sex hormone

While focusing on the physical symptoms, Sundhed.dk also address differences in experience among women. Some have no symptoms while others experience so many bothersome symptoms that they need treatment. Further, the website explains what to expect after a hysterectomy and/or oophorectomy. The medical explanation, including the link between menopause and monthly menstruations, is reproduced in the dictionary definitions, which suggests that the medical definition is authoritative and likely widespread in general language.

In contrast to the claim that the experience of menopause may differ in severity, an overwhelming part of the medical literature on menopause used to assume that menopause is a condition that always needs to be treated (Ferguson & Parry, 1998). While some may experience it that way, more recent literature demonstrates that some women find it useful to learn of a variety of different representations of menopause (Hvas & Gannik, 2008a). Many of

the symptoms attributed to menopause may have other causes (Walker & Hunter, 2002). In Section 2.3, I present literature on lived experiences of menopause, including some of the medical explanations for menopausal symptoms.

#### 2.2.4 The binary construction of the sexes

In the Western world, we are used to thinking of two sexes; man/woman with the corresponding bodies male and female but this is a social construction (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). People who are born with bodies that do not conform to this binary are referred to as intersex today, while the historical term used is hermaphrodites according to Fausto-Sterling, who gives a review of historical perceptions of sex and gender. She elaborates on the distinction between 'pseudohermaphrodites' and 'true hermaphrodites'. While a pseudohermaphrodite had either ovaries and testes combined with the genitalia of the 'opposite sex', a true hermaphrodite had both ovaries and testes. This is interesting from the point of view of menopause as the ovaries produce most of the hormones that are held accountable for menopause (Falkenberg Nielsen & Juel Bojsen-Møller, 2012, pp. 461–475). Therefore, it is possible that a hermaphrodite experiences menopause, provided they have ovaries. For the full experience with menstruations, they need a uterus as well. In other words, the norm of fitting in to either sex category is not achievable for everybody. In recent times, it has been medical practice to assign babies a sex at birth, in some cases with gender affirming/suppressing surgery (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Consequently, not everyone experiencing menopause is necessarily a woman.

### 2.3 Lived experiences of menopause

The experience of menopause varies from woman to woman and, as demonstrated in Section 2.2.3, has been represented in different ways, for example as the end of fertility, a problematic time, an illness or an event. The way menopause is discursively constructed affects the experience (Hunter & O'Dea, 1997). This is why analysis of the discursive representations of menopause is important. In the following, I will address how different aspects of women's lives are said to have been affected by menopause, starting with dominant descriptions of menopause.

Menopause has been associated with a broad range of experiences in public discourses and medical literature. This contributes to expectations of a ‘normal’ menopause. The table below shows ‘signs and effects’ that were identified by Shoebridge and Steed (1999) in their content analysis of Australian printed women magazines. It illustrates the variety of symptoms experienced by female bodies.

<b>Appearance</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Psychologically</b>
Obesity/weight gain	Itchy/crawling skin	Intellectual/emotional impairment
Hair loss/diminised texture	Increased risk of cancer	Sleeping problems
Skin problems	Mortality predictor	Erratic/problematic behaviour
Reduced breast tone	Digestion problems	Headaches
Growth of facial hair	(heartburn, flatulence, constipation)	Panic attacks
Reduced general muscle tone	Reduced ability to produce tears	Impaired memory
Easily damaged fingernails	Reduced sensitivity to smell	Dizziness
No weight gain	Fewer transition problems than with	Depression
<b>General ill-health</b>	other women's reproductive stages	Mood swings
Physical/emotionally unwell	<b>Cardiovascular</b>	Irritability
Vulnerable to AIDS	Palpitations	Impaired alertness/concentration
General aches and pains	Narrowing/hardening of arteries	Feeling rejected/unloved
Reduced physical capacity	Coronary heart disease	Lack of confidence
Tired/lacking energy	Stroke	Dementia
Increased energy	<b>Osteoporosis</b>	Anxiety/tension
<b>Urinogenital</b>	<b>Vasomotor</b>	No increased depression
Vaginal dryness	Hot flushes Sweats	Self-actualisation
Vaginal infections		<b>Sexual</b>
Fluid retention		Painful sex
Urinary problems		Infertility
Incontinence		Reduced libido
Ceasing menstruation		Increased libido
Ageing/thinning sex organs		

Table 2.1: Symptoms of menopause. Reproduced from Shoebridge and Steed (1999)

Many of the symptoms mentioned in the table (e.g. irritability, headaches, depression, weight gain, loss of libido) have been included in the narrative justifying treatment with pharmaceuticals. The current advice to menopausal women from the US Food and Drug Regulation Agency is that symptoms such as ‘hot flashes, vaginal dryness and irritation, and thin bones’ may occur for some women during menopause (The US Food & Drug Administration, 2019). But a causal connection between a decrease in hormone levels and these symptoms has been questioned (Walker & Hunter, 2002). More recent studies have investigated links between some of these symptoms and other factors, for example caffeine intake and recent abuse both showed a positive correlation with bothersome symptoms of menopause (Faubion et al., 2018). Further, women who expect menopause to be problematic

tend to have more severe symptoms compared to women without such expectations (Sood et al., 2016).

However, menopause can present a time to discover new sides of life and exciting opportunities, as suggested in the following quote:

Menopause was a time in life when I shifted priorities and interests. It opened up possibilities and allowed me, for the first time, to focus on myself—not on my children, their school, my husband, my family, or my house. It allowed me to honor myself, to dream of what I could still become. ... It wasn't the end; it wasn't the beginning; it was a soulsearching transition, which set the stage for a whole new phase of life. (Utz, 2011, p. 147).

According to the author, this quote is representative of the post-menopausal women included in Utz's (2011) study, which included interviews of 24 US women, pairs of mothers and daughters. The daughters were around 50 years of age, the average age of menopause (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b; Trolle, 2019b; see also Section 2.2.3). This attitude to menopause, Utz points out, echoes Margaret Mead's concept of 'post menopausal zest' (Mead, M. (1974) cited in Utz, 2011, p. 147).

Some studies have also reported positive experiences of menopause. Hvas (2001) found that 268 of 1261 surveys distributed to 51 year old Danish women contained comments about positive experiences of menopause. These ranged from general comments about not having any problems with menopause over relief of being rid of menstruation to enjoying more freedom and possibilities for personal growth (L. Hvas, 2001). The experiences associated with menopause seem to vary among women depending on other factors – some known, such as recent abuse, and others unknown (Faubion et al., 2018). In the following sections, I will briefly discuss some topics that are frequently discussed. These are sexuality, age and aging and mental health.

### 2.3.1 Sexuality

In table 2.1, four effects of menopause are classified as sexual: painful sex, infertility, reduced libido and increased libido. Painful sex can be caused by vaginal dryness, which is a frequent

experience during menopause judging from the attention given to the topic. It is mentioned as a symptom on the medical websites used for data in this thesis (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b; Trolle, 2019b). I discuss different representations of sexuality in Chapter 7. Infertility is associated directly with the medical causal explanation of menopause. This is illustrated in the Danish definition in Section 2.2.3 from Netdoktor, where menopause is associated with 'running out of eggs' (æggene...er ved at slippe op). This means that women change from being able to have children to not having this physical ability.

While dryness and fertility may impact sex-life and desire for some, a study by Winterich (2003) has indicated that social factors also play a role. This includes other cultural or health factors as well as any relationship to a sexual partner. While women in this study express satisfaction with their sex-life whether alone or in a same-sex or heterosexual relationship, there are differences in how they address any problems. Some heterosexual women experience that cultural expectations have them focus more on the man's sexuality, backgrounding their own. More recent research demonstrates resistance towards such cultural expectations amongst older US American women (Stahl et al., 2019). This resistance is expressed in popularised representations of female sexuality such as the TV-series *Sex and the City* ('Sex and the City', 1998), research initiatives like *OMGyes* (OMGyes, 2022) and documentaries like *#FemalePleasure* (Miller, 2018), which have brought greater attention to conversations about female pleasure in the mainstream. One of the women's magazines included in my analysis, *Cosmopolitan*, has also played a part (Frischherz, 2018).

### 2.3.2 Menopause in different times and cultures

Research into menopause as part of the aging process has found different concerns across generations and cultures. Utz (2011) interviewed two generations of women about menopause in a group of 24 women from the American Midwest. The study includes women in their 50s and their mothers who are between 18 and 30 years older. The younger generation express resistance towards the idea of aging and rely on hormone therapy whereas the mothers express resistance towards pharmaceutical treatment and consider menopause to be an opportunity for reflection and possibly changing their lives for the better. This demonstrates how the experience of menopause may vary according to their age/generation

and/or when women are asked about it. The authors suggest that different societal context affects how the respondents view menopause.

Women in North American and European societies report more symptoms related to mental health during menopause compared to women from other parts of the world. This may be due to a combination of cultural factors and other differences such as diet, exercise and reproductive practices (Walker & Hunter, 2002). Studies have indicated that the psychological reaction to menopause is shaped by cultural values and the status of the menopausal woman in society (World Health Organisation, 1996). Women who expect menopause to be problematic tend to have more severe mental health symptoms compared to women without such expectations (Avis & McKinlay, 1995; Ayers et al., 2010). Therefore, research into how menopause is represented in public discourses have the potential to have a big impact on people's lives.

#### 2.4 Summary of social and institutional context

In this chapter, I have described the healthcare systems in both Denmark and the US and how these are changing. The Danish system is becoming more privatised, driven by the arguments that citizens should have more choice. This is in line with the beliefs and norms of healthism. The US system has seen a shift from a privately financed healthcare system to a hybrid system, with some insurance types financed through public funds. The changes indicate a shift towards a welfare state that cares for its citizens.

Women's access to healthcare is different to men's due to a combination of biological and social differences. In particular, female bodies have been regulated due to their function in reproduction and because of traditional expectations of female roles. The ideological development behind abortion policies reveals how social views of women have been negotiated and developed in Denmark and the US in the last century. This illustrates how access to healthcare is influenced by power and gender hierarchies. I discuss this in Chapter 7 when I interpret the representation of women found in the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6.

Ideologies underlying the described systems and processes align with literature on healthism and medicalization. I presented the idea of considering the body as separate from the mind as well as endowing the body or an experience related to health with independent agency. In Section 2.2.3, I presented beliefs, values and norms that constitute the sociological concepts of healthism, medicalization and pharmaceuticalization. I also look for traces of medicalization, specifically of the menopause as discussed in Section 2.2.3. In Chapter 7, I discuss to what extent these are maintained or challenged in the texts I have analysed.

My research questions address how menopause and those experiencing it are represented. Parts of this representation address specific experiences of menopause and I will relate those findings to the presentation in Section 2.3. In the medical view, menopause is seen as a syndrome comprising physical and mental symptoms, some of which have social consequences. For example, irritability may affect relationships with other people. But from the point of view of the individual going through menopause, it is a lived experience.

## Chapter 3: Literature review

While in Chapter 2 I addressed menopause from medical, psychological and sociological perspectives, this chapter focuses on how women's health and menopause has been addressed from a linguistic perspective. In this literature review, I position my research within metaphor theory and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) of women's health. The broader topic of women's health supplements the very sparse linguistic literature available on menopause. I consider studies that investigate metaphor use in discourses on health from English-speaking countries as well as Scandinavia.

First, I discuss a selection of work on women's health from a linguistic perspective in Section 3.1. In that section I first address discursive representations of health conditions and how these may be influenced by social expectations related to gender. Subsequently I consider popularization of medical information and health discourses in women's magazines. Literature on these two genres is chosen to reflect the composition of my data. I finish the section with a discussion of the literature which addresses discursive representations of menopause specifically.

In Section 3.2, I discuss selected studies of metaphor in the linguistic literature, with a particular focus on health discourse and Scandinavian metaphor. This is not intended to be a complete review of the area of metaphor in health discourses, as the topic is vast (see Demjén & Semino, 2017, pp. 386–387; Tay, 2017, pp. 372–374 for an overview). Rather, I aim to convey an impression of how metaphor is used to construct discursive concepts related to health and illness in general and women's health in particular, as well as how metaphor has been studied in Scandinavian languages.

In Section 3.3, I introduce the theoretical framework, which is CDS (Cap, 2019b; Fairclough, 1989). I draw on media studies to describe discursive practices of online women's magazines and public health advice, as my data consists of these genres. Further, I introduce my approach to metaphor analysis, which is in line with Critical Metaphor Theory (Charteris-Black, 2004; Koller, 2004a; Musolff, 2016).

Finally, I summarise the main points of this literature review in Section 3.4, discussing how I will address the research gaps identified and why it is important to do so. This will lead on to Chapter 4, where I detail how I have carried out this study.

### 3.1 Women's health from a linguistic perspective

CDS research on menopause is rare. Therefore, I begin by taking a broader view on women's health in this chapter. I provide examples of how gender can affect the representation of obesity and conditions that are mostly or solely experienced by women. In the subsections, I address representation of women in the genres of public health information (3.3.1) and women's magazines (3.3.2) and finally, I address representations of menopause in other contexts (3.3.3).

Brookes and Baker (2021, p. 176) state that sex is a 'key indicator of health'. For some health conditions, different causes and experiences are associated with each gender, and women generally live longer than men. Their study on representations of obesity shows that although men and women in the UK are affected by overweight and obesity in roughly equal measure, the UK press reports more on women in relation to these topics compared to men. Further, women are found to be represented in terms of how they relate to other people in various ways. For example, female bodies are appraised with terms such as 'beautiful' and 'stunning', i.e. in terms of how they are evaluated by others. Emotional aspects are also foregrounded in the representation of women more than in those of men. Obesity in women is associated with depression and embarrassment while weight loss is associated with increased confidence. Men, on the other hand, are typically represented as being motivated to lose weight by logical and less emotional reasons such as minimising risk of related disease. These findings demonstrate a difference in how men and women are represented in health discourses in the UK press according to gendered stereotypes. Brookes and Baker (2021) question whether this paints a representative picture of contemporary gendered experiences in the UK, i.e. whether men are more concerned with their health than women, who are represented as more concerned with appearances. This raises the question of how much of a gendered experience of a health condition is socially constructed and how much is inherent, i.e. due to biological differences between men and women.

While obesity at least in the UK affects men and women in equal measure, pregnancy, menopause and endometriosis only occur in female bodies. Breast cancer can happen to men and women but it is much more frequent for women to have breast cancer compared to men (1 in 100 breast cancer diagnoses in the United States are found in a man, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Previous work on breast cancer has demonstrated how continued optimism has been constructed as a moral obligation on sufferers and it has been suggested that this discourse of positive thinking can serve conversational purposes rather than indicate a cognitively positive view of life (Wilkinson & Kitinger, 2000). The following example shows how a speaker ends her conversational turn with a reference to herself as a 'positive thinking type of person' to relinquish the floor to other speakers:

It really hit me, you know, hit me with a (laughs) thump and yet I thought there again, I've either got to have it done, or, you're not here, and it was simple as that. And like Samantha, I'm the positive thinking type of person, and so you've just got to, you know, get on. (Nettie, TP9, G11) (pp. 805-806)

This quote shows how a woman describes having to make a difficult decision in terms of force, using the expression 'hit'. She expresses a contrast to these difficult feelings as she laughs and refers to herself as 'the positive thinking type of person'. Wilkinson and Kitinger (2000) suggest that another discursive strategy may be to construct an identity of the speaker that allows her to express negative emotions while presenting herself as a positive thinker. Such expectations to think positively may also be expressed in medical discourses on menopause since, as described in Section 2.3, negative expectations to menopause have been associated with a more problematic experience in the medical literature.

This section has illustrated how social expectations can affect language and discursive strategies in health discourses. An example of how representations may be gendered through appraisal was given. Such appraisal expresses perceived norms, values and beliefs about gender and health, which makes appraisal an important parameter to consider in the linguistic analysis (see Section 4.2.1.4 for operational details).

### 3.1.1 Public health information

When health information is made available to the public, it can be seen as a popularization of scientific knowledge. Popularization has been defined as follows:

Popularization is a vast class of various types of communicative events or genres that involve the transformation of specialized knowledge into 'everyday' or 'lay' knowledge, as well as a recontextualization of scientific discourse, for instance, in the realm of the public discourses of the mass media or other institutions. This means that popularization discourse needs to be formulated in such a way that non-specialized readers are able to construct lay versions of specialized knowledge and integrate these with their existing knowledge (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004, p. 370).

The medical professionals who have written the articles included in the present study have presumably written in a different style than they would have to communicate similar information to professional peers. Thus, the production and expected reception can shape a text (Bakhtin et al., 1987, p. 60; Harvey et al., 2007, p. 779), a point I will address further in Section 4.1.4. In this section, I present linguistic studies that have addressed similar text.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no linguistic studies on popularization of medical knowledge about menopause in either a Danish or a US context. Addressing this gap in the literature is important because how we talk and potentially think about menopause in public discourses may affect people's experience with menopause (see Section 2.3). In the meantime, Critical Discourse Studies in this area have addressed changes in the UK National Health Service (Chałupnik & Brookes, 2021), public health crisis (Musolff, 2022) and media representation (Atanasova & Koteyko, 2017; Hallin & Briggs, 2016) in the UK and the US. I am not aware of such studies in a Danish context. The UK and Denmark are similar in the sense that they both have a public healthcare service, which includes private actors (see Section 2.1 for Denmark and Brookes & Harvey, 2016 for the UK). While there are differences between the two systems, and how far they have come in the privatisation process, some general points can be learned from looking at the UK's NHS. This section will discuss these in turn to illustrate CDS approaches to health topics.

The UK has a publicly funded National Health Service (NHS) and, in 2012, a move towards privatisation was made through the establishment of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). The self-representation of these on their websites was studied by Chalupnik and Brookes (2021), who found evidence of marketisation strategies, including problem-solution structures and discourses of competitiveness. Further, they attribute positive evaluation to their own actions. The CCGs, namely, promote their own brands and activities rather than inform about health to enable website users to make decisions regarding their own health.

Public health campaigns, in contrast, aim to influence the behaviour of individuals. Musolff (2022) discusses how the Covid-19 pandemic was represented in terms of war by politicians, including the US American president at the time. Such rhetoric seemed to dominate the global discourse and this triggered a number of articles by critical discourse analysts who pointed out the potential implications of relying so heavily on War metaphors to frame the pandemic. While I have seen no such studies of Danish Covid-19 discourse, I do not personally recall such metaphors being used either by Danish politicians or media (with the exception of the term 'kæmpe' (battle/struggle) but see Gustafsson & Hommerberg, 2018, p. 8 and section 3.2.2). Musolff (2022) suggests that the initial use in Britain constituted nostalgic references to WWII, a persuasive strategy designed to encourage the Brits to show courage in the face of the pandemic. However, he describes later use as 'a routine use of general fighting terminology that targets the confrontation between the national community led by the government and the persistent threat of the pandemic' (p. 314).

A literature review of peer-reviewed articles by Atanasova et al. (2019) found that the production of media representations of mental health news remains under-researched. Historically, media representations in general have been dominated by official sources such as government, industry and professional organisations (Hansen, 1991 cited in Atanasova et al., 2019), but newer media have given individuals the opportunity to communicate online (e.g. Hunt & Brookes, 2020). Further, in recent years medical professionals have increasingly used media to communicate health topics to the public (Hallin & Briggs, 2016). Indeed, the authors describe how mediatisation of health and medicine lead to a knowledge production that is increasingly subject to media logic while medicine increasingly influences our social life (Hallin & Briggs, 2016).

Public health information, as included in this study, shares some features with the popularization of science in journalistic discourse. Differences may relate to text production and the identity of writers as physicians rather than journalists, as well as the intended readership. The institutions behind the health information websites included in this study are powerful social groups within the medical establishment in Denmark and the US.

### 3.1.2 Women's magazines

This section presents studies of women's magazines from North America and Britain. I am not aware of any linguistic analysis considering health discourses in Danish women's magazines, so the current research addresses a gap in the literature by analyzing such data. I discuss controversy surrounding the readership and an indicated shift in focus from the individual to the societal over the course of the last 60 years or so.

Talbot (1987) analysed a British magazine for teenagers and described how an imaginary community is constructed and what she terms a 'synthetic sisterhood' with reference to Fairclough's 'synthetic personalisation'. Fairclough (1989) uses this term to describe language that addresses an audience as if addressing individuals in a face-to-face, synchronous situation in order to build a (synthetic) relationship between the author and the intended recipient. This is done through various linguistic devices including pronouns and directive phrases. Similar criticisms have been directed at women's magazines, e.g. the creation of a fantasy world is also a strategy applied by *Cosmopolitan* (Machin & Thornborrow, 2003). *Cosmopolitan* is a global brand, which, according to Mayo and Taboada (2017, p. 3) traditionally focused on 'inconsequential topics such as clothes, make-up, celebrity gossip and sex'. It has been subject to feminist critique since the 1960s because of its focus on women's reliance on their sexuality to get things done (Machin & Thornborrow, 2003). More recent research indicates a changing view on women. Since 2014, *Cosmopolitan* magazine includes coverage of women's roles in American politics (Mayo & Taboada, 2017). The authors find that in recent years, the magazine has taken a political standpoint to the left of American politics, coinciding with an increase in female candidates. Further, *Cosmopolitan* has shifted focus to include more articles on female pleasure (Frischherz, 2018).

When it comes to health specifically, a discourse analysis of health articles in Canadian women's magazines (Roy, 2008, p. 468) found that readers were encouraged to take responsibility for their health through 'self-control, personal determination and adherence to numerous regimens'. Hence, responsibility is put on the individual woman, mainly through the use of deontic modality, militaristic metaphors and directly addressing the reader (Roy, 2008). In these magazines, the socio-political context of women's lives is not considered, resulting in a discourse that assumes that there are no restrictions on a woman trying to optimise the health of herself and her family. Editors refute the accusation that this results in what is referred to as 'dumbing down' and argue that women only want entertainment from the magazines and are not interested in politics (pp. 473-474). Considering the recent increase in female politicians in the US, that view may not be found in contemporary US American women's magazines, at least not in the *Cosmopolitan* (see above).

This section has demonstrated a development of magazines for female readers in English speaking countries from seeking to provide a sense of community based on consumerist and heteronormative values to a more critical platform that encourages women to consider politics and what they can do to improve their own health. This supports Declercq's (2018, p. 223) point that women's magazines are as ideological in character as news, in the sense that they produce 'normative ideas about good citizenship'. This conclusion is based on studies of the production of women's magazine articles in Dutch as expressed in interviews with journalists, which the author carried out. I will address to what extent her findings are applicable to a Danish and US American contemporary context in Section 3.3.2, in the introduction to discursive practices.

### 3.1.3 Representations of menopause in other contexts

As mentioned above, there is little linguistic research addressing menopause from a CDS perspective. In this section, I will address how women's aging is represented as menopause can be characterised as part of this process (Coupland & Williams, 2002). Subsequently, I will present the single piece of CDS research I have found on menopause.

While aging is a physical process in the body, it is also socially constructed (Twigg, 2004). In Western society, old age is represented on a binary with youth, with the latter being associated with desirability and the former with disease. Brookes et al. (2021) demonstrate how these ageist discourses are reflected and reproduced in posters representing dementia in a British public health campaign. In these posters, dementia is associated with old people even though the condition also affects younger people (DementiaUK, 2022). Brookes et al. (2021, pp. 254–255) interpret this as an expression of a commonly held view that ‘ageing is held as a source of illness, suffering, loss and degeneration’.

Ageist discourses that affect women in particular have recently been discussed by Anderson (2019). Her book compares ‘public and private voices on the identity of ageing women’. The public voices are represented by advertisements of beauty products while the private voices are represented by interviews with 17 female respondents between 21 and 80 years of age, all white, middle-class, heterosexual, cis-gendered and living in the UK. The research aimed to uncover how age in women is constructed in respondents’ narratives.

The narratives express a connection between beauty and young age, suggesting that women feel less attractive as they age. This is attributed to a discourse in society evaluating aging women negatively from the point of view of the male gaze. Despite the shared negative attitudes towards age, the experiences described in these narratives are not only diverse but also contradictory (C. Anderson, 2019, p. 184). Contrasting positions are also traceable in public voices as some reinforce this age binary and others counter it (C. Anderson, 2019, pp. 90–110). Twigg (2004) underscores the importance of acknowledging this plurality in studies of aging through engaging in subjective experiences rather than projecting a general view of aging people.

Anderson’s (2019) findings indicate that discourses may relate to this binary either by reinforcing it or contradicting it. Curiously, I have not been able to find newer literature on gendered representations of age and, indeed, most of the references on the topic of the construction of femininity cited in Anderson (2019) are from the 1980s/90s. In her study, she finds little to have changed. However, this conclusion should be taken with caution considering the small sample size and the necessarily dated literature included in her review. Moreover,

the study was carried out on data collected in Great Britain and the results may not be directly transferrable to contemporary Danish or US contexts.

Although there are many studies focusing on menopause, I was able to identify only one that is based on linguistic discourse analysis (Coupland & Williams, 2002). The data from this study were also collected in Great Britain, which means contextual differences may account for some variations between these findings and those reported in Chapters 5 and 6 of my thesis.

Coupland and Williams (2002) performed pragmatic text analysis of three different discourses instantiated in three text corpora:

1. information leaflets from pharmaceutical companies;
2. national (UK) newspapers and magazines;
3. feature articles and popular books.

The information leaflets were found to be dominated by a pharmaceutical discourse, the newspapers and magazines by a discourse on alternative therapy and the books by an emancipatory, feminist discourse.

The pharmaceutical information leaflets were available in doctors' surgeries or at pharmacies. Some leaflets use pictures of doctors and endorsements from named doctors, while others present the text in a doctor's voice, e.g. using the headline: 'Menopause: A Doctor Explains'. Others refer to a consensus amongst doctors (Coupland & Williams, 2002). The use of 'ambiguous authorship' combined with a voice of authority serves to potentially benefit the pharmaceutical companies. They promote their drugs under the guise of the objective information that is associated with advice from a healthcare professional.

These leaflets construe menopause as a medical problem with a pharmaceutical solution. Hormonal changes are presented as problematic and the menopausal female body is associated with the terms 'deficiency' and 'loss'. Drugs are presented as the solution and a result can be that 'ovarian serenity is restored' and 'the knowledge and power which enables a woman to play an active role in supporting her own hormonal changes can restore a woman's faith in the miraculous ability of the woman's body to rebalance and heal itself' (p. 439).

In these leaflets, the term '(un)natural' is used to appraise the products or menopause. Coupland and Williams (2002, pp. 428–429) propose that the use of the term 'natural' is typically (although often incorrectly) perceived to mean 'safe' by the public and hence functions as a way to create an illusion of safety surrounding the drugs. In contrast, one text conceptualises menopause itself as unnatural, based on the argument that women historically did not live long enough to experience it and therefore, the text implies, there is no natural way of dealing with it. Therefore, women ought to forget trying to be 'natural' and, the text argues, choose efficiency. This implies that pharmaceutical intervention is needed because the female body has not developed to deal with menopause.

Although 'natural' is used as a positive value in most of the texts in Coupland and Williams's study, the body is not necessarily represented as natural. Indeed, metaphors that describe the female body in terms of mechanics are prevalent, in particular in the form of the BODY AS A MACHINE. For example: 'various systems in your body . . . switch themselves off'. It may be inferred that hormone therapy can fix the problem in the same way a technical fault may be fixed. However, some of the texts do acknowledge that the body may be able to handle things on its own: 'It's as if your body's thermostat control has developed an intermittent fault. Don't worry, normal service will eventually be resumed for most women' (p. 425).

When it comes to the symptoms of menopause, statistics of frequency are presented as 'evidence' for the symptoms (Coupland & Williams, 2002, p. 426). Moreover, the statistics are not always scientifically convincing as results are presented without information on methods such as representativeness or size of sample, elicitation of responses or information about researchers (p. 426). Some symptoms are represented with metaphors like 'upheaval', 'storm' and 'turmoil', indicating a need to regain control of women's bodies. Symptoms representing bodily decline and mood deterioration are linked to decline of hormones in some of the texts without consideration of the wider social and psychological context (Coupland & Williams, 2002, pp. 426–427).

Coupland and Williams (2002) found alternative therapies to be in focus in some UK newspapers, magazines and books, and built a second corpus of these texts. The authors of the selected texts are typically nutritionists or herbalists and while menopause is problematized, it

is not represented as an illness. Some of these texts explicitly distance themselves from the medical discourse. However, they do employ similar strategies of persuasion such as statistics and expert statements. Further, the idea of hormonal changes as the underlying cause is accepted although it is framed as an 'imbalance' in this corpus (pp. 430-432).

The 'solutions' are, also in these texts, represented as 'natural' but here women are encouraged to take control of their health on the basis of an 'holistic ideology'. The proposed empowerment is supposedly obtained by replacing medical interventions with 'natural resources'. The authors found evidence of anti-establishment and anti-science ideologies in some of these texts even though the messages were supported by statistics and other empiricist arguments (Coupland & Williams, 2002, p. 431).

Interestingly, the authors claim that the texts in their corpus mix an empiricist discourse with one of magic and another one of domesticity, as in the following example:

All reported back encouraging results – hot flushes, among other things, disappeared within a month. I decided to adapt other dishes by including these ingredients and also others that are high in these natural chemicals (Coupland & Williams, 2002)

The empiricist discourse is expressed in 'reported' and 'results', magic in the expression 'disappeared within a month' and the domestic discourse in 'adapt other dishes by including these ingredients'. I think that 'disappearance' can be unrelated to magic but even so, the mix of an empiricist and a domestic discourse is noticeable. Coupland and Williams (2002) argue that these strategies are powerful in a society where people have largely lost faith in the medical establishment due to scandals and misinformation (p. 435). However, more recent studies contradict the proposition that people should have lost faith in science (Declercq, 2018).

The third corpus discussed by Coupland and Williams (2002) contains articles and books that advocate a more positive view of menopause and object to the negative problematization of menopause evident in medical and alternative discourses. The authors refer to this as the emancipatory, feminist view (2002, p. 435). One text even reframes menopause as a return to

a normal state with the time of ovulation and fertility defined as a passing phase characterised by worries about menstruation, risk of pregnancy and health problems. Menopause, in this view, comes as a liberation from reproductive confines and associated health risks (pp. 439-441).

Benefits to women's sex life at this age are proposed by a psychosexual therapist in one text, as the sex life is claimed to be more fulfilling and stable. Another text suggests that every experience a woman has in the fertile period is considered either as contributing to her family life or as a threat to her 'nest'. Meanwhile the older woman is 'revolutionary' in experiencing life for 'itself' and by implication for herself (Coupland & Williams, 2002, pp. 440-441). Re-appropriation of the term 'crone' also attributes positive evaluation to the post-menopausal woman and some feminists even hold ceremonies to mark this new age of wisdom and strength (pp. 440-441).

Considering the findings in the studies presented in this section, menopause is represented as a complex amalgamation of different concepts in public discourses. While traders of pharmaceutical and alternative substances may have a commercial interest in how menopause is construed in public discourses, others have a political interest in construing those experiencing menopause as more or less powerful.

### 3.2 Metaphor in health discourses

There are at least two features of metaphor, which make it interesting to study from a linguistic perspective. First, metaphor can illustrate experiences and phenomena that are difficult to explain. This is particularly useful in the context of health, where some processes and feelings are not easy to delineate or describe (Semino et al., 2018). This chapter will present examples of such use of metaphor described in the research into the conditions: pain, cancer and mental afflictions. These are characterised by symptoms and experiences that are not immediately visible or measurable. Secondly, Demjén and Semino (2017, p. 385) emphasise the power of metaphoric framing in relation to illness, as the experience is usually unwanted and unpleasant. Metaphor can help create meaning and self-expression but may also reinforce negative feelings such as anxiety and shame.

Consequently, there is ample literature on metaphor within linguistics with entire journals dedicated to the topic, such as *Metaphor and the Social World* (Dorst et al., 2022), *Metaphor and Symbol* (Colston, 2022) and *Metaphorik.de* (Beger et al., 2022), as well as communities such as *RaAM* (Ahrens, 2022) and *MetNet Scandinavia* (Jensen & Hillbom, 2022). It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt an all-inclusive review of the literature on metaphor. Therefore, I have included selected literature that addresses metaphor within the topic of health, from the theoretical standpoint of Discourse Studies. This selection illustrates how women, age and health are construed through metaphor and how these metaphors function in their communicative context. Musolff found systematic variation in understanding of metaphor linked to sociocultural factors (2016, pp. 134–135). In other words, the sociocultural background of the reader impacts how a metaphor is understood. In the following three sub-sections, I will present selected linguistic work on metaphor with a focus on recent publications on metaphor in health discourses (3.1.1.), metaphor in women’s health discourses (3.1.2.), and metaphor in Scandinavian health discourses (3.1.3.). Since I have not found linguistic research in Danish health discourses that address metaphor from a critical perspective, I have included studies of metaphor in discourses of health in other Scandinavian languages.

The use of metaphor within a health context has been described in the linguistic literature assuming a distinction between physical and mental health in line with traditional views on medicine (see Section 2.2.1). The *Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language* provides an overview, with a chapter on physical health (Demjén & Semino, 2017, pp. 385–399) and one on mental health (Tay, 2017, pp. 371–384). While this distinction is helpful for a literature review, many health conditions have a physical as well as a mental component. This is exemplified by Brookes (2018) in his work on diabulimia, which is a dual condition where medication taken by diabetics is used to control their weight as part of an eating disorder. While the eating disorder is frequently seen as a mental condition, Brookes (2018) finds that sufferers object to being treated as if the eating disorder had no relation to their diabetes. This is not to claim that diabetes is a purely physical illness, however it is diagnosed on the measure of serum blood sugar levels, which can be considered a physical factor. The integrated experience of people with diabulimia demonstrates that the physical and mental categorising of conditions may be problematic for those experiencing health problems, even though it has

obvious benefits for the analyst. With this in mind, I will first discuss how metaphor has been studied in health conditions traditionally considered physical and, subsequently, I will discuss metaphor in relation to those conditions traditionally considered mental.

Starting with the aforementioned chapter, Demjén & Semino (2017) provide an overview of metaphor research in healthcare settings and suggest that they may be broadly categorised as follows:

1. Public communication about illness e.g. in the news;
2. Lived experience of illness or health(care);
3. Metaphors used by stakeholders such as patient/general practitioner;
4. Metaphor as a practical tool to improve well-being or understanding and managing illness.

Studies in category number 1 consider use of metaphor in media reports on different illness or pharmaceuticals and how this use may affect public views and behaviours. While studies in category 4 are also concerned with how metaphor may affect behaviour, the focus is on use of metaphor within a healthcare setting rather than public discourse. Studies in category 2 are concerned with how metaphor is used to describe and construe the experience of patients while studies in category 3 compare how different stakeholder's use metaphor to describe illness and symptoms.

These four categories are not necessarily distinct; rather, they reflect perspectives taken by researchers in the study of physical health. A study by Gustafsson et al. (2019) illustrates this. The data described in their study comprise lived experience of cancer made available to the public through blogs. This can be seen as a form of public communication about illness. At the same time, this can also be seen as a study of metaphors used by stakeholders as it is written by cancer patients. Furthermore, the authors aim for the analysis to contribute to understanding and managing cancer. This demonstrates that these four categories are different perspectives that can be taken on metaphor, and combined, in the context of health and illness.

As mentioned above, physical as well as mental health experiences may characterise a condition simultaneously. People experiencing menopause may have physical symptoms, such as hot flashes, but can also experience conditions that are typically associated with mental health, such as depression. Research on metaphor in mental health conditions has taken two strands; mental health researchers and discourse analysts (Tay, 2017). The former focuses on how metaphor may be used in the therapeutic setting and address questions related to efficacy and effectiveness of metaphor use. This approach assumes that a change in metaphor use can be linked to therapeutic change following a general pattern (2017, p. 375). Discourse analysts, on the other hand, are more interested in the interplay between metaphor and the contextual factors of metaphoric instantiation. Despite a different focus, discourse studies also contribute with implications for clinical practice (2017, p. 374), as some of the following examples demonstrate.

Hunt and Brookes (2020, section 7.2) found that forum members represent self-experienced anorexia, depression and diabulimia nominally as attributes, e.g. 'anorexia' rather than 'I am anorexic'. These representations correlate with personification of the conditions. For example, depression is represented as 'hitting' and 'rearing its head' (2020, section 5.3.1). Another representation of an experience is 'the ED voice' on anorexia.net (2020, section 7.2). Through such personifications, the writers construct mental illness as beyond individual control and attribute unfavourable actions and emotions to the conditions. This represents the sufferers as powerless and aids in managing stigma associated with mental illness. At the same time, it enables a self-representation as knowledgeable individuals with a rational understanding of their condition (2020, section 7.2). For healthcare practitioners (HCPs), understanding how metaphor is used in various discourses may help practitioners adapt an approach that suits the individual patient (Tay, 2017, pp. 374–375).

### 3.2.1 Metaphor in women's health discourses

Ho (2020) investigated the use of metaphors in a corpus of 411,362 words in English from online forum discussions of pregnancy. Like menopause, pregnancy is an experience that can only happen to those with a uterus and professional healthcare may be required. However, the medicalised view of pregnancy and menopause has been challenged, yet healthcare is still an

important part of the discourse surrounding these (see Section 2.2). Some metaphors in the study by Ho (2020) personify bodily processes such as menstruation. Similes in the data attribute actions such as dancing, swimming and drumming to the foetus (pp. 179-181). The author found that the type of metaphors that personify the foetus, are used to strengthen the relation between the mother and the foetus and can serve an empowering function. Pregnancy discomforts are addressed with metaphor that uses humour and hyperbole, such as 'a killer heart burn' and 'can't wait to have the waddle like a duck walk' (p. 183). Such strategies empower the speaker according to the author. Violence metaphors typically construct a physical symptom as an adversary to the woman. These metaphors serve to seek emotional support and companionship with those with similar experiences, which in turn leads to empowerment.

Littlemore and Turner (2020) studied metaphors in communication about pregnancy loss. Their data consist of interviews with 31 women and four men that had experienced a loss recently themselves, except for one of the men, who was a friend of a bereaved. In addition, 16 people who worked for charities supporting the bereaved were interviewed. Many of these had experienced such bereavement themselves. All participants were living in England and recruited through organisations that provide support in relation to pregnancy. The metaphors identified in this study construe pregnancy loss in terms of embodied experiences, such as having the rug pulled from under you or being broken by the experience (p. 51). Other metaphors conceptualise a split self (Lakoff, 1996, pp. 105–106), which enables othering of the body and attributing agency to it. In some cases, the body is blamed for the pregnancy loss, as women explain feeling that their body has failed them or let them down (p. 54). Such metaphors describe interviewees' experience with pregnancy loss. In other metaphors, loss changes the bereaved person, but there are also examples where the person changes the grief, e.g. 'I channel it into my art' (p. 59). These findings are part of the recovery process and evaluated positively by the bereaved (p. 62).

Bullo (2018) conducted a study of data from an online forum of endometriosis sufferers. Endometriosis entails the lining of the uterus spreading to other parts of the body, which can obviously only happen to those who have a uterus. The study combines corpus linguistic methods with discourse analytical tools, including appraisal analysis and metaphor theory. The

data consists of English language online forum posts, scholarly journal articles as well as personal accounts collected through interviews with women with endometriosis based in the UK. One finding of this study is that women are appraised as abnormal because of their symptoms in the data. For example, women with endometriosis self-represented, by objectification, of themselves as goods or an object that had been broken. Further, it was found that healthcare professionals frequently appraised symptoms, such as pain, as normal for women. These appraisals were seen as typical for the discourse surrounding endometriosis and Bullo (2018) suggests they lead women to describe the interaction with healthcare professionals with BATTLE metaphors. These metaphors were associated with disempowerment and could have an impact on women's well-being, whether they sought help, and how they manage their disease.

Breast cancer and endometriosis were constructed as metaphorical enemies in tattoos worn by women and shared on Pinterest and Instagram (Koller & Bullo, 2019). They found tattoos to be representative of fighter and warrior identities which serve empowering functions (see also Flusberg et al., 2018). While this type of representation construes the illness as a metaphoric adversary, the wearers of the tattoos are constructed as 'aggressive, agentive and positive' (Koller & Bullo, 2019, p. 7). Other tattoos represent more subversive identities of the woman as a sufferer, while the illness is construed as a burden. These representations may express despair, but can also express a rational approach to the situation. A few of the tattoos have religious overtones, for example depicting breast cancer as 'a cross to bear'. The authors suggest it may reflect 'traditional discourses of womanhood and pain' (p. 10). As Koller and Bullo state, the conceptualisation of a particular illness in terms of a violent opponent aligns with socio-cultural ideals of how to deal with illness. This is confirmed by other studies which also found violence metaphors in their data, including those carried out by Ho (2020) and Bullo (2018) mentioned above. These ideals entail that the afflicted person takes action and resists the condition, in this case breast cancer or endometriosis.

The studies discussed in this section demonstrate different ways of employing metaphor to deal with symptoms, grief and dismissive health care professionals. The metaphors are used for personification, to construct a split-self and conflicts. Metaphor was also used to establish or strengthen social bonds as well as to form identity and empower the speakers. While all

linguistic studies of metaphor in discourses on women's health I have discussed are based on English language data, the following section will address some studies that have addressed metaphor in discourses of health in Scandinavian languages.

### 3.2.2 Metaphor in Scandinavian health discourses

Studies of Danish health discourses tend to address the medical consultation (see for example C. S. Jensen et al., 2019) and there are, to my knowledge, no linguistic studies of metaphor in this context. The metaphor studies identified, which focused on Danish, dealt with topics such as management (Holmgreen, 2009) or knowledge (Greve, 2016). The only Danish health metaphors I found in linguistic studies are from research that builds on the #ReframeCovid initiative, a communal data collection that collected alternatives to war framing of the pandemic, as this framing was seen to be dominant in some countries (Olza et al., 2021). The sheet contains 30+ languages and 36 Danish examples. I will include metaphor scenarios represented in the Danish data in this section.

Even though there is not much linguistic work available on Danish metaphor in health discourses, the other Scandinavian languages, Swedish and Norwegian, are very similar to Danish, as is their joint heritage in terms of culture, politics, societal structure etc. In terms of metaphor, Nacey et al. (2019) considered the languages similar enough to adapt the metaphor identification procedure, MIPVU, to the three languages in a joint effort. A researcher from each language read two articles in their own language and each of the other two. Then, they proceeded to identify lexical units and metaphoric expressions (see Section 4.2.1.2). What is noteworthy here is the high degree of inter-rater reliability for demarcation of lexical units of 94% (p. 153) and for metaphoric words of 90% (p. 155), indicating a reliable procedure as well as good comprehension across the languages. While the three languages are not identical, the people speaking them have historically been able to communicate relatively effectively speaking their own language with people speaking one or both of the others (Braunmüller, 2002). Therefore, I will also include metaphor in Swedish and Norwegian health discourses in this section.

Amongst the Danish example in the ReframeCovid collection is a personification of the virus as 'an uninvited and dangerous guest' ('en ubuden og farlig gæst', Queen Margrethe II of

Denmark, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020, contributed by Pernille Bogø-Jørgensen). Personification of illness can serve different purposes, from managing stigma and self-image as discussed by Hunt and Brookes (2020, see section 3.2), to representations of illness as an adversary for self-empowerment as discussed by Koller and Bullo (2019, see section 3.2.1). The example of Covid-19 as a guest is likely to achieve the second effect, namely to make a potentially dangerous and invisible health condition easier to deal with through personification. Further, the term 'ubuden' (uninvited) suggests that the virus comes as a surprise. A similar metaphor from an older article on the BBC news website casts cancer as an unwelcome lodger.

For me, cancer arrived as an unwelcome lodger, parking itself in the back room and demanding attention. For three years I tried to be a courteous if unwilling host.  
(Graystone, 2013)

Bogø-Jørgensen and Koller (2021) found that politicians use metaphors of movement and space to persuade people and achieve social cohesion in the #ReframeCovid initiative. The study considers metaphors of space and movement in English, German and Scandinavian languages. The metaphors had a collective orientation, exemplified in the use of inclusive 'we' (vi) in examples such as the following:

[I]nnføres disse tiltakene nå. Vi trenger alle med på laget. Vi står sammen om å slå ned smitten igjen.

These measures are being implemented now. We need everyone with us on the team. We stand together to beat down this contagion again.

(Bent Høie, Norwegian Health Minister, 5 November 2020, contributed by Susan Nacey)

Denne gang skal vi vise sammenhold ved at holde afstand.

This time we have to show [solidarity] {holding together} by keeping our distance.

(Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, 17 March 2020, contributed by Pernille Bogø-Jørgensen)

I kväll vill jag säga några ord som jag vill att ni bär med er när vi nu går in i vintermörkret.

Tonight I want to say some words, which I want you to carry along as we now go into the winter darkness.

(Stefan Löfven, Swedish Prime Minister, 22 November 2020, contributed by Pernille Bogø-Jørgensen)

This collective orientation may be due to the nature of the Covid-19 pandemic and the fact that the spreadsheet was set up to collect public conceptualisations. Similar examples were available in English and German, so they are not unique to the Scandinavian languages. Neither does it seem to be exclusive to infectious diseases as it demonstrates a wish for solidarity, which has also been found amongst cancer patients.

Gustafsson and Hommerberg (2016) describe how Swedish cancer patients use War metaphors in blog posts to construe solidarity with each other. The following example, from their data, is a reaction a friend's death:

Imorgon ska jag resa mig upp och fortsätta denna kamp som H påbörjade. (Gustafsson & Hommerberg, 2016, p. 275)

Tomorrow, I am going to get up and continue this fight/struggle, which H started.

According to the authors, constructing the fight as a joint effort between the deceased friend and the writer empowers the writer. This is an example of how some patients use these metaphors to empower themselves in a vulnerable situation (see also Hommerberg et al., 2020; Koller & Bullo, 2019, also mentioned in Section 3.2.1). This supports evidence of English metaphors of discourses on terminal cancer from Semino et al. (2018), suggesting some similarity in how this stage of cancer is described in English and Swedish.

This article came out of a Swedish project inspired by the UK-based Metaphor, Cancer and the End of Life project (Semino et al., 2018). Gustafsson and Hommerberg (2016) show that Swedish cancer patients use 'kampmetaforer' (metaphors of fight/battle/struggle) to separate

the body from the self when describing their resistance to the disease. When these metaphors are used in the sense of 'battle' or 'fight' in the Swedish data, they are used to describe the cancer in an adversarial relation to the patient who is battling cancer. Gustafsson and Hommerberg (2018) deduce that this way of talking about the cancer has been normalised amongst the patients, since some of the patients talk about expectations that they are supposed to fight.

To be honest, I have in a way already given up [gett upp]. I find myself hedging and reminding myself that I won't be cured. This may upset some people. I don't know if it would make me feel better to dare to believe in a long and good life. And just 'fight/struggle'<sup>5</sup> [kämpa]. But it doesn't work that way for me right now. At the beginning of my cancer illness, it was self-evident for me to aim at getting cured and 'winning'. But after a number of relapses, I have lost some of my fighting spirit. I think I'm more sad now. (Gustafsson & Hommerberg, 2018, p. 12)

This metaphor describes a very difficult battle because losing it maps onto dying. Some patients deal with this difficult situation by representing the body as the party that loses the battle.

My body really isn't the least cooperative any more. Sometimes I wonder how much longer it will manage to fight [kämpa] against this illness?! (Gustafsson & Hommerberg, 2018, p. 14)

This echoes the findings of Littlemore and Turner (2020) described in Section 3.2.1, where the body is blamed for the pregnancy loss.

Metaphor use in relation to cancer and covid-19 in Scandinavian languages seems to resemble metaphor use in English health discourses with the use of personification and War or Violence metaphors. Another similar function of metaphor, to seek empowerment and solidarity, is also

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<sup>5</sup> quotation marks in the original text

pursued across languages. Perhaps these relate more to the nature of the health conditions and less to the cultural context.

### 3.3 Theoretical framework

In this thesis, I investigate metaphor scenarios representing menopause and those experiencing it in data collected from the internet. I consider how language reflects and contributes to the development and challenge of ideological structures within discourses on menopause. Following a critical tradition within metaphor studies (Charteris-Black, 2004; Chilton, 1996; Koller, 2004b; Musolff, 2016), I combine a cognitive approach to metaphor with a critical discourse analytical perspective. Hart (2011, p. 173) argues that since language, thought and action are based on the same system of conceptualisation, linguistic analysis enables an indirect access to structures of thought and action. In this view, CDS and *Cognitive Linguistics* are perspectives on linguistic phenomena, including metaphor (Hart, 2011, p. 171). He demonstrates a successful combination of these perspectives and it is this tradition, the current thesis sits within.

In the following sections, I first elaborate on CDS in Section 3.3.1. The CDS perspective raises questions of how agency is represented and appraised, which can inform a discussion of ideologies expressed in the text and may be understood considering the social and institutional context. Since this approach entails a consideration of social and institutional contexts, I will address these in Section 3.3.2. In Section 3.3.3. I introduce metaphor theory from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics. This view informs the identification of metaphor. Finally, I will draw together the different perspectives and discuss Critical Metaphor Theory in Section 3.3.4.

#### 3.3.1 Critical Discourse Studies

Discourse is a technical term that is used by different disciplines with different meanings. This thesis understands the term in two senses, which Cameron (2001) refers to as 'the linguist's sense and the critical social theorist's sense' (pp. 10-17 and 123). The former is 'language in use' as opposed to constructed examples. The latter builds on the tradition of Foucault, who defined discourse as 'a particular way of constructing a subject matter' (1986). In other words,

language constructs what it mentions. A combination of these senses entails investigating language considering who said what to whom, how and why, rather than merely looking at the language. These contextual factors are an integrated part of how language is used to construe social reality.

Discourse Studies (DS) covers a variety of approaches, one of which is CDS (Cap, 2019b; Fairclough, 1989). In this view, analysis starts at the text level and then goes on to consider textual features in relation to discursive practices such as production and consumption of the text (Richardson, 2007). This is based on the assumption that such practices affect the language while the language in turn contributes to sustaining or challenging mental representations of social actors such as producers and consumers of the text (Fairclough, 1992). Following this, the discursive perspective in this thesis entails considering metaphoric expressions in the social context in which they are used; i.e. under which conditions is the text produced, distributed and received. These discursive practices take place in a second reciprocal relation with the wider social context. In other words, the text is produced, distributed and received in relation to social norms while these practices sustain or challenge the same norms. Discourse studies, then, explore the social context of language use when analysing the discourse as it is expressed in language (Cap 2019, p. 13).

Cap (2019b) mentions three characteristics of *CDS*, the first being abductive reasoning. This means that any conclusion is based on the available evidence and is not necessarily generalizable beyond that (in contrast to inductive reasoning). Consequently, the goal of this thesis is to say something about the specific data and topic I analyse rather than make general claims about language, menopause or metaphor. To the extent that any of my findings support or challenge general claims about either topic, it raises cause for discussion and perhaps calls for further studies. I suggest such studies in Chapter 8.

The second characteristic is the study of texts with linguistic tools and methods (Cap, 2019b) although some CDS work has relied on the intuition of the analyst and few actual linguistic analysis tools (Partington & Marchi, 2015). Hart and Cap (2014) emphasise that the text analysis in CDS entails analysing the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms applied. I will outline the linguistic methods chosen for my research in Section 4.2.

The third characteristic is a *critical* approach, which entails evaluating how linguistic text analysis can reveal mechanisms of ideology and power in society (Cap, 2019b). In this view, language has power potential; that is the ability to reflect, define and redefine social distinctions (Cap 2019 p. 13). Fairclough and Fairclough (2015) advocate a critique that evaluates how social actors consider various states of affairs to be problematic and seeks to explain why social actors may participate in such problematization. They argue that this type of critique can uncover ideologies and explain changes in social reality. In other words, CDS is an approach to linguistic analysis which aims to provide a social critique within a specific, defined area of language use.

Considering these three levels – the linguistic analysis, discursive practices and the social context – requires a multidisciplinary approach. I have chosen to draw on other disciplines, including sociology, medicine and psychology, in Chapter 2, where I have described the social context. To describe discursive practices, I combine previous CDS work by linguists with models from media studies, as little linguistic work has addressed data similar to mine. I will outline this in Section 3.3.2. and provide more detail about the selected data in Section 4.1.

### 3.3.2 Discursive practices

Considering discursive practices entails a description of members of the discourse community and relations between them (Koller, 2012). Members of the discourse community include those who produce the text as well as those who potentially receive it. Relations between them are reflected in the text and influenced by the medium involved in the distribution of the text. Therefore, this section will address discursive practices in terms of production, distribution and reception.

#### 3.3.2.1 Production

There may be multiple authors involved in text production in media and institutional discourse (Bednarek & Caple, 2012; Fairclough, 1992). To describe this, Fairclough draws attention to *intertextuality* in two forms. One is *manifest intertextuality*, where a text is quoted, cited or rephrased. This introduces voices other than the attributed writer and may also introduce ambiguity about who holds a particular opinion. The other form, he calls *interdiscursivity* and this refers to influences from other texts in terms of for example genre, activity type, style and

discourse (in the Foucauldian sense explained above). This can also be seen as norms, beliefs and values held by the writer(s) and the institution(s) they work for. Whether the texts in media and institutional discourse are produced by individuals or teams, the texts are representative of the institution behind the website. In this sense, they are collective products. Fairclough (1992) also mentions newspaper articles as an example of a collective product, where multiple authors work together. Like the data in this thesis, newspaper articles aim to inform the public and are subject to editorial processes. However, they differ in that newspaper articles deal with topics that are 'newsworthy' now to people in general, whereas the topic of menopause will be relevant at all times to different people.

### *3.3.2.2 Distribution*

The articles included in this study are made available via the internet. This section will briefly outline literature from media studies to describe the affordance of communication enabled and shaped by this medium.

McQuail and Deuze (2020, p. 54) suggest the following key features of the internet:

- Computer-based technologies;
- Hybrid, flexible character;
- Interactive potential;
- Private and public functions;
- Interconnectedness;
- Ubiquity and de-locatedness;
- Accessible to individuals as communicators;
- A medium of both mass and interpersonal communication.

As opposed to traditional mass media, computer-based media is less hierarchical because anyone with a smartphone or computer and the required literacy skills can create content (see Jones & Hafner, 2012 on digital literacies). This blurs the boundaries between private and public communication as well as the distinction between the professional and the amateur (McQuail & Deuze, 2020, pp. 70–71). Online communication then allows a wider variety of contributors, for example, private and professional individuals as well as public and private

institutions. Consequently, online communication shares features of traditional mass (for example one-directional, centralised) as well as interpersonal communication (for example interactive, dispersed). Dialogue is sometimes possible through a commenting function or more indirectly via email or other contact information provided on the website. To what extent these possibilities are made available depends on choices made on the basis of institutional concerns, rules and conventions. It can include whether readers are allowed to contribute with comments as well as showing video, audio and text on the same page (p. 65). Along with the multiple ways in which people can create content (Bednarek & Caple, 2012, p. 31), this leads to a hybrid and flexible character of web-based communication.

Information that is freely available online has a wider potential reach compared to private conversations, magazines that must be bought or paper leaflets with medical information. However, even if information appears free, there is often a price to pay. Many websites monetize information about the users of these websites for advertising profiling purposes. To improve consumers' choice in relation to this, recent European (The European Union, 2017) and American (Congress of the United States of America, 2020) legislation requires websites to enable users to opt out of various types of cookies that are used to collect information. This means users can now select not to have their internet behaviour tracked for targeted advertising purposes. These initiatives aim to empower consumers and regulate how businesses can use information about the visitors of their websites.

### *3.3.2.3 Reception*

Naturally, the potential audience of any text is limited to those who can read the language in which that text is composed. This means that the potential readership is much smaller for the Danish websites in my data compared to the American websites. The data in Danish is, of course, not immediately available to people who do not read Scandinavian languages, but digital translation tools can be utilised to get some level of access to the text. Whether anyone would be interested enough to make that effort on a topic that is widely addressed in English is another question.

Restrictions could also be related to the online medium if people did not have access to the internet. However, just 7% of US Americans in a survey said they do not use the internet (Pew

Research Center, 2021). In Denmark, only 4% of the population do not have access to the internet at home (Danmarks Statistik, 2021), and even those people might still use it at public libraries, other educational institutions or workplaces. This indicates that a vast majority of the populations has access to the texts included in this study, as they are freely available online.

Even so, not everyone would read text on specific websites, and scholars have investigated assumed readership of the genres included in this study. Declercq (2018) found that writers of women's magazine articles in Dutch assumed their readers to be self-managing individuals who seek out information about health in order to make their own decisions. Although there are no similar studies of Danish women's magazines as far as I am aware, there is some evidence to suggest this is a reader type, which can be assumed more generally in European and US societies.

Chałupnik & Brookes (2021) studied healthcare websites from a CDS perspective and found that marketisation of the British healthcare system is reflected in language used by health care providers in England. The websites constructs readers as consumers of health care, drawing on discourses of competitiveness and self-other differentiation (2021, p. 19). This demonstrates framing of health as the responsibility of the individual and aligns with the findings of Declercq (2018). Another example of the responsible and empowered consumer is discussed by Hallin and Briggs (2016), who combined a medical and linguistic anthropological approach with media and journalism studies to investigate medical news from the United States for expressions of biomedicalization in an interplay between doctors and health journalists. While they consider the idea of the empowered consumer of health care as central to contemporary biomedical models, they urge a dialogue that acknowledges the knowledge of the healthcare professional and other experts. Patients should, in their view, be constructed as altruistic partners in development of knowledge in order to facilitate a constructive relationship when it comes to treatment and a healthier public approach to health (2016, p. 215). How such a construction manifests in language is yet to be seen.

In relation to healthcare, Briggs and Hallin (2007; 2016) contrast two medical models, they observe in the US healthcare system: the *biomedical authority model* versus the *patient consumer model*. In the first, the patient is a passive recipient of information and instructions

from the biomedical authority. In the patient consumer model, the patient actively seeks information about their own treatment and makes choices for their own health. The role of the medical professional is reduced and media, not least online, are important sources of information about health. The gradual shift from the biomedical authority model to the patient consumer model leads to a construction of the individual as more agentive and powerful in line with the ideology of healthism, as I described it in Section 2.2.2.

### 3.3.3 Metaphor from a cognitive perspective

Metaphor is representing one thing in terms of another and it is a well-studied part of language. The relation between Cognitive Linguistics and Discourse Studies has been laid out by Koller (2014a, p. 149). In her view, 'discourse' is 'language use as social practice that is based on and shapes cognition'. In other words, our thinking affects how we act socially when we use language, but our thoughts are also affected by social action in the form of language use. This section will introduce some main insights about metaphor from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. Firstly, I present selected aspects of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Secondly, I give an overview of different levels of schematicity. Thirdly, I address the embodied nature of language in general and metaphor in particular. Fourthly, I summarise the discussion about universal versus sociocultural aspects of metaphor.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory considers a lexical expression a metaphor if it carries meaning from a source domain to a target domain. Metaphor enables us to talk about the abstract and unfamiliar in terms of concrete and familiar areas of experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). To exemplify this, Johnson (1990, pp. 74–98) considers a metaphor drawing on bodily experiences: balance. This is a pervasive metaphor that can be expressed in different ways. It entails an axis and force vectors and these may be organised in a linear fashion or in relation to a container. An example of a linear balance is the expression weighing cost against benefits (1990, p. 95), which compares numerical values in terms of scales, where the costs cannot be 'heavier' than the benefits. This metaphor draws on the physical experience of carrying bags in both hands and experiencing balance when the weights of the bags are equal. Balance in a container can have more than these two dimensions. Emotions, for example, are frequently conceptualised as forces or pressures inside a container, which are able to 'simmer', 'overflow'

and 'erupt' (1990, p. 88). These metaphors enable us to describe emotions we experience in terms that are more concrete and familiar. In section 4.2.1.2, I will explain how this view also enables a systematic approach to metaphor identification (Pragglejaz Group, 2007).

Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been challenged by more recent corpus studies (e.g. Semino, 2017) and other work on naturally occurring language (see Gibbs, 2009 for a critique).

Littlemore and Turner (2020) argue that it is not suitable for metaphors created by people who find themselves in emotionally challenging situations because they often use more creative metaphors and the identification of a clear source and target domain can be challenging in such cases. Kövecses (2017) adds more nuance by proposing a model with four conceptual levels, with image schemas as the most schematic and mental space/scenarios as the least schematic. In between are domains (Langacker, 1987) and frames (Fillmore, 1982), but in this thesis, I predominantly refer to image schemas and scenarios. To illustrate image schemas, Kövecses (2017, p. 324) uses the example that the concept of a body relies on the image schemas 'Container', 'Verticality' and others. These can be combined and used by different concepts; for example, the concept of a building is also based on the Container schema. The mental space corresponds to Musolff's scenarios (Kövecses, 2017; Musolff, 2006) and can be seen as the instantiation of the current metaphor in context. Mental spaces/scenarios are 'online representations of our understanding of experience in working memory' (Kövecses, 2017, p. 326). I will go into more detail with scenarios in Section 3.3.4.

Cognitive linguistics holds the view that 'language is embodied...it is grounded in physical, including visuo-spatial, experience and is bound with the body's situatedness at the point of interpretation' (Hart, 2015, p. 239). This means we express abstract concepts in terms of our position in space and in relation to others as in the balance-example mentioned above. The basic meaning of a metaphor expression (see section 4.2.1.2) often refers to an embodied experience and this enables communication on intellectual and/or emotional levels. For example, research into metaphorical conceptualisation of pain has shown that pain is commonly conceptualised in terms that stem from potential sources of pain, such as burning, stabbing or splitting pain (Semino, 2019b, p. 74). These terms are metonymically related to pain if it stems from such an injury, Semino explains. However, even pain that cannot be explained by any physical injury is commonly conceptualised in similar terms. In these cases,

the terms are used in a metaphoric sense, because meaning is carried over from the source domain PHYSICAL INJURY to a target domain PAIN. Drawing on psycholinguistics and neuroscientific evidence, Semino (2010) argues that the use of such metaphors for pain may elicit an empathetic response. This is explained by a potential simulation of pain through use of familiar expressions. For example, talking about a 'burning' pain may trigger the reader's imagination to feel something similar through a memory of a burning sensation. This is possible because feeling physical sensation is a shared human experience.

Another shared human experience is feeling emotions and researchers are also interested in how this is conceptualised in different languages. One example of such research is Kövecses (2000), who has shown that anger is conceptualised according to similar structures across languages from different parts of the world (Chinese, English, Hungarian, Japanese, Wolof and Zulu). The author suggests that the common structure is shared because it relates to basic bodily experiences, such as feeling hot when agitated or excited. While some of the metaphoric expressions vary across languages, they all build on a common human experience.

#### 3.3.4 Critical Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory has inspired much current metaphor research, not least Critical Metaphor Theory, which considers discourse as explained above. This view investigates how ideologies and social practices are represented and shaped through metaphoric patterns (Charteris-Black, 2004; Koller, 2004b; Musolff, 2004). This discursive approach is in line with Chilton (1996, p. 194), who observed that: 'The political significance of metaphor is thus that it is a means for determining the basic attitudes and assumptions that structure decision making'. Hence, Critical Metaphor Theory considers ideological aspects of metaphor use assuming these attitudes and assumptions are constitutive of ideology and it has been applied to a range of social topics including gender and health. I will present examples of its application to demonstrate how metaphor can pursue discursive strategies in relation to gender and health.

Starting with gender, Koller (2004a) demonstrates how Critical Metaphor Analysis can be used to contribute to the understanding of social power structures with a corpus-based analysis of the representation of businesswomen and businessmen. The analysis shows that women are

represented in terms of War with a higher frequency compared to their male peers. An example is the following self-representation: 'I am ruthless in using every bullet I have' (2004a, p. 6). As terminology of war is brought into business discourse, aspects from the source domain are foregrounded in the description of the target, e.g. competitiveness and aggression. Koller (2004a) argues that this may be a strategy employed in order to attribute traditional masculine values to women in an environment that negatively evaluates their presence. This is an example of how linguistic analysis of metaphor can contribute to an understanding of social power dynamics in a given context and how those dynamics are an integrated part of social practice (Fairclough, 1989).

Metaphoric patterns that express agency and evaluation have also been described as metaphor scenarios (Musolff, 2006). Metaphor scenarios are 'figurative mini-narratives that carry with them an evaluative stance' (Musolff, 2017, p. 643). Narratives have been shown to function as persuasive texts by engaging readers and decreasing resistance towards ideas conflicting with those held by readers (Ratcliff & Sun, 2020). Metaphor scenarios were developed to analyse political text, of which persuasion and ideology are important features (Musolff, 2006, 2016). As indicated in Section 3.1.3, ideology and persuasion have also been considered in a previous study of discourses on menopause. Nevertheless, health discourses are different to political discourses not least because agency in political discourses can usually be attributed to people. In health discourses, biological processes may act independently of consciousness, for example when an illness is represented in terms of an opponent. Metaphor scenarios have also proven useful in research on health discourse, for example in discourses on cancer as described in the following.

A large-scale corpus-based study of the metaphors used to talk about cancer and the end of life in the UK (Semino et al., 2018) exemplifies this: 'After today's test when you get the results you will have the name of the beast you both will have to beat together' (2018, p. 86). This quote invokes a scenario where cancer is an opponent in a Violence scenario, where the desirable outcome would be for the patient and their family to win that fight. Fighting scenarios such as this are frequently used by patients and carers in the data sets of this study. They seem to have an empowering function for the patients, as they express agency and control in some cases (2018, p. 109). However, they may also be disempowering, as in the

following example: 'I feel such a failure that I am not winning this battle' (2018, p. 110). In terms of discursive strategies, these examples may serve to share experiences amongst cancer patients and create solidarity and compassion. As described in section 3.2.2, metaphor use by patients can indicate various coping mechanisms (Gustafsson et al., 2019).

### 3.4 Gaps and empirical contributions

The topic of menopause has scarcely been addressed in the linguistic literature, and this thesis can only begin to address this gap in the linguistic knowledge of women's health. Danish and English metaphors in health discourses have been studied in relation to cancer and covid-19, the latter starting a global conversation about which metaphors to use in a highly politicized health crisis (Olza et al., 2021). As mentioned in Section 1.1, menopause affects everybody either directly or indirectly at some point in life and it is therefore important to uncover how we conceptualise it in language and construe it socially. This can help us understand and ease the experience of menopause.

Metaphor studies of Scandinavian languages in health discourses are also sparse and even those that do address Scandinavian metaphor, do not always provide full examples in the original language (Gustafsson et al., 2019; Gustafsson & Hommerberg, 2018; Hommerberg et al., 2020). A large gap in Danish metaphor research therefore exists and this thesis starts to address this by reporting metaphors in Danish presented alongside a translation.

Literature on metaphor in health discourses demonstrates that metaphor serves many useful functions and is therefore worthy of study. The combination of the CDS and Cognitive Linguistics perspectives enables a combination of a consistent metaphor identification with a usage-based analysis of the phenomenon of metaphor. Details about the approach, as well as the data, follow in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Data and methodology

In this chapter, I present my data and analytical approach. As mentioned in my research questions in Section 1.6, I have collected data from Danish and US American women's magazines and medical websites which address the topic of menopause. An investigation of these data will give insights into how the experience of menopause is construed by influential channels. Such construals may affect how women think, talk about and experience menopause. This makes the data selection suitable for a critical approach. Section 4.1 gives details about this data selection and collection, while section 4.2 presents my analytical approach and how the findings are interpreted. In Section 4.3, I discuss strengths and limits of this approach before I conclude in section 4.4 with strengths and weaknesses of this research.

### 4.1 Description and selection of data

The data examined in this work comprises online texts from women's magazines and medical websites written for the public. Both the women's magazines and medical websites constitute contemporary and written language data. While the women's magazine articles are written by professional writers, the articles on the medical websites are predominantly written by doctors. The women's magazines provide personal stories of menopausal celebrities as well as opinions and advice, while the medical websites give advice and information. The representations of menopause on websites of both genres are mediated by the organisations behind the websites, which means that they are likely to have undergone editing and adhere to institutional guidelines. This may affect the language. I return to this point in Section 4.1.4, after the presentation of the data selection. I collected the data manually and saved the text in txt-files for analysis in Atlas.ti (Section 4.2.2). This section presents the data collected from women's magazines (Section 4.1.1), medical websites for the general public (Section 4.1.2) and a summary of the data collection overall (Section 4.1.3). Finally, I describe the discursive practices surrounding the data in Section 4.1.4.

#### 4.1.1 Women's magazines in the USA and Denmark

I selected five data sites for the women's magazines: three US women's magazines and two Danish ones. First, I established general criteria for the selection of data for this part of the analysis. I included women's magazines which are:

- Widely read;
- Explicitly targeted towards women;
- Publisher based in the US and Denmark, respectively;
- Articles on menopause are retrievable through a search on the website.

I selected widely read American magazines using readership statistics made available by Feedspot 'Top 60 women's magazines & publications to follow in 2022' (Feedspot, 2021). Feedspot is a site that rates online magazines, blogs and podcasts using a combination of algorithms and human editors. I collected articles on the website of each online magazine by searching for 'menopause', determining which articles had 'menopause' in the title. In the following, I provide details about the article selection and the magazines.

The American magazines are *Cosmopolitan*, *Allure*, and *Oxygen*. *Cosmopolitan* is 'the biggest young women's media brand in the world' according to the magazine website (Hearst Media Inc., 2019). Their target audience is women as is evident from this quote. Searching for 'menopause' on *Cosmopolitan's* website brought up 127 articles where menopause is mentioned in the article and five of these have menopause in the title. *Allure* is the second magazine featured on Feedspot's list (2021). Their target audience is also presumably female, as the focus is 'a woman's total image' in this quote from the publisher's website: 'Allure is the beauty expert, an insiders' guide to a woman's total image' (Condé Nast, 2022). According to the publisher, Condé Nast, they have 4 million monthly readers of their print publication and 12.6 million unique digital users (2022). Searching for 'menopause' on *Allure's* website brought up 48 articles where 'menopause' is mentioned in the article and three of these have 'menopause' in the title. The next American magazine on the Feedspot list (2021) that fits my criteria is *Women's Running Magazine* (Outside Interactive, Inc, 2022). However, none of the articles found through a search for 'menopause' on the website of the magazine focused on menopause, so I decided to include the next most-read magazine on the Feedspot list (2021) that fits my criteria – *Oxygen*. This magazine is produced by the publisher who is also behind *Women's Running Magazine*, namely Outside Interactive, Inc. Feedspot (2021) calls *Oxygen* a 'trusted resource for information on training, nutrition...and fitness for women'. On the *Oxygen* website, women feature in all of the images and very few feature men and/or children

(Outside, 2022b). Searching for 'menopause' on the *Oxygen* website brought up 29 articles where menopause is mentioned in the article and two of these have menopause in the title.

To identify magazines for the collection of Danish data, I referred to a report by the market research company, Kantar/Gallup (2021). I included all magazines that had an annual readership >100.000 in the time period between July 2020 and June 2021, explicitly target women and return articles on 'overgangsalder\*' (the Danish word for menopause) through a search function. All publications included in the report are published in Denmark. Both selected magazines, *Alt for damerne* and *Femina*, are published weekly and refer to a female focus in the name of the magazine. The Danish magazine *Alt for damerne* carries a name that means 'Everything for the ladies' and hence suggests a focus on female readers. They have an estimated 159 thousand readers (Kantar Gallup, 2021). A search for 'overgangsalder' retrieved 19 articles that mention the term in the headline. The magazine *Femina* is named with the Latin word for *woman*. The magazine has an estimated 134 thousand readers (Kantar Gallup, 2021). A search for 'overgangsalder' gave an unspecified number of results in an order that did not appear to reflect either relevance or recency. Within the first 100 results, 17 results contained 'overgangsalder' in the title.

I matched Danish articles with the collected US American according to the overall function of the article, considering whether it relays an experience of menopause partly presented as direct speech or provides advice or other more general comments. I also considered topics when I matched the articles. Matching the selection of the articles in both languages made the interpretation of my findings easier, because I drew on contextual factors. By minimizing the differences at the level of discursive practices, I could more easily identify differences between findings in the Danish and the US articles. These considerations resulted in the following selection, marked with an E for experience, G for more general comments about menopause and a B for articles that contain both.

Mark	Article from US magazines	Translation of article from DK magazine	Article from DK magazine
E	Kim Cattrall Imagines the 'Sex and the City' Cast Going Through Menopause (Narins, 2014)	Caroline Henderson menopause	Caroline Henderson overgangsalder (Truelsen, 2017)
E	Angelina Jolie Speaks Out About Going Through Menopause: 'I Don't Want to Be Young Again.' (Rose, 2015)	Mette Horn: One can well feel like an angry wasp behind a glass wall	Mette Horn: Man kan godt føle sig som en vred hveps bag en rude (Hast, 2018)
G	How to Deal With Hormonal Acne During Menopause (Booker, 2020)	Dermatologist: Here are my best tricks for beautiful skin in menopause	Dermatolog: Her er mine bedste tips til smuk hud i overgangsalderen (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)
G	Stay Fit During Menopause (Dunn, 2013)	3 good advice that alleviate symptoms of menopause	3 gode råd, der mildner symptomer på overgangsalder (Aller Creative Studio & Mylan, 2019)
G	How to Reduce and Relieve Symptoms of Menopause (Outside, 2022a)	9 questions, you don't dare to ask about menopause – now we have done it for you	9 spørgsmål, du ikke tør stille om overgangsalderen - nu har vi gjort det for dig (Askgaard, 2017)
G	13 Skin-Care and Wellness Products Made Specifically for Menopause and Its Effects (Devash & Robin, 2021)	Come through menopause in one piece ('helskindet' refers to the skin being unscathed)	Kom helskindet igennem overgangsalderen (Vichy, 2022)
B	This Is What It's Like to Go Through Menopause When You're Young (Graham, 2017)	Sleeplessness in menopause: Hellish hot flashes and stingy nights	Søvnløshed i overgangsalderen: Helvedes hedeture og nærige nætter (Bøge, 2020)

Table 4.1: Article selection, women's magazines

The first four articles relay experience of specific people. Their personal experience is described in ways that mix direct and indirect speech. The American actress Kim Cattrall relates menopause to characters in the show that made her famous as an actress: 'Sex and the City'. In addition to sharing her own experience, she imagines how the characters might act when experiencing menopause. The other American actress, Angelina Jolie, shares her positive experience with menopause as well as how her mother's struggles with having her ovaries removed inspired her in a role. The Danish articles on menopause show experiences from a wider range of celebrities including authors, politicians, designers and bloggers, as well as non-celebrities. I have selected one article with an actress, Mette Horn, and one article with a singer, Caroline Henderson, to match the American articles. Mette Horn shares her personal experience, including how family circumstances affect her experience of it. Caroline Henderson shares her opinions on how to deal with menopause as well as how her friends helped her in the process.

Articles that provide advice or make comments use more general references to 'women' and address the reader directly with 'you' or the imperative form. I have matched those that could be matched on topic. However, for one *Cosmopolitan* article, 'Thanks, Guys, for Giving Us Menopause' (Burton, 2013), which is about a study in computational biology that claims a causal link between menopause and a male sexual preference for younger female mates, I have not been able to find a Danish article on the topic of evolutionary reasons for menopause. I therefore decided to exclude this article, even though it raises a question about why this is a topic in the US American data but not in the Danish magazines. Further research could examine whether there is more interest in evolutionary reasons for menopause in other US genres compared to Danish genres. A more recent *Cosmopolitan* article debunks a story about a causality link between less sex and early menopause: 'Don't Believe Those Recent Reports That Say Having Less Sex Causes Early Menopause' (Hsieh, 2020). I could not find any Danish articles in the magazines about potential causes of menopause so have also excluded this article.

One American article combines a general view with personal stories, such as 'This Is What It's Like to Go Through Menopause When You're Young'. I have matched this with a Danish article about sleeplessness that follows the same structure. I made this choice in order to have an

even representation of experiences of menopause versus advice and other general comments to facilitate the comparison of my findings across languages.

Doctor's advice is incorporated in some articles from the women's magazines. Given the medicalised framing of menopause as well as the more general medicalisation of societies discussed in chapter 3, I decided also to include data that represents the medical approach to menopause in the form of medical websites aimed at the general public.

#### 4.1.2 Medical websites aimed at the general public in the US and Denmark

The medical websites selected represent the medical profession and the way it is institutionalised in Denmark and the US, i.e. a predominantly public versus insurance-based healthcare system (see Section 2.1 includes a description of both healthcare systems). The US website I selected to represent medical information for the public is run by the *Mayo Clinic* (2021), which is a not-for-profit, multi-centre medical organisation. US healthcare is largely privatised and it is therefore appropriate to use a source that is independent of the government. This clinic competes with others to provide healthcare and the website may be seen as part of their services to provide information and establish credibility but also to serve the purpose of attracting attention of potential 'consumers'.

For the Danish data, I chose to analyse articles published on *sundhed.dk* (2022b), which is a website run collaboratively across three levels of governance (state, region, municipality). The website serves as the main point of communication between the healthcare system in Denmark and its users and, as such, is part of the public healthcare system which regulates doctors on the state level, supplies hospital care on a regional level and facilitates rehabilitation at the municipal level. Even though there are private healthcare providers in Denmark (see Section 2.1 for details), this website is the main point of contact between members of the public and the healthcare system.

I performed a search for 'menopause' on the *Mayo Clinic* website and for 'menopause' and 'overgangsalder' on *sundhed.dk* (see Section 1.3). This yielded 856 articles on the *Mayo Clinic* website and 97 on *sundhed.dk*. Both sites seem to order the pages yielded by the search according to relevancy. However, it is not possible to say this with any certainty because the

websites do not state their criteria. I applied the same criteria as for the women’s magazines, to only include articles mentioning ‘menopause’ or ‘overgangsalderen’ in the article heading. Since this resulted in a selection of seven articles from *sundhed.dk*, I matched articles from the *Mayo Clinic* website to those from *sundhed.dk* according to topic as seen in the table below.

<b>Article from <i>sundhed.dk</i></b>	<b>Translation of article from <i>sundhed.dk</i></b>	<b>Article from <i>Mayo Clinic</i></b>
Overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2019b)	Menopause	Menopause overview (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b)
Overgangsalderen og hormonbehandling (Trolle, 2019c)	Menopause and hormone treatment	Menopause Diagnosis and treatment (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020a)
Overgangsalderen, spørgsmål og svar til hormonbehandling (Trolle, 2019d)	Menopause, questions and answers about hormone treatment	Menopause hormone therapy: Does it cause vaginal bleeding? (Burnett, 2020)
Skedekatar efter overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2019e)	Vaginitis after menopause	Stephanie Faubion, M.D., talks genitourinary syndrome of menopause (Luckstein, 2017)
Ophør af menstruation (menopause) (Sundhed.dk, 2020)	Cessation of menstruation (menopause)	Women’s Wellness: Menopause misconceptions (Weiss, 2019)
Seksuelle problemer i overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2020)	Sexual problems in menopause	Women’s Wellness: Experiencing Changes in Sexuality Around Menopause (Sparks, 2015)
Blødning efter overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2019a)	Bleeding after menopause	Bleeding after menopause: Is it normal? (Laughlin-Tommaso, 2020)

Table 4.2: Article selection, medical websites.

Some of the articles are matched closely in terms of topic, such as those on bleeding after menopause and the menopause overview. Others are the best fit I could find from the sources

available. The *Mayo Clinic* website has articles that overlap or address smaller parts of a symptom in separate articles. One example is ‘Menopause hormone therapy: Does it cause vaginal bleeding?’, which I have matched with a Danish more general article about menopause and hormone treatment. The Danish article on cessation of menstruation is matched with an article that relates menopause explicitly to the end of menstruation before it goes on to address expectations of menopause. Both medical websites contain articles that provide advice or general information about menopause, but no articles share personal experiences from the first person perspective as in the women’s magazines.

#### 4.1.3 Summary of data selection and collection

The articles listed in the previous two sections represent public representations of menopause in magazines and on medical websites. These have the potential to influence how women think, talk about and experience menopause. The texts have been written and edited by certain interest groups with social aims, which I discuss in terms of discursive practices in Section 4.2.1. These discursive practices influence social relations between the participants, which may be reflected in the language used.

<b>Data type</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Item count</b>	<b>Word count<sup>6</sup></b>
Danish women’s magazines	<i>Femina, Alt for damerne</i>	7 articles	6247
American women’s magazines	<i>Cosmopolitan, Allure, Oxygen</i>	7 articles	6831
Danish medical information website	<i>sundhed.dk</i>	7 articles	8065
American medical information website	<i>Mayo Clinic</i>	7 articles	4091

Table 4.3: Data sources and word counts

The articles from the *Mayo Clinic* are generally shorter and, as mentioned above, there are many more hits on a search for menopause on this website. Some of them are either

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<sup>6</sup> Tokens calculated using LancsBox

duplicates or different ways of addressing a sub-topic, such as an interview with an expert working at the *Mayo Clinic* versus simply describing the condition and providing advice about what to do in the same voice. The articles from *sundhed.dk* are longer and none of them are older than 2019. One provides an overview of menopause while the others each cover a sub-topic related to menopause. This reminds me of an encyclopedia, where an entry is updated rather than representing the same topics in different ways as the Mayo Clinic website does. This difference between the two genres, is in line with the different institutional practices of the websites, i.e. the US website aims to attract healthcare consumers, while the Danish represents a public healthcare system with an obligation to inform the population.

#### 4.1.4 Discursive practices

Discourse studies, in the tradition applied here and outlined in Section 3.3.1, involves linguistic analysis of text and interpreting the findings considering how they may function as social action. To describe this connection between instances of language use and potential social action, it is useful to characterise members of the discourse community, relations between them, patterns of how the text is produced, distributed and received and under which conditions these activities take place (Koller, 2012, p. 26). These practices illustrate the institutional and social context of the text and this knowledge informs the interpretation of the metaphor analysis. In chapters 5 and 6, I draw on these in the interpretation of my linguistic findings. I divide the discursive practices into three sections: production, distribution and reception.

##### 4.1.4.1 Production

Online articles may be produced by individual authors, teams or organisations. These may be public or private (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). This section addresses the websites from which I collected the articles as well as the organisations behind them and who is attributed authorship for the individual articles. In the analysis chapters 5 and 6, I address any representation of these authors as well as other participants in the data. But first I address the production practice of the women's magazines and the medical websites individually.

The women's magazines feature a home button with the name of the magazine fixed at the top as users navigate around the site, giving the magazine brand a prominent position. The

websites are produced by private publishing companies. These publishing companies are backgrounded on the websites, mentioned in small print at the bottom of the page and in the legal policies. The only exception is *Oxygen*, which also mentions the company name, *Outside*, in a banner at the top. This more prominent position compared to the other magazine websites signals the importance of the company brand over the magazine brand. When it comes to representing writers and editors, there is more variation across the magazine genre. The Danish magazines list their editing team with titles, names and email addresses, whereas amongst the US magazines, only *Cosmopolitan* mention their editing team members by naming individuals. While most articles in all five magazines are attributed to named authors, only *Cosmopolitan* and *Allure* link to further information about the author(s). This link leads to a small description of the individual including one or more social media accounts. *Oxygen* include articles that are not attributed to an author and in the absence of information of an editorial team, this presents the magazine and organisation behind it as the primary author. Some of the articles selected include multiple voices and it is not always possible to give one clear answer to the question of who the author or producer of a text is (see Foucault, 1969). In direct speech, it is the speaker cited, but in other text it may be the writer of the article, as I illustrate with the following example:

1

Hun fandt sin egen vej, da hendes krop tog en tur i hormonrutsjebanen, og hun blev ramt af overgangsalderen. (Truelsen, 2017)

She found her own way when her body took a ride on the hormone roller coaster and she was hit by menopause.

This shows how ambiguity may arise about who is making a claim. It is not possible to say for certain whether the writer is reporting on something the interviewee said or if the writer is relaying a loose impression they got in the course of the interview. Consider the direct quote in the next paragraph: 'Jeg synes, jeg har klaret overgangsalderen fint, og jeg synes ikke, jeg har haft så mange gener' (I think I have coped with menopause well, and I do not think I have had so many problems). It may seem unlikely that someone who 'coped with menopause well'

and [does] 'not think [they] have had so many problems' would use metaphors that appraise menopause with the ability to have impact. These are metaphors such as 'hormone rollercoaster' and 'hit'. However, later in the article Caroline Henderson says:

2

Det er jo hele hormonsystemet, der bliver vendt op og ned, og man kan få alverdens problemer...(Truelsen, 2017)

It is the entire hormonal system that is turned upside down, and one can get all sorts of problems...

This metaphor, that turns the hormonal system upside down, is conceptually similar to the body being on a roller coaster. But in this quote, Caroline Henderson is talking about people in general using the generic pronoun 'man', rather than her own experience. It is possible that the writer has attributed the idea of 'menopause as upheaval' to Caroline Henderson's experience to create contrast with the interviewee's own statement that menopause was not problematic. This demonstrates the complexity of establishing who produced a given metaphor and why some ambiguity is to be expected in texts from magazines.

The other genre included in this study, medical websites, shows differences in the healthcare systems of Denmark and the US: The authors of both medical websites, *sundhed.dk* and *Mayo Clinic*, include doctors as well as public and private institutions. But while the Danish website represents a public service, the American *Mayo Clinic* represents a private institution. The Danish medical website is run by a collaborative group representing the three levels of public administration in Denmark (see Sections 4.1.2 and 2.1). The healthcare model is predominantly public although GPs and pharmacies are independent business owners and private treatments and insurance are available (see Section 2.1). Most of the articles are written by one named doctor (six out of seven articles) whose credentials are easy to verify online. The remaining article refers to 'Håndbogen' (The Handbook) instead of stating an author. This is a publication edited by the Danish doctors' association and owned by the governmental regions (mid-level administration) (Lægeforeningen, 2021). A list of editors mentions six primary editors, three male and three female; so for this article, authorship is more covert. In short, the Danish data

from *sundhed.dk* is publicly sponsored and represents the public healthcare system, but is written largely by one professional individual.

The American medical information website is maintained by the private *Mayo Clinic* and functions to present and promote it. The individual articles are written by public affairs employees or doctors on behalf of the institution. While two out of seven articles state an individual doctor as the author, two of the articles are attributed to *Mayo Clinic Staff*, which provides a link taking the reader to a list of 50 medical editors. In these cases, the text is presented as being the product of a team effort. The editorial team consists of female and male doctors, with a female editor for *Women's Health*, who is presumably involved in the writing or editing of the selected articles on menopause. The remaining three articles are posted or written by public affairs employees. In two cases, it seems clear that the text is written by the public affairs employee, but the third one is more ambiguous:

By Dana Sparks

# Women's Wellness: Experiencing Changes in Sexuality Around Menopause

May 14, 2015

## Women's Wellness



**National Women's Health Week May 10 - 16**

***Stephanie Faubion, M.D., Women's Health Clinic, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.***

Women frequently experience changes in sexuality around menopause. These can include a change in sexual interest or desire which may move from a more spontaneous sexual desire pattern to more of a willingness or receptive desire pattern. This means that a woman may feel like being sexual if the situation is right and all the necessary ingredients are in place. For example, the necessary ingredients might be that she is well rested, that she isn't stressed and that the relationship with her partner is in a good place.

Figure 4.1: Screenshot of article from *Mayo Clinic* (Sparks, 2015)

This article is presented with 'By Dana Sparks' at the top but before the headline. Below the image, another person is mentioned, namely 'Stephanie Faubion, M.D...'. The article contains a video with doctor Faubion, but it is unclear whether she also wrote the body text or if Dana Sparks did. It is also possible that this was the result of a collaborative effort. I have chosen to refer to it assuming Sparks is the author for consistency in referencing. In summary, information about the authorship of a text is ambiguous. Still, all of the data was produced in interaction between institutional and professional concerns and reflects language use that is likely to be a compromise between these. As I show in the following subsection, the distribution is more similar across genres than the production.

#### *4.1.4.2 Distribution*

The internet as a medium allows for wide distribution (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). All articles on the websites are presented as one-way communication as opposed to, for example, a website that allows a debate thread following an article. However, distribution of the articles via social media enables readers to respond to and engage with the articles and each other on those platforms. It is challenging to give an accurate estimate of how many people see the articles online, but to get a sense of the online following, I looked at the profiles of the women's magazines and the medical websites on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter/X. The US profiles have more followers than the Danish, which can be explained by the global number of English speakers versus Danish speakers. Cosmopolitan has by far the highest number of followers; 17 million. In second place is Allure with three and a half million. Mayo Clinic has three million and three thousand followers and Oxygen has nearly 800 thousand. The Danish women's magazines have 172 thousand (Alt for Damerne) and 154 thousand (Femina) while the Danish medical website has 70 thousand. The last two have no presence on Twitter/X. All numbers of followers on social media in this section are from June 2022 and rounded off to nearest thousand or million. These social media accounts enable dialogue between the institutions and their followers. All the websites also provide contact information for their editorial teams and/or managers, which enables a more private dialogue between representatives of the institution behind the website and the readers.

Internet websites also vary regarding how much of their content is freely available as some sites require registration and/or payment for specific content. The websites used as data

sources for this study do not restrict readers by requiring registration or payment, with the exception of *Oxygen*. Some of the articles about skin care in the women's magazines promote specific skin care brands. The websites may also increase awareness about the brand and strengthen the relationship with the consumer, which could potentially lead them to buy or subscribe to the physical magazine. However, another affordability of the internet is that it enables websites to collect information about users and to monetize this by sharing it with marketing agencies. All online women's magazines included in this study as well as *Mayo Clinic* use cookies for targeted advertising purposes according to their Cookies and Privacy policies. This constructs the relationship between the readers and the text producers in terms of consumerism for the websites that collect data, as these data can be seen as payment for the content available on the website. *Sundhed.dk* is the only website included in this study that does not collect marketing cookies. This can be explained by the fact that the website represents a public healthcare system. The relationship to the readers is set in what has been referred to as a 'gift-economy' (Hindhede, 2011) as opposed to the market economy characterising the U.S. (see also chapter 2 for a comparison). Hence, the conditions of distribution demonstrate how assumptions about the relation between the text producer and receiver vary across data sources.

#### 4.1.4.3 Reception

Readers of health information websites can be construed as consumers or receivers of gifts in a community to which everyone contributes in some other way, as suggested in Section 4.1.4.1. Yet another representation of people engaging with health is suggested by Hallin and Briggs (2016), who argue that a partnership between doctors and patients would benefit the individual as well as society. I discuss how the identified metaphor scenarios represent the reader as a consumer, a beneficiary, a partner or in some other way in Chapter 7, while this section considers how the websites represent their users.

*Cosmopolitan* represents their readers as independent and politically conscious as demonstrated in this quote:

'We know you have opinions—and the confidence to share 'em.' (Hearst Media Inc., 2019).

*Cosmopolitan* and *Allure* both construe a relation of trust between the reader and themselves through promises of fact checking and statements such as this quote:

‘...we value the faith you put in our words and opinions, we respect how hard our readers work for their money and would never recommend a product that we did not try, test, and truly love ourselves...’ (Condé Nast, 2022).

*Oxygen* also addresses the reader directly and provides them with fitness and nutrition plans, indicating that they also see their readership as independent and ambitious when it comes to their body. Whether their readers are driven by concerns for health or appearance, is ambiguous.

The Danish magazines represent their readers as people who are interested in other people as they have many personal stories. *Femina* explicitly states:

‘femina er for alle kvinder, som interesserer sig for andre - og for sig selv’ (Aller, 2022)

‘femina is for all women who are interested in other people – and in themselves’

With the addition ‘og for sig selv’/‘and themselves’ an interest in self-improvement is added. *Alt for damerne* promises they:

‘...giver dig fornyet perspektiv på din verden...’ (Story House Egmont A/S, 2022)

‘...give you a renewed perspective on your world...’

This demonstrates an expectation of the reader as socially curious in opposition to the representation of the US American reader as independent.

*Mayo Clinic* refers to ‘patients’ four times in their mission statement using language that constructs them as beneficiaries or consumers:

‘The needs of the patient come first.’ (Mayo Clinic, 2022)

Although potential readers are recurrently referred to as patients, another representation shows a more holistic view:

‘Inspire hope and nurture the well-being of the whole person, respecting physical, emotional and spiritual needs.’

In less medicalised language, *sundhed.dk* refers to users and citizens:

‘et brugerorienteret sundhedsunivers, der skaber værdi og sammenhæng for både borgere og sundhedsfaglige, og som hjælper borgerne med at mestre egen sundhed’ (Sundhed.dk, 2022a).

‘a user-oriented health universe, that creates value for the citizens as well as healthcare professionals and which helps the citizens to master their own health’.

This quote from the strategy page on the website demonstrates a strategy to provide help for the competent citizen to make their own decisions about their health, which is in line with healthism (see Section 2.2.2).

#### *4.1.4.4 Interpretation of metaphor scenarios drawing on discursive practices*

All the text is mediated, i.e. there is no direct communication between discourse producer and recipient. More could be said about genre, but for this project I find the analysis of discursive practices sufficient to provide contextual information on the meso-level for understanding the identified metaphor scenarios. This description of discursive practices provides contextual information, which I draw on in the interpretation of the findings of the metaphor scenario analysis. A description of context is fundamental to any discourse analytical approach (as discussed in Section 3.3). This section has provided information about the context of production, distribution and reception. In the following sections, I turn to the linguistic analysis and describe how I identify metaphor and analyse metaphor scenarios.

## 4.2. Analytical approach

I approached the data described above starting with a linguistic analysis of metaphor scenarios followed by an interpretation of the scenarios identified which considers discursive practices. I

describe my approach to the analysis of metaphor scenarios in Section 4.2.1, including linguistic identification of the elements constituting metaphor scenarios and how I infer potential discursive strategies. In Section 4.2.2, I describe the software I used for coding the data and introduce the coherent text snippets I refer to throughout the analysis and discussion as 'instances'.

#### 4.2.1. Analysing metaphor scenarios

Metaphoric expressions are central to metaphor scenarios. Metaphor is often used subconsciously and may express ideology, as described in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.4. This makes it a good starting point for an analysis that aims to describe discourses from a CDS perspective (see Section 3.3.1). Given the research questions stated in Section 1.6, I limit the analysis to metaphor scenarios that represent menopause or those experiencing menopause. Metaphor scenarios are 'figurative mini-narratives that carry with them an evaluative stance' (Musolff 2017, p. 643). A narrative typically consists of actors, a sequence of events and an outcome (Thornborrow, 2010).

Metaphor has several dimensions, three of which I consider during the analysis undertaken in this thesis. These are the linguistic, cognitive and communicative dimensions of metaphor (Bogetić, 2017; G. Steen, 2008). With the 'metaphor identification procedure' (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) detailed in Section 4.2.1.2, I identify how metaphor is expressed lexically; this is the linguistic dimension. MIP sees metaphor as a cross-domain mapping following Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and later developments of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (see Section 3.3.3). This is a fundamental part of the cognitive dimension as metaphor exists when there is a similarity between the contextual meaning of a term and a more basic meaning of the same term while a contrast exists between the two meanings. Metaphor thus enables us to understand one thing in terms of another (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). The basic meaning of metaphor can be described at different levels of schematicity as described in Section 3.3.3. In this thesis, I organise the metaphoric expressions according to conceptual schemas to provide an overview of the data. I derive these schemas from the basic meaning of the metaphoric expression and the relevant mapping, i.e. similarity between the two meanings. Considering the metaphors at a more schematic level enables me to identify systematic use of metaphor scenarios and characterise how they interact in a cognitive dimension. Finally, to address the

communicative dimension I consider how metaphor may be seen to pursue discursive strategies by use of evaluation and indication of agency.

This is in line with Verschueren (2012, p. 6) who says: ‘a methodologically adequate approach should enable two researchers to sensibly compare and evaluate their results beyond the mere voicing of contrasting opinions’. Therefore, I aim to make my decisions about what constitutes a metaphor scenario as transparent as possible in this section.

In this thesis, I use the term literal in the sense ‘the literal meaning of a word is its most basic meaning’ (‘literal’, adj. Macmillan Education Limited, 2022). I consider the ‘most basic meaning’ the more concrete meaning of a term in the sense suggested by the Pragglejaz Group (2007, p. 3), which I describe in Section 4.2.1.2. I also use the term at another level, namely that of narrative. Here, I refer to the narrative that is in the target domain as opposed to the metaphoric narrative, which consists of the metaphoric terms and their entailments.

The following sub-sections detail how I approached the analysis. First, I described the elements contributing to metaphor scenarios: 4.2.1.1. In the three sections that follow, I provide detail on the analysis of these elements, namely Section 4.2.1.2 on metaphor identification, Section 4.2.1.3. on actors and agency and Section 4.2.1.4. evaluation and modality. In Section 4.2.1.5, I briefly explain the role of discursive strategies in this analysis.

#### *4.2.1.1 Elements of scenarios*

A metaphor scenario comprises actors, a sequence of potential actions and evaluation, in addition to metaphor (Koller & Ryan, 2019). I analyse these elements integrating methods from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), in particular social actor theory (Darics & Koller, 2019; van Leeuwen, 1996) and the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005).

As mentioned, metaphor scenarios are motivated by metaphoric expressions, but they are often characterised through a combination of lexical expressions - metaphoric and literal. This could be with adjectives expressing evaluation and implying agency such as in the following example from my data set:

...the loss of the consistent, regular pattern of our menstrual cycles is what becomes so disruptive...(Weiss, 2019)

While 'pattern' is the metaphoric expression, it is appraised with the terms 'consistent' and 'regular', which emphasises the inherent appreciation in the term 'pattern' as it indicates a regular composition (Martin & White, 2005; see also Section 4.2.1.4). The absence of it is appraised with the term 'disruptive'. This attributes agency to the pattern; it is keeping disruption at bay until menopause causes a loss of this pattern. The metaphor scenario is expressed in the combination of these terms in a coherent piece of text, while the metaphoric expression is the term 'pattern' as it is understood in this context.

With this in mind, I address the following questions (Koller & Ryan, 2019):

- + Who are the actors?
- + What actions do they take? What actions are directed at them?
- + Is evaluation expressed or implied?
- + Which actions and relations are likely or desirable?

These questions are addressed in detail in the sections on 'actors and agency' (4.2.1.3) and 'evaluation and modality' (4.2.1.4), respectively. I approached the data, after an initial read-through, with these questions and identified smaller pieces of text that indicated actions, evaluation, a potential sequence of events and a metaphoric expression that contributed to the evaluative narrative. Further, I included only narratives that represent menopause or those experiencing it. I call these smaller pieces of text 'instances' and describe these in more detail in Section 4.2.2. For illustration, consider this example from my data set:

4

'Aside from the physical discomfort, genitourinary syndrome of menopause can put a strain on relationships, and women need to know that this is common and nothing to be embarrassed by.'

In this instance, the metaphoric expression is 'strain', which I identified applying the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP; see Section 4.2.1.2). The action 'put a strain on' is represented with the actor 'genitourinary syndrome of menopause'. The goal of this material process is 'relationships' (see Section 4.2.1.3 on actors and agency). The last part of the sentence 'and women need to know...' appraises the action 'put a strain on' (see Section 4.2.1.4 on evaluation and modality). The narrative sequences are entailed in the material process because it is transformative; the relationships are transformed as strain is put on them. An outcome is the implication that women are embarrassed by this experience and think it is unusual. This is appraised as likely and undesirable.

There is more to say about the elements of this example, but this mini-analysis demonstrates the elements I was looking for, when I identified instances of interest. After I had identified these instances in Atlas (see Section 4.2.2), I exported them to MS Excel for further analysis. In the following sections I describe the analysis of the elements in detail.

#### *4.2.1.2 Identifying metaphors with MIP*

To describe the metaphoricity in the identified scenarios, I draw on the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP; Pragglejaz Group, 2007), which is a procedure for identifying metaphor in a systematic manner. In this section, I first illustrate the procedure with an example from my data. Subsequently, issues in applying the procedure raised by the Pragglejaz group (2007, pp. 23–32) are addressed.

As stated by Semino (2019a, pp. 320–321), the decisions regarding metaphor identification should be guided by the research aim and context. I aim to describe representation of menopause in specific genres and languages in order to provide evidence for a discussion of ideologies that may be reproduced or challenged through metaphor scenarios. My use of the MIP supports the interpretation of metaphoricity at the text level, but I make no claims about the prevalence or overall distribution of metaphor in the texts analysed because I have not applied MIP to every lexeme in the data. Rather than determine all lexical units in the texts, I only apply MIP to text that contributes to the representations of menopause or those experiencing it in instances with an evaluative mininarrative. This is because MIP is a very time-consuming procedure to implement, and it was decided that there would be little gained

by identifying metaphor that do not contribute to answering my research questions. MIP was developed to provide a consistent and robust method for metaphor identification. The idea is to minimise disagreements between scholars about what constitutes a metaphor by making assumptions that guide metaphor identification clear. My use of the procedure seeks to verify metaphor in my identified metaphor scenarios. Because I wanted a binary definition of metaphor, I decided to use the MIP rather than the later development MIPVU (G. J. Steen et al., 2010) which allows for a more fine-grained distinction of different grades of metaphoricity. I acknowledge that metaphor is, as Semino (2019a, pp. 320–321) puts it, ‘multi-faceted and scalar’, and my approach to it is simplified in order to focus on what the scenario might achieve in terms of communication.

The MIP procedure is as follows (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3):

1. Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse.
3.
  - (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.
  - (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be
    - More concrete (what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste);
    - Related to bodily action;
    - More precise (as opposed to vague);
    - Historically older;

— Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.

(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

Following this, the first step was to read through my selected articles, before any analysis. After this, I imported the texts into Atlas, and then started identifying metaphor scenarios. For each scenario identified, I verified the metaphoricity of at least one term that contributed to the narrative outlined in Section 4.2.1. Metaphoricity in this research is to be understood in a binary way. Either a term is a metaphor or it is not. A metaphor is when ‘we talk and, potentially, think about something in terms of something else’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Semino, 2008). Following Semino (2020, p. 5), I also include simile – or direct metaphor (G. J. Steen et al., 2010) - in my research. Although simile is not used *metaphorically* by a discourse participant, they do compare aspects of a topic with the basic meaning of the term (Semino, 2010, p. 220).

Analysing metaphor in two languages, English and Danish, may present challenges in the application of this procedure. Fortunately, metaphor identification in Danish has been carried out in the form of S-MIPVU (Nacey, 2020; Nacey, Dorst, et al., 2019), which is an adaptation to the three Scandinavian languages – Danish, Norwegian and Swedish – of MIPVU (G. J. Steen et al., 2010). As argued above, not all aspects of this development are relevant to my study. However, studies applying MIPVU to Scandinavian languages are helpful in reflections about how to apply MIP to my Danish data.

For the Danish examples, I aim to provide an idiomatic translation into English. However, I attempt to avoid losing details of the metaphor scenario in the translation. In the example below, this has resulted in the use of the generic pronoun ‘one’, which is not widely used in contemporary English. However, the Danish expression ‘man’ is commonly used. It may be used to refer to the speaker while making the expression more general and backgrounding

oneself ('man', pron. Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a) as in the below example, which I use to illustrate how I apply MIP to the current data.

5

Det er også en tid forbundet med tab, børnene flytter hjemmefra og sender ikke ligefrem takkebreve hver dag, og som kvinde bliver man usynlig i det offentlige rum. (Hast, 2018)

It is also a time connected with loss, the children leave home and don't exactly send thank you notes every day and as a woman, one becomes invisible in the public sphere.

In this instance, I have identified two lexical units as metaphoric expressions, namely 'tab' (loss) and 'invisible' (usynlig). I applied MIP to decide the metaphoricity of these terms as follows:

### **Tab**

Contextual meaning: to miss a previous close relation to children and the regard of other people

Basic meaning: being unable to keep hold of a physical object (from the basic meaning of 'tabe', vb., Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a)

Contextual meaning versus basic meaning: The contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning and the relationship between the two can be understood in terms of comparison. We can understand the feeling of losing something abstract, namely certain social relations, in terms losing hold of a physical object.

Metaphorically used: yes

### **Usynlig**

Contextual meaning: the feeling of not being noticed (perhaps related to feeling attractive)

Basic meaning: not visible, see-through

Contextual meaning versus basic meaning: The contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning and the relationship between the two can be understood in terms of comparison. We can understand the sensation of not being noticed in terms of not being seen.

Metaphorically used: yes

In both of these cases, the basic meaning is more precise or concrete than the contextual meanings, which belong to the more abstract domains of feelings and sensation, respectively.

In addition to my decision to include direct as well as indirect metaphors in the analysis and only include those metaphors that motivate a scenario, other decisions also had to be made on the basis of my chosen data and research questions. In the following, I present issues in applying the MIP addressed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and how I have dealt with these.

Referring to dictionaries is recommended in the procedure to avoid restricting the understanding of word meanings to that of the researcher (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 14). However, Semino (2019, p. 319) cautions that dictionaries are not free from error or inconsistency and encourages researchers to use them critically and flexibly. I use the dictionaries and corpus tools described below to support the description of meanings to improve the validity of claims related to word meanings but I aim to combine the use of them with my own critical judgement as a linguistic researcher. The selection of dictionaries is obviously dependent on the language of the data (Nacey et al., 2019). For the English text, I used the Macmillan online dictionary of American English and for the Danish text, Den Danske Ordbog (DDO), as they are both corpus-based and freely available online. These dictionaries have also been applied to the original MIP as well as subsequent (S-)MIPVU analyses (Nacey, Greve, et al., 2019; Pragglejaz Group, 2007; G. J. Steen et al., 2010). They reflect contemporary language use, which is suited for my data.

In exceptional cases – where reference to dictionaries does not adequately explain contextual meanings – I also make use of reference corpora. This could be because a contextual meaning is not listed in the dictionary or if there is some aspect of evaluation not listed that I want to verify. A search for the term in a reference corpus allows me to see if the term is used in similar meanings in other texts.

For American English, I use *COCA* (Davies, 2009), which is a monitor corpus of contemporary American English. This corpus is subdivided into five genres: academic, spoken, fiction, magazine and newspaper. It covers the time span 1990-2017 and comprises 570+ million words. The genres ‘magazine’ and ‘academic’, the latter of which has the subsection ‘medicine’, are particularly relevant for my data.

For Danish, I use two separate reference corpora. I use *KorpusDK* (Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022b), which contains material from 1983-2010 and was originally built according to the same structure as *COCA*. However, the spoken part and others have been removed because of usage restrictions from the suppliers of the texts. This has resulted in a corpus that has text from news outlets, Wikipedia, blogs and internet fora. It consists of 56 million words. The genres included in *KorpusDK* thus make it relevant as a reference for the analysis of the women’s magazines. In addition, I use the *DK-CLARIN LSP Corpus - Health domain* (Olsen, 2011), which is available with the corpus tool *Korp* (Borin et al., 2012; Institut for Nordiske Studier og Sprogvidenskab, 2022) as this includes pages from the same domain as the Danish medical information data included in this study (taken from *sundhed.dk*). It consists of 6.77 million words.

Establishing the lexical unit for analysis is an important aspect of the MIP. I follow the Pragglejaz group (2007) when it comes to multiword units, polywords and phrasal verbs. This entails considering whether it makes sense to analyse the constituent parts, or if meaning is lost when they are analysed separately; in other words, the criterion of decomposability (Gibbs et al., 1989). Idioms and fixed collocations are treated as semantically decomposable, but in cases where the latter are listed in the dictionaries, I still draw on those entries if the definition in the dictionaries match the contextual meaning in my data. I also follow the suggestion to ignore word class (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, pp. 27–28). This means for example that I consider

the meanings of the noun 'loss' and the verb 'lose' as the same term although one is a noun and the other a verb (see instance 5 above).

The metaphoric expressions in my data that motivate a scenario are content words and prepositions, for example 'leaves', 'in', 'dark', 'act' and 'fashion'.

6

The conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark, especially when menopausal skin starts to act in a bewildering fashion... (Booker, 2020)

This makes it relatively straight-forward to establish basic meanings in most cases (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, pp. 28–29). Even so, clarification is needed when it comes to establishing a basic meaning as 'related to bodily action', a criterion in point 3b of the procedure. It is important to note here that the sense of 'bodily action' referred to is understood as the mental schemata of how we perceive our bodies and their surroundings (Johnson, 1990). This is important because many processes within the body may seem abstract to the person experiencing them even though they are as embodied as they can be (see Section 3.3.3 for more about this in the context of pain). This should not be confused with cases where the contextual meaning of a metaphor endows the body with agency normally reserved for humans.

#### *4.2.1.3. Actors and agency*

In this thesis, I consider agency drawing on van Leeuwen's social actor theory (2008). This theory distinguishes between linguistic and sociological agency, where the former indicates an agent expressed explicitly in the text while the latter refers to implied agency. In some cases, these agents are excluded from the text but evident because of contextual knowledge, while other representations of sociological agency may leave the question of 'who did it?' unanswered. Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 29) uses the term 'backgrounding' to indicate when the sociological actor can be inferred and 'suppression' when it is unclear who the social actor is. An example from my data illustrates this:

7

Skipping periods during perimenopause is common and expected. Often, menstrual periods will skip a month and return... (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b).

It is possible to infer that this refers to 'women' skipping periods if one insists that a sociological actor must be human. However, another actor is possible, namely the one constructed as the grammatical actor in the following sentence, in which, periods are construed as the grammatical actor. Arguably, this is the actual actor since women do not usually decide whether or not to skip their periods. The action is technically happening to her. In this case we have an actor that is not a person but rather part of her body.

To address cases like these, I follow Potts and Semino (2017, p. 75) and take a broad view of social actor theory including menopause and all associated symptoms and the body in which it takes place as potential sociological actors. In their study of metaphor in discourses on cancer, they identified six categories of actors:

1. professionals
2. patients
3. self
4. care/treatment
5. healthcare system
6. disease/injury/death

The first three categories refer to people with the potential for conscious intent. Categories four and five are actions/institutions that stand metonymically for people, while the sixth category refers to processes in the body (injury can also be something that happens to the body). In my data, I also find social actors of these three kinds (see Sections 5.3 and 6.2).

Whether the biological body and the social being are seen as separate is a question with implications for metaphor analysis. This is because a body represented as acting in response to the social context is seen as a personification metaphor only if the body is not considered capable of such action. The question of whether the body responds to social context goes beyond the field of linguistics. I address menopause as a sociological actor in this thesis because it is represented in similar ways in my data.

Following Koller and Darics's (2019) adaptation of van Leeuwen's (1996) model, I address the following questions in the identification of sociological actors:

- + Who is represented?
- + Are they explicitly mentioned or implied?
- + By what linguistic means are they referred to?
- + Are they in a grammatically active or passive position?
- + What degree of semantic agency do they have?
- + Are they referred to in personal or impersonal ways?

By answering these questions, I connect the linguistic expressions (for example explicit mention) to the textual context (sociological agency). I also consider the relations that the text constructs between communicators, audience and third parties, referring to the participants identified in section 4.1.4.

Sometimes agents are not mentioned explicitly and the reasons for this can vary from linguistic efficiency to avoidance of placing responsibility. It can happen through the use of actorless passives, impersonalisation or infinite verb forms (Koller & Darics, 2019, pp. 223-224).

Whether or not the agent is the grammatical actor, semantic agency addresses which actions are represented with the greatest impact. While the grammatical actor is a binary category, semantic agency exists on a cline. To illustrate, consider this simile:

8

...Man kan godt føle sig som en vred hveps bag en rude... (Hast, 2018)

...One can well feel like an angry wasp behind a window glass...

This is a mental process represented in the reflexive verb 'føle sig' (feel), which signals a medium degree of agency. A mental process tends to express a higher degree of agency than a relational or existential process would, but with a lower degree of semantic agency compared to a behavioural, verbal or material process (Darics & Koller, 2019).

The participant 'man' is a commonly used general personal pronoun in Danish. The most applicable definition in the Danish Dictionary is 1a:

bruges for at henvise til den talende selv, ofte for at gøre udsagnet mere generelt eller for at underspille sin egen rolle ('man', pronomen, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a)

used to refer to the speaker themselves, often to make the statement more general or to underplay their own role

This definition corresponds to the meaning used by the woman experiencing menopause to describe how she feels. At the same time, the use of generic 'man' generalises that feeling and backgrounds the speaker. Further, in example X she is hedging the statement through the modal verb 'kan' (can) and the adverb 'godt' (directly translated as 'well' but it functions as part of the modality marker).

The metaphoric expression describes *how* the speaker assumes every menopausal woman feels. The wasp maps on to 'man' and the sense of banging against a window repeatedly with high levels of anger becomes imaginable through the metaphor scenario (see Section 3.3.3 for more about how metaphor is used to share experiences). Using 'man' in the reference to stand more generally for 'women going through menopause' establishes a collective identity which may function to provide a sense of solidarity. This illustrates how I analysed agency in the metaphor scenarios, I identified.

#### *4.2.1.4. Evaluation and modality*

Metaphor scenarios express attitudes in different ways and I analyse them drawing on a part of the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005; P. R. R. White, 2002). The appraisal framework suggests categories that describe emotions expressed or referred to in the text (affect) as well as appreciation or judgement. These have been described by Martin (2003, pp. 173-4) as institutionalised feelings that aim to control behaviour (judgement) or taste (appreciation).

As Oteíza points out 'what counts as appraisal depends on the field of discourse' (2017, p. 462). While no previous studies of menopause have discussed appraisal to my knowledge, the affect, appreciation and judgement subsystems were included by Bullo (2018) in her study of discourses of endometriosis. Bullo (p. 575) states that the model 'allows for examination of the lexical choices expressing positive or negative disposition towards a stimulus in terms of emotional (affect), aesthetical (appreciation) or moral/ethical dispositions (judgement)'. This supports the aim of the analysis presented in this thesis, which is to find observations about discourses and worldviews on a basis of linguistic evidence.

Martin and White (2005) suggest that affects, judgements and appreciations are expressed in terms of valence. While affect is represented as binary (un/happiness, in/security, dis/satisfaction and dis/inclination), both appreciation and judgement are forms of appraisal that exist on a cline. While appreciation refers to reactions to impacts, qualities, assessment of balance, complexity, worth or value, judgement expresses assessments of how normal, capable, tenacious, truthful or ethical something or someone is.

Appraisal can be explicitly expressed, as in the use of the term 'normal' in the following example:

9

...Vaginal bleeding after menopause isn't normal, and it should be evaluated by your doctor. (Laughlin-Tommaso, 2020)

The negated judgement of normality establishes 'bleeding after menopause' as undesirable, while 'should' as a marker of deontic modality construes 'evaluation by a health care provider' as a desirable outcome of the situation a reader finds herself in, as this is the answer to a question raised about spotting after menopause. In this way, the modal verb works to appraise the action as necessary.

Besides deontic modality, I also consider epistemic (Halliday, 2014) and dynamic modalities (Gabrielatos, 2010). Deontic modality expresses what is considered desirable through lexis that places an interdiction, volition, obligation or permission on someone (Halliday, 2014). In the

example above, 'must' indicates an obligation on the woman to seek medical help. Epistemic modality expresses what is considered likely through lexis that assesses what is probable or usual, as in the following example:

10

Når man nærmer sig menopausen, kan der være forvarslere i form af blødningsforstyrrelser og symptomer som hedeture. (Trolle, 2019b)

When one approaches menopause, there may be signs in the form of bleeding disruptions and symptoms like hot flashes.

The modal verb 'kan' is used for all three types of modality in Danish, but in this example it expresses what usually happens for those approaching menopause and with some probability may happen to the reader. It does not directly contribute to evaluation here but rather expresses uncertainty about what experiences the reader may have. In this way, it sets up two potential outcomes for those approaching menopause – one with and one without signs. Because 'blødningsforstyrrelser' and 'hedeture' are associated with negative valence, the outcome without signs is the more desirable one. In such cases, epistemic modality contributes to describing the desirable outcome (implied deontic modality). As demonstrated by Koller (2012, p. 15), an analysis of modality may then provide further support or nuance to findings of evaluation.

Dynamic modality concerns the ability, capacity or possibility inherent in a participant or situation or imposed by a participant.

11

Menopausen er det tidspunkt, hvor menstruationerne hører op... Den varsler afslutningen på hendes evne til at blive gravid. (Sundhed.dk, 2020)

The menopause is the time when the menstruations stop... It signals the end of her ability to become pregnant.

Here, it is presented as a fact without evaluation that the woman can no longer become pregnant, as ‘afslutningen’ is a neutral word. Evaluation of propensity is then largely determined by the co-text, while it may contribute to the characterisation of the relation between menopause and the person experiencing it, in this case by establishing menopause as the cause for the lack of ability to become pregnant.

To address modality in relation to the actors represented, I applied the questions in table 4.4. On the left, the questions posed by Koller (2012, p. 15), on the right are my adaptations (marked in italics).

Original questions posed	Adapted model to the current thesis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ What does the author perceive a social group to be like in the past, present and future?</li> <li>+ What possible developments are constructed for them (epistemic)?</li> <li>+ How would the text producer like them to be (deontic)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ What does the author perceive a social <i>actor or</i> group to be like in the past, present and future?</li> <li>+ How likely <i>or usual</i> are certain developments constructed for them (epistemic)?</li> <li>+ How would the text producer like them to be (deontic)?</li> <li>+ <i>What actions are constructed as inherent in the representation of the social actor, as inherent in the situation or as imposed by a participant (dynamic)?</i></li> </ul>

Table 4.4: Questions to operationalise analysis of modality

For each expression of modality, the question of the author will first have to be addressed (see section 4.2.1.1). The original model is for collective identities. Since my data is more concerned with how health is construed and less with collective identity, I have added ‘actor or’ to the first question. In the question related to epistemic modality, I have added ‘or usual’ as this is a prevalent form of this modality in my data. Further, I have added a fourth question to address dynamic modality.

Finally, in some cases, evaluation is implied with a metaphoric expressions:

There are several ways to maximize your gym time to combat the negative effects of menopause and keep your physique from becoming a statistic. (Outside, 2022)

The metaphoric term 'combat' constructs two parties as opponents. As the implied actor is the reader, expressed with 'your', they are appraised positively with a fighter identity implying qualities such as strength and energy (see Section 3.2.1 and Koller & Bullo, 2019).

Correspondingly, the opponent, 'the negative effects of menopause' is appraised negatively as an enemy.

These elements of metaphor scenarios work together across the text, forming a web that expresses beliefs, values and norms that point towards certain discursive strategies.

#### *4.2.1.5. Discursive strategies of metaphor scenarios*

Following the analysis of metaphor scenarios as described above, I interpret possible discursive strategies pursued by the scenarios. A discursive strategy may problematise or normalise a social construction such as 'menopause' or 'woman' (see Section 1.3). This provides an insight into functions of metaphor scenarios and what the text producers may hope to achieve. For example, these strategies may serve to persuade a user to consume certain services or products or to behave in a certain way, which I discuss in Chapter 7. These are necessarily speculative in the sense that is not possible to measure thought and intention directly. However, I base my inference of the strategies on linguistic evidence found in the analysis of metaphor scenarios.

#### 4.2.2. Use of analysis software and text instances

I used Atlas.ti to code instances containing metaphor scenarios as well as the individual elements in my data. I then exported the results into Microsoft Excel, which enabled me to filter them according to genre and language as well other comments and codings, as detailed in the following. I applied six codes to capture the metaphor scenarios:

1. motivating metaphor
2. process
3. participant
4. evaluation/modality

5. narrative structure
6. text instance.

The codes are in line with my analytical approach described in section 4.2.2. Codes 1-5 are the required elements in a metaphor scenario as described above. I coded agency in terms of process and the participants involved in it. It is not always possible to associate participants with specific lexis; they may have to be inferred as described in section 4.2.2.3. In such cases, I made a note of the inference under the code for the relevant process. Code six is used to highlight the text instance. A scenario can be challenging to delimit because they may be evoked by metaphoric expressions spread out over an article, or perhaps even across the data. Therefore, I refer to the coherent snippets of text I have marked up as ‘instances’ throughout the analysis and discussion. I have aimed to include just enough text in the instances to characterise the elements of the metaphor scenario. This can include one or several sentences<sup>7</sup>, so long as the sentences contribute to the scenario. Figure 4.2 shows instance 12 encoded in Atlas.ti:

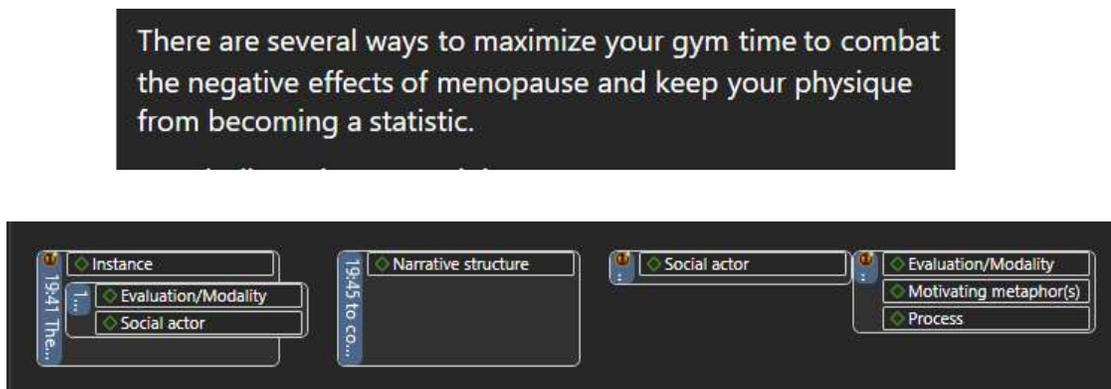


Figure 4.2: Example of coding in Atlas, text source: (Outside, 2022a)

In this example, the metaphoric expression is ‘combat’. This term is also annotated as both evaluation and process because it constructs the goal of the material process as an opponent. This process has two participants, which are ‘you’ (implied actor) and ‘the negative effects of menopause’ (the goal with further evaluation in the term ‘negative’). Because ‘you’ is

<sup>7</sup> A sentence being the words between full stops in this case.

backgrounded, I have highlighted the term 'your' the first time it occurs. When there is no explicit expression of a backgrounded actor – or in case of a suppressed actor, I note this on the annotation for the process. The desirable outcome is 'to combat the negative effects....a statistic.' (see chapter 5 for more on this example).

For each quotation, it is possible to add a note. I used this function to add detail, for example that the actor of this process is backgrounded through an infinitive construction. I noted possible discursive strategies under the instance code. For example in this case, I annotated the instance as part of the problem-solution strategy since 'the negative effects of menopause' are construed as a problem while 'maximise your gym time' is represented as the solution. After coding, I export each code together with the comments in order to identify patterns.

#### 4.3 Strengths and limitations of the data selection and analytical approach

In this thesis I analyse data from magazines and medical websites, which represent an important and influential part of the public discourse on menopause, but do not capture the entire discourse. In chapter 8, I discuss possible future work and suggest other possible data sources for discourse analytical studies into menopause. This data gives an impression of public discourses on menopause in two different countries and communicative situations (see Section 4.1.4). However, due to the small data sample and differences in authorship, particularly of the medical websites, the findings are not generalisable to the entire genres or national cultures. In this chapter, I have aimed to make my methodological choices transparent enough for other researchers to compare their results to mine and account for any differences in results with reference to choices of data and methods.

Studies on a larger scale with several collaborating partners have achieved metaphor analysis that compares larger data sets. An outcome of one such collaboration, the MELC project (Semino et al., 2018), is a 'metaphor menu for people living with cancer' (Semino et al., 2022). This is a collection of metaphors that represent different approaches to cancer and may serve as inspiration for healthcare professionals and others engaging in conversations about cancer. This project along with a Swedish project inspired by it (Hommerberg et al., 2021) have motivated me to analyse metaphor in a specific health discourse. Both of these projects triangulate qualitative and quantitative analysis and were carried out by larger teams of

people with different, complementary skills. Within the scope of a single PhD-project, it would not have been possible to perform a study of this scale.

The benefit of a qualitative approach in the present thesis is that it enables in-depth analysis of a small text sample, even though it limits the generalisability of the results. Rather than being able to draw conclusions on how menopause is broadly represented in the relevant countries, I describe some possible ways of representing menopause and those who experience it and link them to broader discourses on health. I discuss how the representations I find reproduce or challenge conventional perceptions of health and healthcare. Reflections of possible implications of these representations may help to inform decisions about how to communicate about menopause. Further, I hope it will inspire future work into metaphors of menopause.

#### 4.4 Conclusion on data and methodology

The data and methods presented in this chapter have been selected and adapted to answer how menopause is represented in selected discourses in two languages. While the analytical claims I make in this thesis are not generalisable, I aim to make an empirical contribution by providing novel, linguistic evidence of how menopause is written about in prominent genres of health communication in two countries (i.e. women's magazines and medical websites aimed at the public). Hopefully, this can increase awareness about what is possibly the most common challenge for women's health. Language use in discourse on health conditions reflects and affects how we potentially think about a particular health condition. Linguistic analysis may thus help to supply evidence about the ways we talk and think about menopause, in given contexts.

Further, I aim to make two methodological contributions to metaphor research. By combining tools from systemic functional linguistics with research on metaphor scenarios, I contribute to the discussion about what metaphor scenarios can be found in discourses on health and what characterises these scenarios. Secondly, a methodological contribution to the discussion of agency in discourses on health. More broadly, the analysis of data in American English and Danish builds on research that shows how methods developed for the analysis of English-language texts can be extended to texts composed in other languages.

I present the analysis in two chapters (5 and 6), treating each genre separately. Within each chapter, I consider similarities and differences between the findings in each language. In chapter 7, I discuss the findings and interpretations in both genres and across languages, connecting them to the literature reviewed in chapter 3.

## Chapter 5: Analysis of women's magazines

This chapter presents the analysis of metaphor scenarios identified in the selected articles from women's magazines, as described in Section 4.1.1. I start in Section 5.1 by presenting a typical example of a metaphor scenario in the data to illustrate the elements these scenarios comprise. Then I present typical patterns of the individual elements of metaphor scenarios as explained in Section 4.2.1 in the following order: Section 5.2: Metaphor, Section 5.3: Agency, Section 5.4: Narrative, and Section 5.5: Appraisal. To discuss what the metaphor scenarios are used for, I consider how they may be seen to pursue certain discursive strategies in Section 5.6, including considerations of discursive practices. Finally, I suggest some of the main patterns of scenarios in the data in Section 5.7.

### 5.1 The elements comprising metaphor scenarios in this data

Metaphor scenarios are mini-narratives expressing evaluation through the use of metaphor as described in Section 4.2.1. These elements are intertwined throughout text. However, in this chapter and Chapter 6, I untangle and describe the elements and how they work together to represent menopause and those experiencing it. For example, text instance 1 comprises scenarios with the elements metaphor, agency, narrative, and appraisal, as follows:

1

Hun fandt sin egen vej, da hendes krop tog en tur i hormonrutsjebanen, og hun blev ramt af overgangsalderen. (Truelsen, 2017)

She found her own path after her body took a ride on the hormonal rollercoaster and she was struck by menopause.

#### 5.1.1 Metaphoric expressions

The metaphoric expressions 'fandt' (found) and 'vej' (path) represent the woman as engaged in finding a journey. Another metaphor, the expression 'hormonrutsjebanen' (the hormonal rollercoaster), represents the bodily experience of menopause as movement that may amuse some and make others feel sick. It may point to the idea of fluctuating hormone levels, since a

defining feature of a rollercoaster is that it moves up and down. In the third phrase, menopause is represented as a force with the metaphoric expression 'ramt' (struck). The metaphoric expressions 'vej' (path) and 'rutsjebane' (rollercoaster) both evoke a Movement schema, while 'ramt' (struck) evokes a Force schema. If only the basic meanings of these terms were available, the statement would make little sense, but metaphorical thinking enables sense making of the four metaphoric expressions.

#### 5.1.2 Agency

The interviewee, represented with 'hun' (she), is the actor in the process of finding, with 'sin egen vej' (her own path) as the goal. She is also represented as the goal of the process 'blev ramt' (was struck), where menopause is the actor represented in a prepositional clause, 'af overgangsalderen' (by menopause). The passive construction foregrounds the goal and backgrounds the actor, which emphasises her experience with menopause as the important aspect of menopause itself. The action she is engaged in, is described in rather vague terms. It is not clear what 'vej' (path) maps onto explicitly, only that it is clear to the actor, since she has found it.

Another actor is 'hendes krop' (her body). It is represented as going on a rollercoaster. This indicates a split between herself and her body. Her body acts while she is more passive. Hormones are implicitly endowed with agency in the compound 'hormonrutsjebanen' (the hormonal rollercoaster) as it is understood that hormones are causing the sensation of a rollercoaster. The hormones are part of her body, acting on her body, further establishing a split between her self and parts of her body, which act on their own accord. This scenario constructs her as a somewhat passive subject to the actions of her body and menopause, until she finds her way.

#### 5.1.3 Narrative

A narrative comprises the agency described above as well as a sequence of events and an (appraised) outcome. The metaphoric expressions 'fandt' (found) and 'vej' (path) construct a metaphoric narrative as it suggests some sort of challenge was overcome. The challenge and the outcome then comprise two events in sequence. The agency is expressed with 'hun' (she)

as the actor and 'fandt' (found) as the action. A goal is also expressed with 'vej' (path). This narrative alludes to the Hero's Quest (Campbell, 2008) which suggests that the reader should be on the woman's side. The metaphors then tie together different elements of the scenario to form a cohesive story at the metaphoric level.

The literal level mirrors the same sequence of events. First she was struck by menopause and her body took a ride. This is represented as happening first, as the term 'da' (after) indicates the first part of a temporal sequence where the (temporally) latter part is a reaction. She found her own way in reaction to the actions of her body and menopause – this is the second event as well as the outcome. Perhaps she is empowered as she moves from a passive to a more active role in this narrative.

#### 5.1.4 Appraisal

Appraisal is expressed with the metaphoric terms in this metaphor scenario. Conventionally, it is considered a good thing to find your way. The metaphor judges the person as competent. It stands in contrast to having been on a rollercoaster or been struck, which might leave some unsteady on their feet. While the rollercoaster image connotes fun, being struck is rarely a pleasant experience (except if the striking agent is inspiration or beauty). But if you need to 'find your way' after being struck, you have presumably been struck with some force.

Metaphor in this text instance then describes relations between the actors, the processes they are engaged in and appraisal. The social actors in this text instance interact and form a web that connect the different metaphors in one scenario. Further, the text instance represents the metaphors as different events that occur in a given sequence. The scenario comprises these elements as they work together to describe and appraise the interviewee's experience of and reaction to menopause as problematic.

This construction of menopause as problematic but still representing a way for the affected to overcome is the most typical discursive strategy in the scenarios I identified in the women's magazines. I discuss this further in Section 5.6. In the following Sections 5.2-5.5, I describe main findings for each element across the identified scenarios.

## 5.2 Metaphors in this data

In this section, I present patterns of metaphoric expressions across selected articles for the women's magazines and make comparisons between the Danish and US metaphors. Table 5.1 shows which metaphoric expressions I have interpreted in relation to conceptual schemas. The table also gives the frequency with which each metaphoric expression occurs in relation to conceptual schemas. Note that some scenarios combine metaphoric expression as in text instance 1. Such instances may be seen to combine scenarios or constitute one scenario. Due to this ambiguity, I count metaphoric expressions rather than scenarios in this section.

<b>Conceptual schema</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions DK (raw frequency)</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions DK translated</b>	<b>DK total frequency of expressions</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions US (raw frequency)</b>	<b>US total frequency of expressions</b>
<b>Clothes</b>	vender vrangen ud (1)	turn inside out	<b>1</b>	fashion (1) tailor (1)	<b>2</b>
<b>Conflict</b>	kæmpede med (1) ramt (1)	struggled with struck	<b>2</b>	succumb (1) conquer (2) battle (1) combat (3) facing (1)/face (1) counter (1) barrier (1) invaders (1) cover (1) against (1) unopposed (1) impact (2) strikes (1)	<b>18</b>
<b>Connection</b>	forbundet (1) forenes (1)	connected unite	<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Construction</b>			<b>0</b>	staple (1) supports (1)	<b>2</b>
<b>Container</b>	igennem (4)/gennem (2) går ind i (1) rude (1)	through enter window glass	<b>7</b>	through (4) barrier (1) invaders (1)	<b>6</b>
<b>Directions</b>	vendt op og ned (1) vendt på hovedet (1) falder (1)	turned upside down turned on its head falls	<b>3</b>	drop (2) plummet (1)	<b>3</b>
<b>Force</b>	kort lunte (1) ramt (1) bryder (1)	short fuse struck break	<b>3</b>	impact (2) strikes (1)	<b>3</b>
<b>Machine</b>			<b>0</b>	fuel (1) sparked (1)	<b>2</b>
<b>Movement</b>	igennem (4)/gennem (2) danser (1) på vej (1) vej (1) rutsjebanen (1) kom(/-mer) (4) følger med (1) accelerere (1) går ind i (1) falder (1) glider (1) farende (1)	through dance on its way path roller coaster comes/came follow along accelerate enter falls glide rushing (adj.)	<b>20</b>	drop (2) plummet (1) near vb. (1) lead (1) reach (1) coming (1) leave (1) get back (1) through (4)	<b>13</b>
<b>Nature</b>	bjerg (1) indre vandmand (1) hveps (1)	mountain inner jellyfish wasp	<b>3</b>		<b>0</b>

Conceptual schema	Metaphoric expressions DK (raw frequency)	Metaphoric expressions DK translated	DK total frequency of expressions	Metaphoric expressions US (raw frequency)	US total frequency of expressions
<b>Other</b>	fandt (1) udgave (1) tab (1) venter (1) let (1) begrænse (1) styr på (1) rygrad (1) tog (1) tyv (2)	found edition loss await lightly limit under control spine train (n.) thief	<b>10</b>	end (1) beginning (1) dreams (1) shock (1) act (1) level adj. (1) on (1)	<b>7</b>
<b>Senses</b>	hudløs (1) usynlig (1) omtåget (1) knas (1) hårdt (1) om natten (1)	skinless usynlig foggy crunch hard in the night	<b>6</b>	dark (1)	<b>1</b>
<b>Sports</b>			<b>0</b>	tackling (1) goal (1) playing field (1)	<b>3</b>
<b>Water</b>	lukke for (1) det varme vand (1) hoppe ud i (1) vasker (1) indre vandmand (1)	shutting off the warm water jump into washes inner jellyfish	<b>5</b>		<b>0</b>

Table 5.1: Metaphoric expressions sorted by conceptual schema

This table represents my interpretation of the metaphoric expression and the mentioned conceptual schemas is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Rather, it provides an overview of the types of metaphor found in order to compare the metaphor scenarios. As mentioned in Section 4.2.1, I have decided on these labels based on the metaphor identification, considering the basic meaning and the relevant mapping. In some cases, I also considered other metaphors from the same article. For example, the expression 'hveps' (wasp) might have been labeled with the conceptual schema 'animal'. But since the same article uses 'bjerg' (mountain) and 'vandmand' (jellyfish) metaphorically, I decided to use the more abstract term 'nature'.

Some metaphoric terms evoke more than one schema. For example, the Danish term 'ramt' and the US equivalent 'strikes' are categorised with the schemas of Force and Conflict. Further, the Danish terms 'igennem' and 'gennem' and the US equivalent 'through' evoke the idea of

Movement as well as the idea of a Container. It also applies to the US terms 'barrier' and 'invaders', which evoke the Conflict as well as the Container schema. Further, the US terms 'drop', 'plummet' and the Danish 'falder' (falls) evoke both a Movement and a Direction schema.

The conceptual schemas evoked across the data paint a picture of the US as fond of Conflict metaphors as well as the related Sports metaphors, which have similar mappings. Both may transfer the concepts of opposition and competition. Further, the schemas of Construction and Machine are exclusive to the US data. In contrast, the metaphoric expressions found in the Danish articles evoke schemas of Connection, Water and Nature exclusively. Senses are evoked more frequently in the Danish data, with five occurrences vs. one in the US data. This may suggest a snapshot of two cultures with different cultural values, but it is not possible to generalise this finding based on this small data set.

In the following sections, I will present my analysis of three groups of metaphor in their context. First, I will address Movement metaphors, which occur relatively frequently in both the Danish and the US data. Then I will address Conflict metaphors, which occur almost exclusively in the US articles and finally, I address metaphors that evoke the schemas of Senses, Water and Nature, as these occur almost exclusively in the Danish articles.

### 5.2.1 Movement

The most prevalent pattern of metaphor conceptualises menopause or those experiencing it as moving. Many of the same actors are seen as moving in both languages. These include menopause and those experiencing it, which is expected considering that I have focused my search for metaphor scenarios on these actors (see Section 5.3 for more on agency). I will now discuss the Danish instances with movement metaphors first, as the metaphoric expressions are more frequent in the Danish data, followed by a comparison with the corresponding US instances.

Overgangsalderen, menopausen, klimakteriet ... uanset, hvad vi kalder det, kommer det for nogle som en tyv om natten; overraskende og uden forvarsel. (Vichy, 2022)

The transition age<sup>8</sup>, the menopause, the climactery...whatever we call it, for some it comes like a thief in the night; surprising and without warning.

The term 'kommer' (comes) in instance 13 constructs menopause as moving implicitly towards those experiencing menopause. Further, the simile characterises menopause as 'en tyv om natten' (a thief in the night), endowing menopause with agency to take something unrightfully from 'nogle' (some) without them being able to see it. This simile characterises the metaphorical Movement of menopause. The basic meanings of 'tyv' (thief) and 'natten' (the night) contribute to the metaphor scenario with a characterisation of menopause as sneaky and difficult to see.

In a further Movement metaphor, a physical change associated with menopause, aging appearance of skin, is represented as accelerating (14). This constructs 'alderstegn' (signs of aging) in terms of a vehicle that is able to speed up. This metaphor conveys the contextual meaning that the signs increase using a metaphor of accelerating speed.

14

Overgangsalderen har stor indflydelse på huden. Mange undersøgelser viser, at kvinder oplever, at hudens alderstegn begynder at accelerere, når de går ind i overgangsalderen. Når østrogenniveauet falder, er tørhed i huden et af de første symptomer. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

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<sup>8</sup> Translation note: elsewhere, I have translated 'overgangsalderen' with 'the menopause' because the terms are used similarly. Here, I translate it directly to avoid writing menopause twice. For more on these terms, see Section 2.2.3.

The menopause has a major effect on the skin. Many studies show that women experience that the skin's signs of aging begin to accelerate when they enter the menopause. When the estrogen level falls, dry skin is one of the first symptoms.

This instance further demonstrates how some metaphors describe the directional movement of hormones. Levels of estrogen fall (14), the body takes a ride on a hormonal rollercoaster (1, see Section 5.1) and the hormonal system is turned upside down (13, below). These hormonal changes are represented as causing symptoms and problems.

13

Det er jo hele hormonsystemet, der bliver vendt op og ned, og man kan få alverdens problemer, men der er ikke forsket særlig meget i det. (Truelsen, 2017)

It is the entire hormonal system that is turned upside down, and one can get all sorts of problem, but not much research has been done on this.

When those experiencing menopause are represented as moving, it is in a certain way. One instance claims that most women 'glide' or 'slip' through menopause (15) and another suggests that some dance lightly through the menopausal years (16). These are both juxtaposed with representations of less pleasant experiences of menopause.

15

Vidste du, at det er en myte, at kvinder i overgangsalderen vender vrangen ud på sig selv og muterer til uforudsigelige og urimelige hystader. Det sker kun for ganske få. Størstedelen af alle kvinder glider nogenlunde smerte- og symptomfrit gennem den periode. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

Did you know that it is a myth that women in menopause turn their insides out and mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches. This only happens to very few. Most women glide reasonably pain and symptom free through that period.

16

Det er utroligt forskelligt, hvilke gener og udfordringer der venter den enkelte. Nogle danser let gennem årene, hvor andre bliver mere påvirkede. (Vichy, 2022)

It is incredibly different, which bothers and challenges await the individual. Some dance lightly through the years while others are more affected.

The metaphoric expressions 'glider' (glide), 'danser' (dance, v.) and 'let' (lightly) transfer the idea of easy movement through time to the experience of menopause. Both instances construct menopause as a container with 'gennem' (through).

In the US instances, menopause is also constructed as coming (17), as a place someone approaches (18) or moves through (37, 36, 25, 40).

17

Menopause is one of those huge life changes that all women know is coming but no one ever feels fully prepared for when it does. But when it strikes before you've even turned 40, the shock is all the more distressing. (Graham, 2017)

18

As you near the end of menopause — when your ovaries stop producing eggs — your estrogen levels drop, which can lead to weight gain, especially around your midsection. But you don't have to succumb to a new mid-life midsection. Experts recommend the following natural tips for balancing estrogen levels...(Dunn, 2013)

The reader is represented as moving in relation to menopause (18, 40) but another instance represents the reader as moving towards their own goals (19) with the term 'reach'. This constructs the goals as something concrete that can be touched. Menopause is constructed as an opponent with the terms 'combat' and 'conquer'.

19

Luckily, some advanced research studies show how you can combat the hormonal alterations that negatively impact your body and still reach your goals. Here's everything you need to know about menopause and, more important, how to use advanced dietary and training techniques to conquer it. (Outside, 2022)

Instance 19 combines the Movement schema (reach) with the Conflict schema (conquer). This combination is also seen in other instances from the same article (20, 25) and other articles (18, 22). In Section 5.4.1, I address how these metaphoric expressions work together to form a metaphoric narrative.

One instance constructs the reader as moving their own body (20), constructing a split between the reader and their body.

20

you can tailor your diet and exercise regime to combat most of these alterations and get your body back on a level playing field with your younger self. (Outside, 2022)

The two metaphoric expressions 'level' and 'playing field' evoke a schema of competitive sports. The competitors are the younger self and the present self. The preposition 'on' also does metaphorical work, constructing the 'level playing field' as a location the actors can be 'on'. The phrase 'get back' also constructs the fitness of the body in terms of space.

Similar to the Danish instances, the US text constructs estrogen as moving (18, 22). The downwards movement of estrogen in turn is represented as able to lead to bodily changes (18, 21).

18

As you near the end of menopause — when your ovaries stop producing eggs — your estrogen levels drop, which can lead to weight gain, especially around your midsection. But you don't have to succumb to a new mid-life midsection. Experts recommend the following natural tips for balancing estrogen levels...(Dunn, 2013)

21

Speaking of estrogen: It's pretty much everything. Not only does the hormone fuel all things, but it also supports healthy skin cell functioning. So when estrogen levels plummet during menopause, "skin can't protect itself, maintain hydration, or produce strong collagen the way it once could," (Devash & Robin, 2021)

In these examples, estrogen levels 'drop' and 'plummet'. These terms suggest a steep decline, as opposed to the Danish descriptions of the 'estrogen level fall' or the hormonal system being 'turned upside down' or 'on its head'. I will discuss these differences further in Section 5.3 as these metaphors contribute to a characterisation of hormonal agency.

In another movement metaphor, 'A lack of conversation' is represented as moving away from 'so many':

6

The conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark, especially when menopausal skin starts to act in a bewildering fashion — namely, rashes, acne, rosacea, and an overall sensitivity to, well, everything. (Booker, 2020)

The abstract idea of conversation not happening is represented as a concrete entity, that is able to move and leave people behind. It leaves them 'in the dark', which suggests that the conversation could have brought light. This metaphor draws on the idea of knowledge as light, which at least dates back to ancient Greece (Plato, 1998/375 B.C.E.). In other words, conversation about menopause could lead to an understanding of the changes that are

happening – in this instance to the skin. Two further metaphors in this instance characterise these changes to the skin, namely ‘act’ and ‘fashion’.

While the conceptualisation of menopause as a place someone moves through is seen in both languages, menopause is only constructed as moving in one US instance. Hormones on the other hand are more frequently agentive in both the US instances and the Danish. Those experiencing menopause are more frequently seen as moving in both languages. I will return to this point in Section 5.3.

### 5.2.2 Conflict

In the US articles, the most prevalent pattern of metaphoric expressions is those that construct a conflict. Such metaphoric expressions occur in 18 of the US text instances, while they occur in only two of the Danish instances. I will present the US findings first in this section and then contrast with the Danish instances. In the US instances, a conflict is constructed between menopause and the reader with metaphoric terms such as ‘combat’.

12

There are several ways to maximize your gym time to combat the negative effects of menopause and keep your physique from becoming a statistic. (Outside, 2022)

Typically, these metaphors construct menopause as an adversary. Menopause is metonymically represented by the ‘negative effects’ and ‘alterations’ caused by menopausal hormone changes (18, 20, 40 and 12). In a less typical text instance, hormones are also represented as involved in conflict with each other.

22

"The biggest thing about menopause is that estrogen levels start to drop so you have this unopposed testosterone influence on your skin, and that manifests in many ways," (Booker, 2020)

The metaphoric term 'unopposed' constructs an adversarial relation between the hormones estrogen and testosterone. There is a contrast between the basic meaning of 'unopposed', referring to actions by people who compete or work against each other, and the contextual meaning, referring to effects of hormones on the body. Testosterone is represented as having an influence on female skin, which could be opposed by estrogen, but no longer is due to the 'drop' in estrogen 'levels'.

The expressions 'drop' and 'levels' are also metaphoric. The basic meaning of 'drop' is a physical fall and 'levels' refer to a particular height. The contextual meaning is a lower amount of estrogen is in the body, where 'levels' denotes the amount of estrogen and 'drop' indicates that it is lower. This is based on the conceptual metaphor 'less is down' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These metaphoric terms work together to create a scenario in which low levels of estrogen do not pose an opposition to the testosterone. It is implied that higher levels of estrogen would have opposed the effects of testosterone. In this way, the Movement of estrogen levels contributes to a characterisation of the adversarial relation between estrogen levels and testosterone influence.

While 'combat' and 'conquer' suggests a violent conflict with a clear winner and a loser, other Conflict metaphors have less violent implications.

23

Regular physical activity is crucial for women facing menopause. (Outside, 2022)

The metaphoric term 'facing' denotes two processes, related to the basic and contextual meaning respectively. The basic meaning represents women with their face oriented towards menopause, while the contextual meaning implies that there is a conflict of some sort between women and menopause.

24

These two training methods ... are going to counter most of the issues you may face during menopause and cover every aspect of health and fitness, from developing strength and bone density to increasing your aerobic fitness and heart health.

(Outside, 2022)

The metaphoric terms 'facing', 'face' and 'counter' suggest an adversarial relation between, in these instances, women versus menopause (23), certain training methods and the reader versus issues during menopause (24). The metaphoric expressions 'facing' and 'face' personify menopause and the associated issues in order to construct them as adversaries to 'women' and 'you', the reader. They are face to face, suggesting a conflict, but there is no implication of violence.

Neither does the term 'counter' suggest any physical conflict. While the contextual meaning of the verb 'counter' is 'to take action in order to oppose or stop something or reduce its negative effects' ('counter', vb., Macmillan Education Limited, 2022), the basic meaning of the term 'counter' is 'a long flat surface where customers are served, for example in a store or a bank' ('counter', n., Macmillan Education Limited, 2022). While this basic meaning suggests a division between those on one side or the other, these parties presumably have at least some shared interests. I therefore suggest that it is less confrontational compared to the previously mentioned Conflict metaphors, including 'face'.

While the Conflict metaphors I have presented so far construe the reader or women in general involved in a conflict, other scenarios represent parts of the person's body or the whole body involved in a conflict (26, 25).

25

#### Conquer Menopause

Now that you have all the advanced and proven tools to conquer your physique and any adaptations that may occur, it's time to get to work and apply the content of this article into a long-term sustainable plan.

While it may seem that the world is against you, preventing you from achieving the

body of your dreams, these advanced methods are extremely powerful and have already worked for thousands of women going through a similar battle to your own. (Outside, 2022)

In addition to the conflict between the reader and menopause discussed above, instance 25 constructs a conflict between the reader and their 'physique' and between 'the world' and the reader. However, it is suggested that the confrontation with the world is perhaps imagined with the construction 'while it may seem'. A less specific conflict is represented with the term 'battle' as it is constructed as something the reader goes through without mentioning an opponent. It may refer back to the conflict with menopause, 'your physique' and perhaps 'the world'. Whichever antecedent, a sense of community may be construed with the 'thousands of women' who are said to experience 'a similar battle'. Instance 25 further combines the Movement frame, as women move through the difficulties of menopause, with the Conflict frame.

26

Yep, this combination of conditions results in a dry, compromised moisture barrier, the outer layer which protects our bodies from external invaders and irritants. (Booker, 2020)

Instance 26 represents the outer layer of skin as engaged in the process to 'protect...from external invaders and irritants'. The metaphoric terms 'barrier' and 'invaders' maps onto dangers outside the body. In this sense, they also evoke a container metaphor. While 'protects' is not a metaphor, it contributes to the Conflict framing, as protection is only needed when there is a conflict. This demonstrates how metaphoric and non-metaphoric terms can work together in a scenario.

While metaphor constructing menopause as an adversary is typical of the US articles I marked as 'general comments' in Section 4.1.1, they are not presented by those experiencing menopause in the US data. Contrarily the only occurrence of Conflict metaphor I identified in the Danish article is from direct speech uttered by a menopausal woman:

Jeg kæmpede med overgangsalderen, hvilket for mit vedkommende ikke mindst ville sige søvnløse nætter, som gjorde mig hudløs og grådlabil om dagen. Hver dag kan godt blive lidt et bjerg, når man står op og ikke er udhvilet. Man kan føle sig som en vred hveps bag en rude, og man er absolut ikke den udgave af sig selv, man gerne vil være, forklarer Mette med et suk. (Hast, 2018)

I struggled with the menopause, which for me meant sleepless nights that made me skinless and easy to tears in the daytime. Every day can become a bit of a mountain when one gets up and is not fully rested. One can well feel like an angry wasp behind a window glass, and one is definitely not the version of oneself one wants to be, Mette explains with a sigh.

The term 'kæmpede' (struggled) constructs an adversarial relation between the speaker, expressed with the first personal pronoun 'jeg' (I) and menopause, expressed with the Danish term 'overgangsalderen'. The contextual meaning is that she had to make an effort to get through each day. The basic meaning of 'kæmpede' (struggled) is an effort that leads to physical exertion. The term is very similar to the Swedish 'kämpa', discussed by Gustafsson and Hommerberg (2018, p. 8). In both Danish and Swedish, the term has two contemporary meanings, one related to the Conflict frame (which Gustafsson and Hommerberg refer to as 'the battle script') and the meaning of physical exertion. In text instance 8, both are invoked as the opponents of the Conflict are explicitly mentioned while the following co-text elaborates on the feelings of exhaustion.

### 5.2.3 Water, Nature and Senses

The Danish metaphor scenarios evoke schemas that could be described as more natural compared to those evoked in the US data. In this section, I present instances with metaphoric expressions evoking the schemas Water, Nature and Senses, as these are most characteristic of the Danish data.

I might have included Water under Nature, but chose not to because the text instances suggest the metaphorical water has been domesticated by people. For example instance 27 describes warm water that may be shut off.

27

I stedet for at lukke for det varme vand, kan det være en god idé at hoppe ud i det, selvom lysten ikke er der, da den ofte kommer, når man først er i gang. (Askgaard, 2017)

In stead of shutting off the warm water, it can be a good idea to jump into it, even if the desire is not there, as it often comes when one gets into it.

In this text instance the Danish idiom ‘at lukke for det varme vand’ (to shut off the warm water) is elaborated. The idiom refers to someone (typically a woman in a straight relationship) who stops having sex with their partner. This text instance suggests that if the reader jumps into the water instead of shutting it off, her sexual desire is likely to come back. Hence, this scenario suggests that the woman’s decision to move into the water may prompt ‘lysten’ (the desire) to return. The scenario combines two Water metaphors, namely shutting off warm water and jumping into it, with two Movement metaphors, namely jumping into warm water and the desire returning.

The idea of jumping into warm water suggests a pool – the sea rarely reaches a temperature you could call ‘warm’ in this part of the world. Further, it is connected to the metaphor ‘shutting off’ which again suggests a pool rather than natural water. The other Danish text instance evoking a water schema likewise refers to the idea of water for domestic use.

28

Jeg havde ikke noget behov for at kunne stå i en stram bikini, men jeg havde brug for at føle mig stærkere. At få styr på den der indre vandmand og få noget rygrad. Jeg kan tydeligt mærke, at træningen har gjort en forskel. Jeg har tabt nogle kilo siden sidst og

på trods af sorg og spekulationer, så føler jeg mig stærkere – både fysisk og mentalt. Der er jo også det med motion, at den vasker sludderet væk...(Hast, 2018)

I did not feel any need to stand up in a tight bikini, but I did need to feel stronger. To get the inner jelly fish under control and get a spine. I can feel clearly that the work out has made a difference. I have lost some kilos since last time and in spite of grief and speculations I feel stronger - both physically and mentally. There is the thing with exercise that it washes away the nonsense...

Here, the water is implied in the action 'vasker' (washes). The metaphoric expression transfers the ability of water to cleanse to the action of exercise. The statement is general and it is a reflection made by an interviewee on her experience of menopause and what she did to feel better, when it was difficult. This interview also provides the two metaphors I categorised with the Nature schema – term 'bjerg' (mountain) in instance 8 above and the term 'indre vandmand' in instance 28, which is also a Water metaphor.

The metaphoric expression 'den indre vandmand' (the inner jellyfish) maps the idea of a creature with no skeleton onto a feeling the interviewee is describing. The idea is that an underlying structure for the self is missing. This idea is further emphasised with the metaphoric term 'rygrad' (spine), which in this context means a firm part of the personality. The speaker says she needed to get 'styr på' (control on) it. The basic meaning of 'styr' is the part of a bike where you put your hands and control the direction. In this context, the speaker expresses a need to get a part of her inner self under control – which she managed to do with exercise.

The four metaphoric expressions that evoke the Senses schema in the Danish data describe an individual's experience of menopause. They are all used in combination with other metaphors. One of these describe a dimming of the senses and combines with a metaphoric expression of Force.

Det værste var, at jeg blev langt mindre tolerant og enormt omtåget og fik en meget kort lunte, fordi jeg manglede søvn. (Bøge 2020)

The worst thing was that I became a lot less tolerant and felt extremely foggy and had a very short fuse because I lacked sleep.

The metaphoric expression 'omtåget' (feeling surrounded by fog) draws on basic meanings of the preposition 'om' (around) and 'tåget' (foggy). It refers to a dimming of the senses, sometimes induced by alcohol or drugs. The metaphoric expression 'kort lunte' (short fuse) invokes the more dramatic idea of a bomb that goes off very shortly after being lit. While the basic meanings of the metaphors are far apart, they work together in context, because the embodied experience of feeling groggy and irritable after too little sleep is probably familiar to most people.

Another metaphoric expression suggests that menopausal women become invisible and describes this experience as connected with loss – two further metaphoric expressions. The term 'forbundet' (connected) describes the relation between the time of menopause and the metaphoric expression 'tab' (loss) as tight. The basic meaning of the term 'tab' (loss) is the inability to hold on to something with your hands. The contextual meaning is no longer to have children living at home and attention in the public space.

Det er også en tid forbundet med tab, børnene flytter hjemmefra og sender ikke ligefrem takkebreve hver dag, og som kvinde bliver man usynlig i det offentlige rum. (Hast, 2018)

It is also a time connected with loss, the children leave home and don't exactly send thank you notes every day and as a woman, one becomes invisible in the public sphere.

This metaphor scenario differs from the other with a metaphor evoking the Senses as it describes how the interviewee perceives other people's ability to see her rather than describe one of her own senses. Yet, because it is a metaphor – she is not actually invisible – she is describing her own feeling of lack of attention. The idea of becoming invisible in the public sphere is presented as a loss of identity. Assuming menopause happens in a woman's life at the time where her role as a mother in the house is over as well as her sex-appeal to strangers in the street, the interviewee constructs her previous identity as mother and attractive woman. To her, this identity was valued and she feels the loss of it. Elsewhere in the article, she expresses a more balanced attitude, highlighting some positive aspects, but the metaphor scenarios in this article represent menopause with a negative attitude.

Two further metaphoric expressions describe a hypersensitivity to noise or the world around them in general. The noise metaphor is combined with a Movement/Container metaphor 'igennem' (through).

30

... Mette har ellers både været igennem en masse knas med overgangsalderen ... (Hast, 2018)

... This even though Mette has been through a lot of crunch with menopause ...

Instance 30 is not direct speech and as such, it is not possible to say whether the interviewer or interviewee came up with the metaphoric expressions. In any case, the metaphoric term 'knas' (crunch) maps the idea of some unpleasant and unnecessary noise to the experience of menopause.

Finally, the metaphoric expression 'hudløs' (skinless) suggests a general hypersensitivity during menopause due to lack of sleep.

8

Jeg kæmpede med overgangsalderen, hvilket for mit vedkommende ikke mindst ville sige søvnløse nætter, som gjorde mig hudløs og grådlabil om dagen...(Hast, 2018)

I struggled with the menopause, which for me meant sleepless nights that made me skinless and easy to tears in the daytime...

This interview has produced most of the Senses metaphors as well as both Nature metaphors and one of the Water metaphors. This skews the results so it is not possible to say whether these metaphors are typical for the Danish discourse or for that article in particular. Due to the small sample size, any such claims should be verified on larger samples in any case. However, these metaphors do form functional patterns through evaluation and represented agency and narrative and as such contribute to particular discursive strategies, which I will discuss in Section 5.6.

### 5.3 Agency in this data

The main actors in the identified metaphor scenarios are menopause and those experiencing it. This is to be expected since I have exclusively selected scenarios that represent these. Other actors relate to menopause in various ways, for example as causing or mitigating menopause or as a physical manifestation of menopause. In Section 4.2.2.3 I discussed social agency and presented previous work that included different types of actors in a study of metaphors in discourses of cancer.

In my data, I identified seven types of actors in the metaphor scenarios in the women's magazines:

1. those experiencing menopause;
2. bodily processes, incl. menopause;
3. body parts or the whole body;
4. hormone levels;
5. actions as actors.

In this section, I will show examples of each category in turn and their actions. The first category of social actor refers to persons, either those reading the articles or those experiencing menopause represented as individuals or as a collective. Categories 2-4 refer to the body acting in a way that is represented as split from the self. Categorising these as social actors is inspired by Potts and Semino's (2017, p. 75) category of disease/injury/death as social actors (see Section 4.2.1.3). Category 5 is grammatical metaphors, i.e. they are actions turned actors, which in this data backgrounds the human actors carrying out the actions.

### 5.3.1 Those experiencing menopause

This is the largest and most complex of the social actor categories represented in the scenarios in the women's magazines. I have divided the findings into three categories, which overlap for reasons I will elaborate below.

1. The reader and menopausal people
2. Collective actors
3. Individual experiences of menopause.

#### *5.3.1.1 The reader and menopausal people*

Even though the text may be read by anyone, some text instances assume that the reader is or will become menopausal. This is expressed as the reader is directly addressed through imperatives and second person pronouns and assumed to be experiencing menopause. Because of this overlap, I treat the reader and the menopausal person as the same type of actor. In addition to instances, which address the reader directly (3 Danish and 12 US), the data contains references to women as collectives (8 Danish and 4 US) and individuals (7 Danish and 3 US).

There is an overlap between the first two categories, as the inclusive 'we' addresses the reader directly while representing menopausal women or readers as a collective. However, there is one occurrence in Danish and two in the US data, and I decided to account for them in this first category.

This overview shows a tendency of the US text instances to prefer directly addressing the reader over referring to collective or individual references to menopausal women compared to the Danish text instances. Although the numbers are too small to make any definite statements, I had expected this as anecdotal evidence suggests direct address is less common in Danish, perhaps with the exception of advertising.

Twelve of the US instances use the second person pronoun 'you'. Most commonly these instances directly address the reader with the assumption they are experiencing menopause.

20

...you can tailor your diet and exercise regime to combat most of these alterations and get your body back on a level playing field with your younger self. (Outside, 2022)

Suggesting that the reader can engage in the actions of 'tailoring', 'combat' and 'get back' contributes to the construction of a reader with a high degree of semantic agency as these processes are material. This is typical for the US articles. In some of these instances, the use of 'you' could be interpreted as a generic pronoun.

22

"The biggest thing about menopause is that estrogen levels start to drop so you have this unopposed testosterone influence on your skin, and that manifests in many ways," (Booker, 2020)

In instance 22, 'you' may refer to anyone experiencing menopause or it may refer to the reader. Such unclear instances are rare, but they are part of the explanation of why the use of second person pronouns is more frequent in the US data. The Danish language – while also occasionally using the second person pronoun in a generic sense (T. J. Jensen & Gregersen, 2016) – has a separate pronoun for generic use, to which I will return below.

Imperatives and deontic modality are rare in the US instances, suggesting that the writers may be attempting to create horizontal power relation to the readers in the text surrounding the metaphor scenarios.

25

#### Conquer Menopause

Now that you have all the advanced and proven tools to conquer your physique and any adaptations that may occur, it's time to get to work and apply the content of this article into a long-term sustainable plan. While it may seem that the world is against you, preventing you from achieving the body of your dreams, these advanced methods are extremely powerful and have already worked for thousands of women going through a similar battle to your own. (Outside, 2022)

The process 'conquer' is represented as imperative in the title. The co-text further suggests that the reader is the actor who may conquer the goal: 'menopause' by addressing the reader with the second person pronoun 'you'. The process 'is' constructs another adversarial relation between 'the world' and 'you' with the proposition 'against'. The world - or parts of it - is represented as seemingly preventing the reader from 'achieving the body of your dreams'. Finally, the text instance suggests that the collective 'thousands of women' have been engaged in 'a similar battle' and won by using the methods suggested in the article. This instance demonstrates how the social actor 'you' is also seen as potentially part of the collective of 'thousands of women' who are joined in the metaphorical battle against menopause.

In some text instances, the actions of different kinds of actors are interwoven. Typically, actions of those experiencing menopause interact with those happening in the body.

18

As you near the end of menopause — when your ovaries stop producing eggs — your estrogen levels drop, which can lead to weight gain, especially around your

midsection. But you don't have to succumb to a new mid-life midsection. Experts recommend the following natural tips for balancing estrogen levels...(Dunn, 2013)

Initially in instance 18, the reader's agency is foregrounded through direct mentioning (you) and they are represented as engaged in the action to 'hear'. The reader is represented metaphorically as moving towards menopause. At the same time, the estrogen levels are represented as engaged in the sudden downwards movement to 'drop' (discussed in Section 5.2.1). This action is represented with the possibility to cause problems, expressed with the verb 'can'. While the reader is given the power to address the problem (weight gain) by following expert advice, the experts are foregrounded in the last sentence as they are represented as the grammatical actor of the process 'recommend'. In this sentence, the reader is implied as an actor who should follow this advice. There is no explicit deontic modality in this instance, yet the argumentative structure implies an obligation to follow the expert advice. The process 'balance' is represented as a present participle, backgrounding the actor engaged in the process of balancing, implicitly the reader. This demonstrates how different categories of social actors are represented in interaction.

Using the imperative verb form as well as second person pronouns and the inclusive first person plural pronoun, the reader is represented as a social actor in three of the Danish instances. Two of these Danish instances explicitly assume that the reader is experiencing menopause.

31

Kom helskindet igennem overgangsalderen. (Vichy, 2022)

Come through menopause in one piece.

The imperative 'kom' (get) suggests that the reader is the actor who 'moves through' menopause in a metaphoric sense.

32

Du skal lære at forenes med en krop, der bliver ældre og føler dig måske ikke attraktiv.  
(Askgaard, 2017)

You must learn to unite with a body that gets older and maybe you do not feel attractive.

In text instance 32, the reader is addressed with the use of the second person pronoun 'du' (you, sngl.). The reader, 'du' (you), is an actor engaged in the processes 'lære' (learn) and 'føler dig' (feel). Deontic modality is expressed with the verb 'skal' (must) which indicates necessity. Placing an obligation on the reader in such a direct way is not typical, but perhaps more passable in Danish compared to US American English women's magazines due to different perceptions of politeness.

The third instance which addresses the reader directly is instance 33. This could be understood to address a wider audience compared to the instances discussed above.

33

Overgangsalderen er et tabu for mange kvinder, for hvem har lyst til at tale om manglende sexlyst, tyndere hår og hedeture? Læs med, når vi bryder tabuet og sætter fokus på nogle af de symptomer, der følger med overgangsalderen. (Askgaard, 2017)

The menopause is a taboo for many women 'cause who wants to talk about a lack of sexual desire, thinning hair and hot flashes? Read along when we break the taboo and focus on some of the symptoms that follow along with the menopause.

In instance 33, the actor, 'vi' (we), is engaged in the action of breaking the taboo and setting the focus. This first person pronoun refers to the writer and/or the magazine, but the reader is invited along with the imperative 'læs med'. Since the taboo can only be broken if somebody actually reads the text, 'vi' (we) is inclusive. This may contribute to a sense of community surrounding the topic of menopause.

The inclusive 'we' is also used in two US instances (34, 6). Instance 34 refers more specifically to those experiencing menopause.

34

"By taking simple care of ourselves, we can look good and feel great for a long time. Menopause is not the end; it's just the beginning." (Booker, 2020)

This text instance represents those experiencing menopause as able to decide how they will look and feel by taking simple measures. The desirable outcome of this is that menopause is the metaphorical beginning rather than the end, i.e. a better experience. The metaphor scenario construes this outcome, but I included the premise for the outcome in the instance even though there is no metaphor in that first sentence. If not included, the metaphor would not make sense from a discourse perspective. The inclusive 'we' represents the writer as part of the collective of menopausal women, which aims to persuade the reader to follow the advice regarding skincare given in the article.

6

The conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark, especially when menopausal skin starts to act in a bewildering fashion — namely, rashes, acne, rosacea, and an overall sensitivity to, well, everything. (Booker, 2020)

The 'we' in text instance 6 may include a wider scope of people, possibly including dermatologists or other skin care experts. Both instances are from the same article and I will discuss possible reasons for using the inclusive 'we' in Section 5.6.2.

#### *5.3.1.2 Collective representations*

Those experiencing menopause as collectives are represented in eight of the Danish instances, including instance 33 mentioned above. In addition to the inclusive 'vi' (we), the collective representation is realised in the term 'mange kvinder' (many women). Other representations

include 'kvinder i overgangsalderen' (women in menopause), 'alle kvinder' (all women) and 'som kvinde' (as a woman).

15

Vidste du, at det er en myte, at kvinder i overgangsalderen vender vrangen ud på sig selv og muterer til uforudsigelige og urimelige hystader. Det sker kun for ganske få. Størstedelen af alle kvinder glider nogenlunde smerte- og symptomfrit gennem den periode. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

Did you know that it is a myth that women in menopause turn their insides out and mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches. This only happens to very few. Most women glide reasonably pain and symptom free through that period.

35

Den dårlige nyhed er, at alle kvinder skal igennem overgangsalderen. Den gode nyhed er, at alle kvinder kommer igennem den. (Vichy, 2022)

The bad news is that all women must go through menopause. The good news is that all women get through it.

5

Det er også en tid forbundet med tab, børnene flytter hjemmefra og sender ikke ligefrem takkebreve hver dag, og som kvinde bliver man usynlig i det offentlige rum. (Hast, 2018)

It is also a time connected with loss, the children leave home and don't exactly send thank you notes every day, and as a woman one becomes invisible in the public sphere.

Text instances 15, 35 and 5 refer to 'kvinder' (women) and 'hun/hende' (she/her). Further, instance 5 assumes that women have children living at home who will leave around the time of menopause, discounting women who have children earlier or later in relation to their menopause or those who have no children living with them. Such assumptions about which kind of family life people have are not common in either the Danish or the US data, but the reference to women is.

However, collective representations of those experiencing menopause are not gendered in all cases:

16

Det er utroligt forskelligt, hvilke gener og udfordringer der venter den enkelte. Nogle danser let gennem årene, hvor andre bliver mere påvirkede. (Vichy, 2022)

It is incredibly different, which bothers and challenges await the individual. Some dance lightly through the years while others are more affected.

References to those experiencing menopause in instance 16 are 'den enkelte' (the individual), 'nogle' (some) and 'andre' (others). In this scenario, those experiencing menopause are moving in different ways and meet different obstacles along the way. Like instance 15 above, instance 16 represents different possible experiences of menopause in contrast to instance 5, which assumes a certain experience is the norm. I discuss this further in Section 5.6.4.

Gender-neutral references are also made with a different verb construction and use of a generic pronoun as in below:

27

I stedet for at lukke for det varme vand, kan det være en god idé at hoppe ud i det, selvom lysten ikke er der, da den ofte kommer, når man først er i gang. (Askgaard, 2017)

In stead of shutting off the warm water, it can be a good idea to jump into it, even if the desire is not there, as it often comes when one gets into it.

The actor in the processes 'lukke' (shut) and 'hoppe' (jump) is implied as the infinite verb form requires no grammatical actor. Another actor, 'lysten' (the desire), is constructed as coming in response to the action 'man er i gang' (one has started). In this process, which refers to sex in vague terms, the generic pronoun 'man' (one) is the actor engaged in the process of getting into it. The pronoun 'man' is ungendered. This pronoun is commonly used in Danish but in an article that addresses the reader directly with 'du' (you) and the imperative form (see above) it stands out a little. The use of a less personal pronoun may be chosen because the topic of sex may be considered sensitive. Another possible explanation is that 'man' (one) can refer to one or more people, so this grammatical construction allows the reader to understand the action including a partner.

Fewer US instances represent those experiencing menopause as collectives, still they are similar to the Danish collective representations. Three instances refer to women, respectively as 'thousands of women' (25), 'all women' (17) and 'women' (23).

25

#### Conquer Menopause

Now that you have all the advanced and proven tools to conquer your physique and any adaptations that may occur, it's time to get to work and apply the content of this article into a long-term sustainable plan. While it may seem that the world is against you, preventing you from achieving the body of your dreams, these advanced methods are extremely powerful and have already worked for thousands of women going through a similar battle to your own. (Outside, 2022)

17

Menopause is one of those huge life changes that all women know is coming but no one ever feels fully prepared for when it does. But when it strikes before you've even turned 40, the shock is all the more distressing. (Graham, 2017)

23

Regular physical activity is crucial for women facing menopause. (Outside, 2022)

The US text instances also contain a gender-neutral representation of those experiencing menopause, but only on one occasion.

6

The conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark, especially when menopausal skin starts to act in a bewildering fashion — namely, rashes, acne, rosacea, and an overall sensitivity to, well, everything. (Booker, 2020)

Those being left in the dark are represented as 'so many'. They are represented with a low degree of semantic agency and I will get back to the agency in this text instance in Section 5.3.3. None of the gender-neutral representations in either language are marked.

#### *5.3.1.3 Individual representations*

As mentioned above, seven of the Danish and three of the US text instances represent an individual experience of menopause. These use the first person pronoun 'jeg'/'I', proper names and the third person pronoun 'hun'/'she' in both languages. Of the Danish instances, four contain direct speech produced by an interviewee, while three refer to the interviewee in the third person or by name. The US instances follow a similar distribution with two instances representing direct speech and one referring to an interviewee in the third person and by name. Unsurprisingly, these instances are from the texts selected to represent the menopausal experience in Section 4.1.1.

In the Danish text instances containing direct speech (39, 29, 28 and 8), the speaker typically describes how they engage in mental processes. The menopausal experience in these text instances is typically a sensory experience the speaker can 'føle' and 'mærke' (feel).

28

Jeg havde ikke noget behov for at kunne stå i en stram bikini, men jeg havde brug for at føle mig stærkere. At få styr på den der indre vandmand og få noget rygrad. Jeg kan tydeligt mærke, at træningen har gjort en forskel. Jeg har tabt nogle kilo siden sidst og på trods af sorg og spekulationer, så føler jeg mig stærkere – både fysisk og mentalt... (Hast, 2018)

I did not feel any need to stand up in a tight bikini, but I did need to feel stronger. To get the inner jelly fish under control and get a spine. I can feel clearly that the work out has made a difference. I have lost some kilos since last time and in spite of grief and speculations I feel stronger - both physically and mentally...

In instance 28, the interviewee uses deontic modality to express the 'behov' (need) and 'brug' (need) she has to look and feel stronger. I have translated both Danish terms with 'need'. The second term, 'brug' can also mean 'use' and is – in my opinion – slightly lower on the modulation scale compared to 'behov'. In other words, she negates a strong need to look good in a bikini, while she does express a need to feel stronger. This self-representation may anticipate criticism of her choice to work out by emphasising that her motives are to feel stronger rather than have anything to do with her appearance. This suggests a high value placed on being strong and an assumption that working out to look good may be frowned upon.

In one of the Danish instances with direct speech, the speaker describes her reaction to menopause:

8

Jeg kæmpede med overgangsalderen, hvilket for mit vedkommende ikke mindst ville sige søvnløse nætter, som gjorde mig hudløs og grådlabil om dagen. Hver dag kan godt blive lidt et bjerg, når man står op og ikke er udhvilet. Man kan føle sig som en vred hveps bag en rude, og man er absolut ikke den udgave af sig selv, man gerne vil være, forklarer Mette med et suk. (Hast, 2018)

I struggled with the menopause, which for me meant sleepless nights that made me skinless and easy to tears in the daytime. Every day can become a bit of a mountain when one gets up and is not fully rested. One can well feel like an angry wasp behind a window glass, and one is definitely not the version of oneself one wants to be, Mette explains with a sigh.

The speaker's response to sleeplessness during menopause in this case is represented with the metaphoric term 'hudløs' (skinless) and the literal term 'grådlabil' (easy to tears). The shift to the more general pronoun 'man' (one) in the second sentence indicates that the speaker perceives these experiences as typical for menopausal women, whereas the first sentence is an account of her own personal experience. She represents herself as struggling with menopause in instance 8, while in instance 28 she represents herself as having found a way to make herself stronger in spite of menopause. The other two Danish articles sharing experiences of menopause also represent self-empowering reactions to menopause. I will return to this point in Section 5.6.2 when I discuss the strategy to mitigate negative approaches to menopause.

Empowered self-representation is more explicit in this instance from the US data:

36

I feel empowered talking about menopause because I'm going through it and have been going through it for six years. (Narins, 2014)

In instance 36, the speaker represents herself as feeling empowered to talk about menopause due to her experience with it. She constructs the experience of going through menopause as

an educational experience rather than one of suffering, which is the most recurrent self-representation I have come across in the US women's magazines. For example, the other instance in the US data with direct speech compares symptoms of early menopause to those of depression:

37

"Looking back, I think it's probably been the last two years. My mom went through an early menopause at 39, but I didn't think it would happen to me — so I just put the symptoms down to depression, and so did my doctor." (Graham, 2017)

In instance 36 the speaker is moving through menopause, while in instance 37 an early menopause happens unexpectedly to the speaker, although her mother went through it at 39. This represents the speaker with a lower degree of semantic agency compared to her mother and others moving through menopause.

Four instances use the female pronoun 'hun'/'hende' (she/her) as well as the name of the interviewee, three Danish (44, 1 and 30) and one US (46).

30

Hun ser godt ud Mette Horn. Hun har det også godt, forsikrer hun mig. Mette har ellers både været igennem en masse knas med overgangsalderen, og hun har oplevet sorgen over at miste sin eksmand Ivan Horn, som var far til hendes to børn. (Hast, 2018)

She looks good/well, Mette Horn. She also feels well, she assures me. This even though Mette has been through a lot of crunch with menopause and she has experienced the grief of losing her ex-husband Ivan Horn who was the father of her two children.

In instance 30 as well as instances 46 and 1, specific women are engaged in movement and in instance 44, menopause is moving towards the woman. Instance 44 represents the woman with a lower degree of semantic agency compared to the other instances, where the woman is moving, for example instance 30 which represents Mette Horn as having moved through a lot of metaphorical crunch. In Section 5.5, I discuss how this metaphor appraises menopause, but in Section 5.3.2, I discuss how menopause is endowed with agency.

### 5.3.2 Bodily processes

Bodily processes include menopause, which comprises other bodily processes. These are often referred to as 'symptoms' as described in Chapter 2. As the metaphor analysis above suggests, both the Danish and US data endow menopause with the agency to move and in particular in the US data, to apply force on those experiencing menopause.

In both languages, three instances construe 'menopause' as an actor. Two US instances are engaged in the action to impact (43, 38), while the third combines movement with force in the actions 'coming' and 'strikes' (17). Two of the Danish instances represent menopause as moving (45, 13) while in one, it strikes (1). This pattern suggests a slightly more forceful representation in the US data, although the goal of the action 'impact' is 'skin and body' and 'complexion' respectively, i.e. a specific part of the person.

38

Itchy skin, dryness, and pimples the likes of which we haven't seen since high school — these are a few of the ways menopause can impact your complexion, plus dermatologist-informed solutions on tackling them. (Booker, 2020)

The goal of 'strikes' (17) and the corresponding Danish term 'ramt' (1) is women experiencing menopause.

17

Menopause is one of those huge life changes that all women know is coming but no one ever feels fully prepared for when it does. But when it strikes before you've even turned 40, the shock is all the more distressing. (Graham, 2017)

1

Hun fandt sin egen vej, da hendes krop tog en tur i hormonrutsjebanen, og hun blev ramt af overgangsalderen. (Truelsen, 2017)

The US text instances use Force metaphor to endow menopause with the agency to 'impact' skin and 'strike' women. The Danish text instances also use the Force metaphor 'ramt' (struck) to construct this violent relation between menopause and women, but two further Force metaphors are used to represent women with agency, namely 'bryder' (breaks, 33) and 'kort lunte' (short fuse, 29). These are not directed towards menopause, but rather the goal of 'bryder' is the taboo and 'kort lunte' (short fuse) is a nominalised process that implies a potentially aggressive behaviour towards other people.

In the Danish instances, menopause is also represented as moving metonymically by endowing the symptoms or problems of menopause with the agency of movement as demonstrated in Section 5.2.1. The text instances specifically endow 'skin's signs of aging' (14), 'hot flashes' (39, 44) and 'sleeplessness' (8) with agency to cause problems for those experiencing them. Hot flashes are represented as able to generate a 'continuous loud, hollow and rumbling sound' ('buldre', vb., Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a):

39

Lige inden jeg fik mine hedeture, begyndte det at prikke i kroppen, så fik jeg en susen for ørerne, og så vågnede jeg, fordi hedeturen kom buldrende. (Bøge 2020)

Right before I had my hot flashes, it started to tingle in the body, then I had a buzzing in my ears, and then I woke up because the hot flash came rumbling.

This instance demonstrates how menopausal problems are represented as problematic, in particular how the metaphorical arrival of the hot flash is characterised as noisy and disruptive to sleep.

In addition to endowing menopause and associated symptoms with agency, a few text instances also endow less specific 'symptoms' (33) or 'gener og udfordringer' (bothers and challenges) with agency:

16

Det er utroligt forskelligt, hvilke gener og udfordringer der venter den enkelte. Nogle danser let gennem årene, hvor andre bliver mere påvirkede. (Vichy, 2022)

It is incredibly different, which bothers and challenges await the individual. Some dance lightly through the years while others are more affected.

The 'gener og udfordringer' (bothers and challenges) are endowed with agency to await and affect people. The latter is implied as 'påvirkede' (affected) is in the passive voice without a prepositional phrase to assign agency.

This section has demonstrated how metaphor scenarios attribute power to menopause to affect those experiencing it by challenging them or more specifically for example by waking them up at night.

### 5.3.3 Body parts or the whole body

Scenarios in both languages endow bodies with independent agency, i.e. the ability to act without the conscious intent of the inhabitant of the body. This agency is typically metaphorical, with one exception namely the process of aging (32). This is one of two of the Danish text instances (32, 1), which represent the body as an independent actor, split from the person inhabiting it:

32

Du skal lære at forenes med en krop, der bliver ældre og føler dig måske ikke attraktiv.  
(Askgard, 2017)

You must learn to unite with a body that gets older and maybe you do not feel attractive.

The actor 'en krop' (a body) is engaged in the process of aging in instance 32. In Section 5.3.1.1, I address how the reader is represented in this example. The process of aging is not metaphorical. The metaphoric expression 'forenes' construes a metaphorical separation between the reader and a body – there would be no need to unite parties that were not separated from each other. Although the most likely inference is that the body is that of the reader, the text uses the indefinite article rather than a possessive personal pronoun. This choice represents the body and aging process as distanced further from the reader, emphasising the split. The desirable outcome of this scenario is that the reader learns to reunite with their body. The second Danish instance representing the body as an independent agent endows 'hendes krop' (her body) with the agency to go on a rollercoaster. I presented this instance in Section 5.1.

In these two Danish text instances, both sides of the split self are explicitly represented with agency. The body in both instances and respectively the second person pronoun and the third. One instance in the US text also endows the body with agency to move, while the conscious part of the split self is represented engaged in the mental process 'want'.

40

Your body is going through some drastic changes at this point that will probably affect your training and nutrition — and unfortunately not the ones you want. (Outside, 2022)

In instance 40, the metaphoric expression 'going through' constructs 'your body' as a moving agent. The action of 'going through' is the actor engaged in the process 'affects'. The actor is represented by the anaphoric reference 'that'. The body's actions are represented as able to

affect the reader's 'training and nutrition'. This is not a metaphorical action as the body does change during menopause and this is known to affect weight, which is commonly associated with training and nutrition (see Section 2.3.1). The metaphoric element in this scenario constructs the body as an agent that moves through drastic changes. As is the case for the Danish instances (32, 1), this has the effect that the body is attributed a higher degree of semantic agency compared to the conscious part of the self.

A particular part of the body is endowed with agency in the US texts, namely the skin (21, 6, 26). In one instance, the skin is engaged in the process of 'acting', which attributes humanlike behaviour to it.

6

The conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark, especially when menopausal skin starts to act in a bewildering fashion — namely, rashes, acne, rosacea, and an overall sensitivity to, well, everything. (Booker, 2020)

This represents the skin as split from the mind and acting 'in a bewildering fashion', an appraisal I will discuss in Section 5.5. Another instance represents the outer layer of skin as engaged in the process of protecting 'our bodies'.

26

Yep, this combination of conditions results in a dry, compromised moisture barrier, the outer layer which protects our bodies from external invaders and irritants. (Booker, 2020)

This split is different from the other mentioned instances as the split is not between the body and the mind but rather between different parts of the body – the outer layer of skin and the rest of the body. The former is engaged in the action of 'protecting' the latter, which represents a relation between the two as allies united against a shared danger. The term 'protect' is not a metaphor as the basic meaning of the term is 'to keep someone or something

safe from harm, injury, damage, or loss' and this is also the contextual meaning. The outer layer of the skin is keeping the body safe from damaging stimuli. However, not everything our body comes into contact with is damaging, the outer layer of skin also absorbs substances that may be useful. Choosing to focus on the protective qualities of the skin frames the body as a fortress, which is weakened by menopause and the aging skin that comes with it.

These instances indicate that bodies have agency of their own and do things the inhabitant is not in control of. They typically represent menopause as unwanted or confusing. These actions are not all metaphorical, but metaphor is used to convey an experience of estrangement and split self. This may help convey people's feeling of surprise and confusion when they experience menopausal symptoms. I will discuss this further in Chapter 7.

#### 5.3.4 Hormones

In the data, hormone levels are represented as declining and this is explicitly connected to menopause. Hormones are part of the body, acting on the body. Their independent agency indicates a split self like instance 26 discussed above, where different parts of the body are represented with varying degrees of agency. The text represents lowering levels of estrogen effect on skin (18, 22, 15) and body weight (21).

18

As you near the end of menopause — when your ovaries stop producing eggs — your estrogen levels drop, which can lead to weight gain, especially around your midsection. But you don't have to succumb to a new mid-life midsection. Experts recommend the following natural tips for balancing estrogen levels...(Dunn, 2013)

The estrogen levels are endowed with agency in the process 'drop', an action that in turn is endowed with the agency to 'lead to weight gain'. This is represented as happening simultaneously with the reader's approach to menopause. The causal relationship between lowering estrogen levels and menopause is likely assumed to be known (see Section 2.3.1). In the Danish data, the level of estrogen is similarly engaged in the process of falling as women enter menopause. In this instance, the falling level of estrogen leads to dry skin.

Overgangsalderen har stor indflydelse på huden. Mange undersøgelser viser, at kvinder oplever, at hudens alderstegn begynder at accelerere, når de går ind i overgangsalderen. Når østrogenniveauet falder, er tørhed i huden et af de første symptomer. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

The menopause has a major effect on the skin. Many studies show that women experience that the skin's signs of aging begin to accelerate when they enter menopause. When the estrogen level falls, dry skin is one of the first symptoms.

This construes the hormones as engaged in a downwards motion like the instances from the US data discussed above, but the motion in the Danish instance is represented as less sudden compared to the US English terms 'drop' and 'plummet'. Another difference is that the Danish instance refers to the estrogen level in singular, while the US texts refer to the plural. This difference construes a collective representation of women in the US texts while the Danish text switches from referring to 'kvinder' (women) to the perspective of each individual woman with her level of estrogen.

In all instances in both the US and the Danish articles, the consequences of moving hormones are mentioned and the connection to menopause is explicit, while the hormones are endowed with agency to move downwards.

#### 5.3.5 Actions turned actors

Actions that stand metonymically for the people carrying them out also occur as actors in the data. This would be called a grammatical metaphor in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 2014). These are typically represented as helpful in relation to mitigate various problematic experiences during menopause. Some represent ways to deal with specific experiences such as hot flashes (41), skin (6) or cognitive problems (28) while others are vague (24).

Dine kostvalg kan også hjælpe på de irriterende symptomer på overgangsalderen, da masser af vand kan begrænse hedeturene, mens B-vitamin fra bl.a. fisk, æg og mejeriprodukter kan reducere humørsvingningerne. (Aller Creative Studio & Mylan, 2019)

Your dietary choices can also help with the irritating symptoms of menopause, since large amounts of water can limit the hot flashes, while Vitamine B from fish, eggs and dairy products amongst other things can reduce the mood swings.

In instance 41, the actors that help, limit and reduce are 'dine kostvalg', 'masser af vand' and 'B-vitamin' (your dietary choices, lots of water and vitamin B) respectively. The reader is encouraged to consider their diet and start the processes to limit and reduce hot flashes and mood swings by drinking water and eating more fish, eggs and dairy products. In this scenario, hot flashes can be metaphorically contained by drinking lots of water. As in all cases where an action is construed as an actor in this data, the implication is that the reader or someone experiencing menopause takes this action.

#### 5.4 Narratives in this data

To describe the narrative elements of metaphor scenarios, I propose a distinction between narratives at the metaphoric and the literal level. In this section, I present some examples to illustrate how the metaphoric narratives map certain ideas onto the literal meaning. As mentioned in Chapter 4, narratives consist of agency, a sequence of events and an outcome (Thornborrow, 2010). These are realised at the metaphoric level, but may not take the form of narratives at the literal level.

The metaphoric narratives are motivated by one or more metaphoric expressions. For example a Conflict or Sports metaphor suggests that there are two agents with opposing interests (e.g. 'counter' or 'tackle'). The agents may be engaged in an activity to compete (e.g. 'combat') with each other or one may try to get past the other (e.g. 'invade'). A Movement metaphor suggests that an agent changes location (e.g. 'går in i' (go into)) and additionally it may express manner of movement (e.g. 'danser' (dances)) or a direction (e.g. 'falder' (falls)/'drop'). In the

following sections, I will present my analysis of narrative in the three groups of metaphor I presented in Section 5.2: Movement, Conflict and Senses/Water/Nature.

#### 5.4.1 Movement narratives

As demonstrated in Section 5.2, movement metaphors are prolific in the data set and most of the actors identified engage in movement in some sense. The Movement metaphors in this data convey a change in location or something happens as the consequence of a movement. Typically, menopause or the reader changes location in relation to each other while the hormone estrogen moves in a downwards direction, leading to changes in the body.

18

As you near the end of menopause — when your ovaries stop producing eggs — your estrogen levels drop, which can lead to weight gain, especially around your midsection. But you don't have to succumb to a new mid-life midsection. Experts recommend the following natural tips for balancing estrogen levels...(Dunn, 2013)

In instance 18, the metaphor 'near' constructs the reader as moving closer to the end of menopause, which maps onto a time in the reader's life. Simultaneously, estrogen levels 'drop' metaphorically. When estrogen engages in this metaphorical action, it typically leads to physical changes in the body, in this instance, the change is a literal weight gain. This weight gain is further represented metonymically as 'a new mid-life section' which is metaphorically represented as an opponent through the term 'succumb'. This instance demonstrates how changes in the body are represented with a combination of literal and metaphoric terms in the data.

The metaphoric narrative maps processes of movement to literal processes – in this instance of time passing, hormone production and weight gain, while some literal agents also engage in metaphorical processes. In instance 18 these agents are 'estrogen levels' and 'you'. Two possible outcomes of the narrative are represented for the reader. Metaphorically, they may either succumb or balance their estrogen levels. In the literal narrative, the outcome is either that the reader gains weight or avoids it by following the expert advice, which is said to affect

the amount of estrogen they have in their body. Both outcomes are represented with the use of metaphor.

The metaphorical change in location narrative typically constructs either menopause and those experiencing it with a change in proximity to each other as illustrated above or with those experiencing menopause going through it.

31

Kom helskindet igennem overgangsalderen. (Vichy, 2022)

Come through menopause in one piece.

The metaphoric narrative in instance 31 invites the reader to move unscathed through menopause. Again, the agent is the same at the metaphoric and the literal level – namely the reader, while the metaphorical process of movement maps onto menopause. The literal narrative suggests that the reader is as whole and healthy after menopause as before, while the metaphoric narrative constructs menopause in spatial terms rather than time with the Container schema evoked by the metaphoric term ‘igennem’ (through). The idea of movement assigns agency to the reader along with the imperative verb form, constructing them as able to affect the outcome and achieve the desirable outcome that they are unscathed by menopause. These combined Movement and Container metaphors describe potential changes to the body. In instance 31, the potential change is harmful and menopause is recurrently represented as such in these narratives.

Movement metaphors then construct narratives that convey a relation between menopause and those experiencing it in spatial terms when they are combined with the Container schema. While there is flexibility for different sorts of appraisal in these narratives, they tend to construct the relation to menopause with a negative attitude.

#### 5.4.2 Conflict narratives

Typically, the Conflict scenarios convey how someone may react to menopause, e.g. a suggestion to use diet and training in a constructed fight with menopause.

19

Luckily, some advanced research studies show how you can combat the hormonal alterations that negatively impact your body and still reach your goals. Here's everything you need to know about menopause and, more important, how to use advanced dietary and training techniques to conquer it. (Outside, 2022)

As described in Section 5.2.2, the Conflict metaphor constructs an opposition between the reader and menopause. In the metaphoric narrative of instance 19, 'menopause' is an opponent that can be conquered. Menopause is also represented as 'hormonal alterations' which refers to literal changes in the body, while the metaphoric narrative here revolves around the conflict and how it is resolved. The desirable outcome is that the reader 'conquers' i.e. wins over menopause. This metaphoric outcome maps on to the idea that the reader's reaction to menopause enables them to 'reach their goals'.

The Movement metaphor 'reach' constructs the goals as a place in space and the reader as the moving agent. The Sports metaphor 'goals' maps the idea of something you want to achieve to the literal narrative, while it is left open for the reader to define what that is in concrete terms. It is an instantiation of a narrative that is frequent in the US articles where the reader needs to compete with menopause on the metaphoric level and overcome some challenges posed by menopause on the literal level.

While the metaphors 'combat' and 'conquer' in text instance 19 suggests the reader's reaction to menopause need to be combative, the metaphor 'unopposed' in text instance 22 tells a literal narrative of 'changes in the body', which are represented as outside of the reader's control.

22

"The biggest thing about menopause is that estrogen levels start to drop so you have this unopposed testosterone influence on your skin, and that manifests in many ways," (Booker, 2020)

The Conflict metaphor sets up testosterone in opposition to 'your skin', casting them as actors in a Conflict scenario. The metaphorical relation between these actors maps on to the influence the hormone has on the skin. Further, the expression 'unopposed' introduces appraisal, as it suggests 'testosterone influence' should be opposed (see Section 5.5 for appraisal). Further, the term 'drop' suggests that estrogen levels move in a downwards direction, contributing to the metaphoric narrative as it implies less resistance or defence. The events, first estrogen levels dropping and then testosterone's influence on skin, are sequentially organised at the literal level. While the metaphoric narrative suggests a conflict with the undesirable outcome that testosterone is unopposed as a consequence of the downwards movement of estrogen levels, the literal narrative suggests skin changes as a result of less estrogen in the blood.

These narratives construct menopause as an opponent and the relation to those experiencing it as challenging. Those experiencing it are represented as empowered to change their situation which is also the case for the Movement narratives (see Section 5.4.1). The following section presents metaphoric narratives of Water, Nature and Sense schemas.

#### 5.4.3 Water, Nature and Senses Narratives

I described how Water metaphors are mapped onto a sexual situation in one instance and the improvement of general cognitive well being in another, in Section 5.2.3. In both, coherence is achieved through the use of the Water schema. Instance 27 provides a metaphoric narrative where someone may have the option to turn off the warm water but is encouraged not to as the first event.

I stedet for at lukke for det varme vand, kan det være en god idé at hoppe ud i det, selvom lysten ikke er der, da den ofte kommer, når man først er i gang. (Askgaard, 2017)

In stead of shutting off the warm water, it can be a good idea to jump into it, even if the desire is not there, as it often comes when one gets into it.

The second event is another encouragement; to jump into the warm water even when the actor doesn't want to. A third event is that the desire may come as a consequence of 'getting into the water'. This last event incorporates another metaphor namely the anthropomorphisation of 'lysten' (the desire) with the movement metaphor 'kommer' (comes). These metaphorical events map onto the decision of engaging in sexual activity despite a lack of desire.

In the other Danish text instance evoking a Water schema, the interviewee constructs a narrative about their experience with menopause and their relation to their own body, combining Water and Nature metaphor as mentioned in Section 5.2.3.

28

Jeg havde ikke noget behov for at kunne stå i en stram bikini, men jeg havde brug for at føle mig stærkere. At få styr på den der indre vandmand og få noget rygrad. Jeg kan tydeligt mærke, at træningen har gjort en forskel. Jeg har tabt nogle kilo siden sidst og på trods af sorg og spekulationer, så føler jeg mig stærkere – både fysisk og mentalt. Der er jo også det med motion, at den vasker sludderet væk...(Hast, 2018)

I did not feel any need to stand up in a tight bikini, but I did need to feel stronger. To get the inner jelly fish under control and get a spine. I can feel clearly that the work out has made a difference. I have lost some kilos since last time and in spite of grief and speculations I feel stronger - both physically and mentally. There is the thing with exercise that it washes away the nonsense...

First, the interviewee relays what her need was, using the metaphoric expressions 'indre vandmand' (inner jelly fish) and 'rygrad' (spine). These two metaphoric expressions are exclusive opposites – either she is like a jelly fish inside or she has a spine. Different qualities are mapped onto her personality with these two metaphors and I will discuss that appraisal in Section 5.5.3. After having identified her need to get the jelly fish under control, the interviewee takes action and the Water metaphor is used to explain why this action helped her. The metaphoric expression 'vasker' (washes) maps cleaning qualities onto the action of exercise. She achieves the spine this way and in the metaphoric narrative, the jelly fish is implicitly under control after she has washed the nonsense away. In this narrative, the shared schema of Water connects the two events of the narrative.

The metaphoric narratives evoking the Senses share the function that they describe menopausal changes. The interviewee feels like she is surrounded by fog (29), noise (30) or that she has no skin to protect her (8) or she has become invisible (5). See Sections 5.2.3 and 5.5.3. These ideas of impaired senses suggest a changed relation to the world around her and implicitly her social world.

#### 5.4.4 Metaphoric narratives as scenarios

The agents of the metaphoric narratives may or may not be agents in a literal narrative. Similarly, the sequence of events may be clear in a metaphoric narrative while the literal level of the text shows no such narrative structure. Some scenarios convey both a desirable and an undesirable outcome, while others convey just one of the two. In other words, some metaphor scenarios map a metaphoric narrative structure onto a literal narrative structure while others construe a narrative structure through metaphor without expressing a literal narrative structure. However, a (un)desirable outcome must be understood at the literal level as metaphor scenarios 'carry with them an evaluative stance' (Musolff 2017, p. 643). This evaluative stance may be implied with the metaphoric expression and reinforced by expressions of appraisal.

## 5.5 Appraisal in this data

This data represents menopause with an overwhelmingly negative attitude, although some instances suggests that it is not as bad as perhaps expected. The actions as well as physical aspects of those experiencing menopause are generally represented with a more positive attitude in the US data and on occasion in the Danish data. These attitudes often work together to contrast the unpleasant experience of menopause with positive qualities attributed to those experiencing menopause or their actions.

In the following sections, I present my analysis of appraisal in the three groups of metaphor in Section 5.2: Movement, Conflict and Senses/Water/Nature.

### 5.5.1 Appraisal with the Conflict schema

Metaphoric expressions can express a juxtaposition between menopause and those who experience it. Some of the Conflict metaphors very clearly illustrate this as they construct opponents and appraise the two sides.

24

These two training methods should now become the staple of your workouts, along with any other form of exercise you may do more for enjoyment. Combined, they are going to counter most of the issues you may face during menopause and cover every aspect of health and fitness, from developing strength and bone density to increasing your aerobic fitness and heart health. (Outside, 2022)

The metaphoric terms 'counter' and 'face' construct oppositions between 'these two training methods...enjoyment' vs. 'most of the issues...menopause' and 'most of the issues during menopause' vs. 'you'. A negative attitude towards 'most of the issues...menopause' is implied as this phrase is the goal of 'counter'. The deontic modality marker 'should' indicates a stance of necessity towards the specific form of exercise the reader is supposed to carry out. Drawing on a Construction metaphor, the exercise is characterised as a 'staple'. This maps the qualities of something robust and solid on to the activity of exercise. As this exercise is the actor

engaged in the action to 'counter', it is judged to have the capacity to go up against 'most of the issues...menopause'.

While some Conflict metaphors focus on one aspect of a competition, such as 'counter' and 'face', other Conflict metaphors more explicitly set up a winner and a loser with the desirable outcome being that the reader wins over menopause.

19

Luckily, some advanced research studies show how you can combat the hormonal alterations that negatively impact your body and still reach your goals. Here's everything you need to know about menopause and, more important, how to use advanced dietary and training techniques to conquer it. (Outside, 2022)

In instance 19, evaluation is inherent in the metaphoric expressions 'combat' and 'conquer' as they construct the reader as the desired winner and menopause as the loser. This appraises menopause negatively, as an enemy, while the reader is represented as capable of winning. The desired outcome is expressed with dynamic (can) and deontic (need) modality, as well as the attribute 'luckily'. The impact of hormonal alterations associated with menopause are appraised with 'negatively', suggesting the reader takes side against menopause. The intensifier 'more important' appraises the 'how to use...techniques to conquer it'. This emphasises the view of menopause as an opponent.

The metaphor 'succumb' might also suggest an outcome with a winner or a loser. In instance 18 however, the opposite of 'succumb' is to 'balance' rather than winning.

18

As you near the end of menopause — when your ovaries stop producing eggs — your estrogen levels drop, which can lead to weight gain, especially around your midsection. But you don't have to succumb to a new mid-life midsection. Experts recommend the following natural tips for balancing estrogen levels...(Dunn, 2013)

The desirable outcome is 'balancing estrogen levels' rather than metaphorically winning over menopause. The metaphor 'balance' is grounded in an embodied experience (Johnson, 1990) and we regard it more positively than imbalance (Martin & White, 2005). The term 'balance' then appraises the estrogen levels – which may be achieved – in terms of appreciation of the composition. Further, the term 'natural' may evaluate the 'tips for balancing...' with the judgement 'safe' (Coupland & Williams, 2002). The desirable outcome of this scenario where estrogen levels drop, is for the reader to regain balance in their hormonal system in a safe way. The implication is that the reader can achieve this by reading the magazine.

In contrast to this peaceful approach to the hormonal system, the metaphor 'succumb' frames the reader in a conflict as it constructs a power relation between the reader and 'a new mid-life midsection', also described as a weight gain. Gaining weight is negatively evaluated in Western culture. This negative judgement is further expressed with the phrase 'you don't have to succumb'.

The deontic modality marker 'have to' refers to an obligation the reader may think they are subject to, which is negated by the text author. An obligation is usually to do something undesired, which means that not succumbing to a new midsection is the desirable outcome in this instance. This use of deontic modality may attempt to represent the reader as free to choose how to react to menopause, despite a strong argument for following the experts' recommendation.

Conflict metaphors in this data set up an adversarial relation and suggest those who experience menopause can fight it. While negative attitude to menopause is expressed by representing it as an opponent, judgement, affect and appreciation are not explicitly expressed through additional vocabulary. The one Danish instance of a Conflict metaphor (discussed in Sections 5.2.2 and 5.3.1.3) contains direct speech by someone talking about their own experience with menopause in contrast to the US examples, which tend to represent the Conflict as something inherent to menopause, albeit with some epistemic modality. I will discuss this difference in relation to the two national cultures and health care systems in Chapter 7.

### 5.5.2 Appraisal with the Movement schema

Movement metaphors are also used to appraise menopause as disruptive, although the appraisal can be expressed by the co-text rather than the metaphoric expression evoking the movement schema.

13

Overgangsalderen, menopausen, klimakteriet ... uanset, hvad vi kalder det, kommer det for nogle som en tyv om natten; overraskende og uden forvarsel. (Vichy, 2022)

The transition age, the menopause, the climactery...whatever we call it, for some it comes like a thief in the night; surprising and without warning.

Menopause is appraised with implied negative attitude, as it is generally considered morally improper to steal. This judgement is expressed with a simile, marked with 'som' (like). The metaphoric expression 'kommer' (comes) merely constructs menopause as arriving, while the simile appraises menopause with sneakiness ('om natten'/in the night) and improper behaviour ('tyv'/thief). This scenario further appraises those experiencing menopause as victims of the theft, which is less empowering compared to the Conflict metaphors presented in the previous section, in which the person is represented with a high level of capacity.

Another way of appraising such scenarios is through deontic modality, modulating a part of the scenario as desirable or less so. In the following instance, this is realised with the modal verb 'want'.

40

Your body is going through some drastic changes at this point that will probably affect your training and nutrition — and unfortunately not the ones you want. (Outside, 2022)

The text suggests that the author of the article is of the opinion that the reader does not want their body to go through drastic changes. This appraises the changes of menopause with a negative attitude. It is not possible to say whether the reason for this 'want' is due to affect, judgement or appreciation. She could be motivated by how she feels, how she herself or others judge her, or how attractive she appears.

A few text instances in both the Danish and US articles appraise menopause less negatively. One does so with two metaphors – one for the undesirable experience and one for the desirable.

15

Vidste du, at det er en myte, at kvinder i overgangsalderen vender vrangen ud på sig selv og muterer til uforudsigelige og urimelige hystader. Det sker kun for ganske få. Størstedelen af alle kvinder glider nogenlunde smerte- og symptomfrit gennem den periode. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

Did you know that it is a myth that women in menopause turn their insides out and mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches. This only happens to very few. Most women glide reasonably pain and symptom free through that period.

The metaphoric expression 'vrangen' (the inside of clothes) is the side that is meant not to be seen when clothes are worn. Turning it inside out then conveys that menopausal women are showing sides of themselves, they should not reveal. This implied judgement may be seen as a judgement of abnormal behaviour. It is further modalised as unusual as it is said to happen to very few. This implies a low epistemic probability by the logic that if it happens to few people, the likelihood of it happening to the reader is low. This is the undesirable experience, further appraised by the claim that women 'mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches'. The Danish term 'hystader' is related to the Greek word for uterus as known from the medical procedure a 'hysterectomy' which is a surgical removal of the womb. I have translated loosely to 'bitch' as it is a condescending gendered term. Appraised as 'unpredictable' and

'unreasonable', this is a judgement of someone who is seen not to live up to social expectations of good behaviour.

The desirable experience on the other hand is said to be more usual, as it allegedly happens to 'most women'. This is appraised with the metaphor 'glide' which appreciate the quality of movement as smooth. Further, pain and symptom free express a lack of negative affect.

In the Danish data, the term 'tabu' (taboo) is used in relation to what is described as a tumultuous period of every woman's life. The term suggests deontic modality since something that should be talked about is not. Further deontic modality is marked with the term 'skal' which expresses the necessity that women must go through menopause.

42

På trods af, at alle kvinder skal igennem perioden i deres liv, hvor alt bliver vendt på hovedet og mange oplever både svedture og humørsvingninger, der kunne give selv en et-årig præstationsangst, så er det stadig et tabu og noget, som vi ved alt for lidt om, mener hun. (Truelsen, 2017)

Although all women must go through the period in their life where everything is turned on its head and many experience both sweat flashes and mood swings that could give even a one-year-old achievement anxiety, it is still a taboo and something we know much too little about, she thinks.

The expression 'på trods af...så' (although) questions why menopause is a taboo considering it happens to every woman and it is appraised as such a challenging experience. Inherent in the term 'tabu' (taboo) is a sense of shame or shyness, which are negative emotions the author suggests to eliminate through questioning the taboo. Instance 42 then suggests that menopause is something women must go through and it turns everything upside down while they do not know what is going on.

Judgement and affect are stated appraisal patterns while there is no explicit appreciation expressed with these metaphors. They are expressed through the use of modality as well as metaphor itself and non-metaphoric terms.

### 5.5.3 Appraisal with the Water, Nature and Senses schemas

Appraisal can also be expressed with intertextuality. In instance 28, this is combined with appraisal expressed in both metaphoric and non-metaphoric language. In Section 5.4.3 I interpreted the narrative of instance 28, where the interviewee is trying to control her inner jelly fish and get a spine.

28

Jeg havde ikke noget behov for at kunne stå i en stram bikini, men jeg havde brug for at føle mig stærkere. At få styr på den der indre vandmand og få noget rygrad. Jeg kan tydeligt mærke, at træningen har gjort en forskel. Jeg har tabt nogle kilo siden sidst og på trods af sorg og spekulationer, så føler jeg mig stærkere – både fysisk og mentalt. Der er jo også det med motion, at den vasker sludderet væk...(Hast, 2018)

I did not feel any need to stand up in a tight bikini, but I did need to feel stronger. To get the inner jelly fish under control and get a spine. I can feel clearly that the work out has made a difference. I have lost some kilos since last time and in spite of grief and speculations I feel stronger - both physically and mentally. There is the thing with exercise that it washes away the nonsense...

The inner jelly fish refers intertextually to the concept of the 'inner beast'. Danes of the relevant age for menopause may remember this idea from an art activist statement (Galschiøt, 2023) where a sculptor in 1993 encouraged people to question an evil and hateful drive lurking behind a friendly face ('den indre svinehund', fixed expression, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a). With this association, the term expresses a strong negative judgement of the way she feels. The fixed expression also has political connotations as demonstrated by the example associated with this dictionary entry:

Pia Kjærsgaard har på den mest udspekulerede måde forstået at udnytte det mest primitive urinstinkt i mennesket: den indre svinehund. ('den indre svinehund', fixed expression, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a)

Pia Kjærsgaard has, in the most conspicuous way, managed to utilise the most primitive primordial instinct in man: the inner beast.

The politician referred to, Pia Kjærsgaard, is a founder of the far-right party 'Dansk Folkeparti' in 1995 (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2023) and the quote is from a conservative newspaper 'Berlingske Tidende' in 1998 ('den indre svinehund', fixed expression, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a). The party is known for being tough on immigration. These connotations add further negative appraisal as it is generally not accepted to succumb to primordial instincts. Depending on political persuasion and how much of this discourse people remember, it may then add politically motivated appraisal.

The idea of a jelly fish further adds slippery and wobbly qualities. Having a spine on the other hand is associated with judgement of character as morally firm and strong ('rygrad', n. Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022a). Further judgement is expressed with the term 'sludder' (nonsense), which appraises her thoughts before she started working out.

Similarly to the Movement metaphors, judgement and affect are the most seen form of appraisal in metaphor of Water and Nature. Instance 28 appraises how the interviewee feels with literal language (affect) and uses metaphor to pass judgements on herself as described above. The other Water scenario (instance 27) also combines the two, judging going into the water as 'a good idea' and suggesting the reader may feel desire return (affect).

These forms of appreciation may even work together in a more integrated fashion. 29 expresses affect through metaphor discussed in Section 5.2.3.

Det værste var, at jeg blev langt mindre tolerant og enormt omtåget og fik en meget kort lunte, fordi jeg manglede søvn. (Bøge 2020)

The worst thing was that I became a lot less tolerant and felt extremely foggy and had a very short fuse because I lacked sleep.

The interviewee senses a cognitive fog and irritability. The term 'kort lunte' (short fuse) describes the tendency to react fast and in an explosive manner. This sort of rage is judged very negatively in Nordic culture, even if Danes anecdotally are more passionate than other Scandinavians. In this sense, the interviewee expresses both judgement and affect using the same metaphor of force. At the same time, she represents the agency that makes the bomb go off as being external to herself.

The form of appraisal seen the least in the data is appreciation. Only in instance 5, where an interviewee claims to have become invisible, appreciation of appearance is implied. The co-text suggests that the invisibility is a metaphor for sex appeal. This change is construed as a loss, which attributes affect to the change as we often use the noun 'tab' (loss) in the context of the death of a loved one.

## 5.6 Discursive strategies of identified metaphor scenarios

In this section, I present the four discursive strategies I found to be pursued in metaphor scenarios in the articles from women's magazines. I discuss their frequencies as well as how they are distributed across the articles.

Table 5.2 shows how many times I identified a discursive strategy through a metaphor scenario in each article with a total at the end. This gives an indication of how prevalent each strategy is and how they are distributed across the articles.

<b>Article</b>	<b>Problem-solution pattern</b>	<b>Mitigate negative attitude</b>	<b>Share experiences</b>	<b>Representation of menopausal experiences as diverse</b>	<b>Total</b>
Kim Cattrall Imagines the “Sex and the City” Cast Going Through Menopause (Narins, 2014)	1		3		4
Angelina Jolie Speaks Out About Going Through Menopause: “I Don’t Want to Be Young Again.” (Rose, 2015)					0
How to Deal With Hormonal Acne During Menopause (Booker, 2020)	4	1	1		6
Stay Fit During Menopause (Dunn, 2013)	1				1
How to Reduce and Relieve Symptoms of Menopause (Outside, 2022a)	9				9
13 Skin-Care and Wellness Products Made Specifically for Menopause and Its Effects (Devash & Robin, 2021)	2				2
<b>Article</b>	<b>Problem-solution pattern</b>	<b>Mitigate negative attitude</b>	<b>Share experiences</b>	<b>Representation of menopausal experiences as diverse</b>	<b>Total</b>
This Is What It’s Like to Go Through Menopause When You’re Young (Graham, 2017)	2				2
Caroline Henderson overgangsalder (Truelsen, 2017)	3		2		5
Mette Horn: Man kan godt føle sig som en vred hveps bag en rude (Hast, 2018)	3	1	3		7
Dermatolog: Her er mine bedste tips til smuk hud i overgangsalderen (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)	3	1		1	5

3 gode råd, der mildner symptomer på overgangsalder (Aller Creative Studio & Mylan, 2019)	3				3
9 spørgsmål, du ikke tør stille om overgangsalderen – nu har vi gjort det for dig (Askgaard, 2017)	3		1		4
Kom helskindet igennem overgangsalderen (Vichy, 2022)	3			1	4
Søvnløshed i overgangsalderen: Helvedes hedeture og nærige nætter (Bøge, 2020)	1	1	3		5
Total	38	4	13	1	

Table 5.2: Discursive strategies distributed across articles

For each article, I identified discursive strategies pursued through metaphor scenario that contribute to the characterisation of menopause and those experiencing it. The most prevalent in both languages is the problem-solution pattern, which I will present first and in most detail. The other three can be seen as sub-categories of the solutions suggested relating to how people talk about menopause.

#### 5.6.1 A problem-solution pattern

Many, if not most, of the text instances I identified represent problems that are caused by menopause. In the data this is done by endowing menopause with agency, indicating changes to the body caused by menopause and/or by constructing menopause as an opponent with metaphor. Problems are also represented as consequences of decreases in hormonal levels as discussed in Section 5.3.4 and of taboos and silence surrounding menopause.

43

Menopause has an undeniable impact on your skin and body, but these are the creams, serums, and even accessories that help keep you looking and feeling more like yourself. (Devash & Robin, 2021)

This scenario consists of two events: menopause's impact and help to counteract this impact. These events also constitute the problem and the solution respectively. The problem is constructed by endowing menopause with the agency to have an 'impact'. The term 'impact' carries over the basic meaning of 'one object hitting another'. It is a nominalised action with the contextual meaning 'to exert influence on'. The metaphoric expression 'impact' endows menopause with the agency of applying force (impact) on the skin and body of the reader. It is negatively evaluated, as the suggestion that help is needed indicates a problem. The problem is that the impact makes the reader look and feel less like themselves. The desirable outcome is 'looking and feeling more like yourself' and that 'creams, serums and even accessories' may help achieve this. The reader is represented with less agency relative to menopause, although it is implied that the reader can consume creams etc. to solve the problem. This representation of menopause as a forceful actor who is potentially violent towards the reader is typical for the medical construction of a problem in the US texts.

Instance 43 illustrates how the metaphor endows menopause with agency, indicating changes to the skin and body and the metaphor also constructs menopause in an oppositional relation to the reader. In the Danish articles the metaphor 'kæmpede med' (see Section 5.2.2) constructs an opposition between interviewees and menopause. Such Conflict metaphors have different entailments than for example the Movement metaphor 'coming as a thief in the night' (13). While the former metaphor represents menopause and those experiencing it as being in open conflict with each other, the expression 'en tyv om natten' (a thief in the night) represents menopause as taking something while trying to stay unnoticed.

13

Overgangsalderen, menopausen, klimakteriet ... uanset, hvad vi kalder det, kommer det for nogle som en tyv om natten; overraskende og uden forvarsel. (Vichy, 2022)

The transition age<sup>9</sup>, the menopause, the climactery...whatever we call it, for some it comes like a thief in the night; surprising and without warning.

In instance 17 those experiencing menopause are also represented as taken by surprise:

Menopause is one of those huge life changes that all women know is coming but no one ever feels fully prepared for when it does. But when it strikes before you've even turned 40, the shock is all the more distressing. (Graham, 2017)

While both representations construe menopause as an opponent, they suggest different responses. Something that strikes suggests violence or at least some physical response at the metaphoric level. The solution to the thief in the night scenario could entail preventative lights or contact to professionals (the police) if the theft can not be prevented. In this sense, it is natural to use Violence metaphors when recommending people to take physical action (see Flusberg et al., 2018) while the thief metaphor goes more naturally with solutions such as educating yourself or consulting a professional.

A conflict is also constructed between the reader and their body in some instances. This is part of a broader trend of splitting the self (see Section 5.3.3 and 5.3.4), and when a conflict is suggested, this represents the body as problematic.

25

...Now that you have all the advanced and proven tools to conquer your physique and any adaptations that may occur, it's time to get to work and apply the content of this article into a long-term sustainable plan...(Outside, 2022a)

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<sup>9</sup> Translation note: elsewhere, I have translated 'overgangsalderen' with 'the menopause' because the terms are used similarly. Here, I translate it directly to avoid writing menopause twice. For a more thorough discussion of the terms, see Section 1.3.

The metaphor 'conquer' suggests that the changed 'physique' is problematic. The reader is represented as able to 'conquer' it, which suggests that the solution to this problem is that the reader somehow wins in a conflict with their own body. I find the phrase 'it's time to get to work' condescending, but this opinion may be coloured by my bias as a Danish researcher. The proposed solution in this article includes specific exercise and diet suggestions given throughout the article.

The Danish data also includes metaphor that split the self and some that more specifically suggest some kind of conflict between the reader and her body. For example, the metaphor 'forenes' suggests that the reader has been estranged from their body.

32

Du skal lære at forenes med en krop, der bliver ældre og føler dig måske ikke attraktiv.  
(Askgard, 2017)

You must learn to unite with a body that gets older and maybe you do not feel attractive.

In instance 32, the scenario consists of three events: first, the body ages, then the reader feel estranged from the body and maybe they also feel unattractive. The problem is that an aging body may feel less attractive. Thirdly, the desirable outcome is that the two reunite. Hence, the metaphor suggests the solution to the problem. It is vaguer compared to the suggestions to use creams, serums and accessories in instance 43 discussed above.

More specific actions to take follow later in the article, including simply to engage in sexual activity as suggested in instance 27. That advice is from an article with a female writer who have been speaking to a female doctor. It is not clear if the metaphor comes from the writer or the doctor, but we may assume the literal meaning is endorsed by the doctor who put their name on the article.

The hormonal imbalance characteristic of menopause is also characterised as problematic, specifically as the body changes when estrogen levels decrease.

21

Speaking of estrogen: It's pretty much everything. Not only does the hormone fuel all things, but it also supports healthy skin cell functioning. So when estrogen levels plummet during menopause, "skin can't protect itself, maintain hydration, or produce strong collagen the way it once could," (Devash & Robin, 2021)

In instance 21, lower levels of estrogen are held accountable for skin changes and no solution to the lack of estrogen is given. Rather, the article presents a list of skin care products, which are 'independently selected by our editors. However, when you buy something through our retail links, we may earn an affiliate commission.' (Devash & Robin, 2021). This indicates how the discursive strategy to present problem-solution patterns may be used to promote commercial solutions. In Chapter 7, I will discuss these strategies and how they fit in to conventional views on and treatments of menopause as I described them in Chapters 2 and 3.

In Section 5.3.4, I described how estrogen is represented with agency to move downwards in both the US and the Danish data and this is exemplified with the term 'plummet' in example 21. The only other hormone mentioned in the articles is 'testosterone' (instance 22, discussed in Section 5.2.2). This hormone contributes to a problematic symptom of menopause; namely changes to the skin. While lower levels of estrogen are presented as the cause of menopausal symptoms, testosterone does not decrease similarly and this imbalance is represented as problematic. In Chapter 7 I will discuss this representation of these two hormones, estrogen and testosterone, which are conventionally referred to as a female and male sex hormone, respectively.

The solutions suggested in instance 43 and 32 (discussed earlier in this section) illustrate typical solutions in the data. Both the US and the Danish examples suggest products, such as creams, or actions, such as changing diet and exercise habits or engaging in sexual activity. Some of these suggestions include unveiled promotion of commercial products as Devash and

Robin (2021), others give more or less detailed advice. This advice may be seen as a product provided by the women magazines. I discuss this idea of commercialising the solutions to the problem of menopause in Chapter 7.

Finally, the problem of menopause may be mitigated with conversation. This is suggested in both the US and the Danish data, although the word 'tabu' (taboo) occurs only in the Danish. I discussed the metaphor of Movement of the US instance 6 in which a 'conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark...' (Booker, 2020) in Section 5.2.1. The suggestion that talking more openly about menopause is needed (as expressed in instance 6 with 'not ...enough') is also expressed in the Danish data in terms of 'breaking the taboo'.

33

Overgangsalderen er et tabu for mange kvinder, for hvem har lyst til at tale om manglende sexlyst, tyndere hår og hedeture? Læs med, når vi bryder tabuet og sætter fokus på nogle af de symptomer, der følger med overgangsalderen. (Askgaard, 2017)

The menopause is a taboo for many women 'cause who wants to talk about a lack of sexual desire, thinning hair and hot flashes? Read along when we break the taboo and focus on some of the symptoms that follow along with the menopause.

In these cases, the problem is represented as the taboo surrounding menopause rather than menopause itself. The solution suggested is a metaphorical breaking of the taboo by writing about the symptoms of menopause. This instance suggests that the topic is something no one wants to talk about. In Section 5.5.2, I discussed the negative appraisal inherent in the term 'tabu' (taboo) in relation to an instance that suggests menopause is relevant to talk about because all women experience it as massive upheaval. These different representations of menopause – all three express a negative attitude. One Danish instance suggests no one wants to talk about it while the other questions the taboo. The US instance suggests negative repercussions of not talking about it.

### 5.6.2 Mitigate negative attitudes to menopause

While I found no representations of menopause which expressed a positive attitude towards it, a few scenarios suggest it may not be all bad. These combine the strategy of mitigating the negative attitude to menopause with other strategies to share experiences and/or to represent menopausal experiences as diverse.

15

Vidste du, at det er en myte, at kvinder i overgangsalderen vender vrangen ud på sig selv og muterer til uforudsigelige og urimelige hystader. Det sker kun for ganske få. Størstedelen af alle kvinder glider nogenlunde smerte- og symptomfrit gennem den periode. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

Did you know that it is a myth that women in menopause turn their insides out and mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches. This only happens to very few. Most women glide reasonably pain and symptom free through that period.

Instance 15 aims to reassure women that menopause is not very problematic for most women. At the same time, it represents two ways of moving through menopause, each with their metaphoric narrative. It represents the problematic experience as a myth and with the metaphor 'vender vrangen ud på sig selv' (turn their insides out). The majority of women are said to 'glide' (glide) through menopause, a metaphor that describes the easy and elegant manner in which most women move through menopause (see Section 5.2.1).

While instance 15 combines the strategy of mitigating a negative attitude to menopause with sharing experiences and representing two different experiences of menopause, instance 34 seeks to create a sense of one shared experience between the speaker and the reader, while mitigating the negative attitude to menopause.

34

"By taking simple care of ourselves, we can look good and feel great for a long time. Menopause is not the end; it's just the beginning." (Booker, 2020)

Instance 34 is a direct quote with an assistant clinical professor of dermatology, i.e. a medical expert. She uses an inclusive voice to connect with the reader (see Section 5.3.1.1) and reframes menopause as the beginning rather than the end. This metaphor attempts to represent menopause as less problematic compared to the majority of identified metaphor scenarios in this data. The beginning of something has the potential to develop into something exciting, while the end does not.

### 5.6.3 Share experiences

Conversations about menopause is said to be lacking in both the US and the Danish data as suggested in Section 5.6.1. This need is addressed by articles such as those included in this study. In particular, individual accounts (see Section 5.3.1.3) of experiences with menopause may contribute to breaking this taboo and establishing a feeling of solidarity. Three of the Danish articles contain scenarios that convey personal experience with menopause in some detail. These are presented in Sections 5.2.3, 5.4.3 and 5.5.3 and the identified metaphors share the features that they are embodied and they convey difficult experiences related to menopause.

8

Jeg kæmpede med overgangsalderen, hvilket for mit vedkommende ikke mindst ville sige søvnløse nætter, som gjorde mig hudløs og grådlabil om dagen. Hver dag kan godt blive lidt et bjerg, når man står op og ikke er udhvilet. Man kan føle sig som en vred hveps bag en rude, og man er absolut ikke den udgave af sig selv, man gerne vil være, forklarer Mette med et suk. (Hast, 2018)

I struggled with the menopause, which for me meant sleepless nights that made me skinless and easy to tears in the daytime. Every day can become a bit of a mountain when one gets up and is not fully rested. One can well feel like an angry wasp behind a

window glass, and one is definitely not the version of oneself one wants to be, Mette explains with a sigh.

In instance 8, the metaphoric expression 'hudløs' (skinless) clearly conveys a sense of hypersensitivity. We can understand how the interviewee feels through imagining what it would feel like to have no skin. Using such metaphor that conveys an embodied sensation may illicit an empathetic response (Semino, 2019b). It is also possible that someone reading it recognises their own experience in this description and feels seen.

#### 5.6.4 Representation of menopausal experiences as diverse

The representation of menopause as diverse seems to be a typical feature of the Danish women's magazines. These Danish instances take the perspective that some will suffer, most will not. Most explicit is the scenario that represent 'gener og udfordringer' (bothers and challenges) as awaiting.

16

Det er utroligt forskelligt, hvilke gener og udfordringer der venter den enkelte. Nogle danser let gennem årene, hvor andre bliver mere påvirkede. (Vichy, 2022)

It is incredibly different, which bothers and challenges await the individual. Some dance lightly through the years while others are more affected.

Presenting menopause with the metaphors 'danser' (dance) and 'let' (lightly) probably aims to provide hope to the reader that menopause will not be as bad as perhaps expected. Instance 15 suggests that most women have an easy menopause.

15

Vidste du, at det er en myte, at kvinder i overgangsalderen vender vrangen ud på sig selv og muterer til uforudsigelige og urimelige hystader. Det sker kun for ganske få.

Størstedelen af alle kvinder glider nogenlunde smerte- og symptomfrit gennem den periode. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

Did you know that it is a myth that women in menopause turn their insides out and mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches. This only happens to very few. Most women glide reasonably pain and symptom free through that period.

While the Danish data elsewhere suggests taking action to mitigate the negative effects of menopause, the fate based view that some are lucky to have an easy menopause is entirely absent in the US data.

Menopause is consistently constructed as a problem in this data. This serves different commercial and healthist purposes, which I will discuss further in Chapter 7. In addition to the solutions suggested in the form of actions people can take or products they can consume, information and conversation about menopause is presented as potential solutions. The idea of breaking a taboo surrounding a problematic topic is presumably to find constructive solutions to it. Some attempts to mitigate negative attitudes to menopause, share experiences and convey the diverse experiences of menopause are made. These can be seen to counter the taboo surrounding menopause by creating hope and solidarity for those having a hard time with menopause.

## 5.7 Main scenario patterns

The text instance presented in Section 5.1 (1) combines ideas of Movement and Force to convey a representation of an experience of menopause. Such combination of metaphor is typical of metaphor scenarios in this data as demonstrated above. Twelve text instances in the US women's magazines combine metaphoric expressions, while seven rely on one metaphoric expression. Twelve text instances in the Danish women's magazines combine metaphoric expressions, while nine rely on one metaphoric expression. In relative frequencies, 63% of US text instances combine metaphor, while the percentage for the Danish is 57%. Some combine metaphor evoking different frames as in instance 1. I am using the term 'combined' to avoid confusion with the discussion of 'mixed metaphors' (Gibbs, 2016). In these combined

metaphors I include those that evoke the same schema(s). In any case, mixing metaphor is unproblematic from a discourse perspective as Cameron (2016) argues. Some narratives use metaphoric expressions that evoke the same schema while others combine expressions evoking different schemas. For example Water is evoked twice in one instance and Movement and Container is combined in another.

The person experiencing menopause is addressed directly but there are also collective and individual representations. The direct address and some of the collective representations are not gendered, while all the individual and some of the collective represent a woman/women. This raises the questions whether it is time to include people who do not conform to the binary gender norm in texts about menopause. I will discuss this further in Chapter 7.

Recurrently, the reader or another person experiencing menopause is the moving agent in both the Danish and the US data. The idea of 'moving through menopause' invokes the Container schema as well as Movement. As described in Section 5.3, this agency is frequently associated with Movement metaphors.

Conflict metaphors are more usual in the US scenarios as described in Section 5.2.2. Terms such as 'combat' and 'conquer' are explicit War metaphors, which externalises and personifies menopause. Other Conflict metaphors construct opposing parties, but such are not exclusive to War. In Chapter 7, I will discuss different approaches to Conflict that may help understand how the metaphors are used in this data. Other metaphors that are more dominant in the US data evoke schemas of produced goods such as Clothes and Machinery.

The Danish metaphors draw on schemas which evoke images of Nature or Water. At first glance this may seem less commercialised and more in tune with the natural world we live in. However, more specifically, this might also be related to the Nordic identity. The Nordics consist of small countries that are known for a close relation to nature (Strandberg, 2020).

The metaphors in this data overall construct menopause as problematic and suggest the person experiencing menopause does something to mitigate the symptoms. In Chapter 6 I

present my findings from the medical websites, and in Chapter 7, I compare the findings from both chapters and discuss underlying ideologies.

## Chapter 6: Analysis of medical websites

In this chapter, I present the analysis of the metaphor scenarios identified in the articles from the medical websites described in section 4.1.2. In the previous chapter in Section 5.1, I presented a typical example to illustrate the four elements of a metaphor scenario, which I analyse in this thesis. The principles of analysis are the same for the data from the medical websites and, therefore, I begin Section 6.1 with an overview of the metaphoric expressions I identified which contribute to identified scenarios in this data. Following the same general structure as in Chapter 5, I present typical patterns of the individual elements of metaphor scenarios in the following order: Section 6.1: Metaphor, Section 6.2: Agency, Section 6.3: Narrative, and Section 6.4: Appraisal. I introduce the identified discursive strategies in Section 6.5. Finally in Section 6.6, I suggest some of the main patterns of scenarios in the medical websites and compare the findings to those of the women's magazines presented in Chapter 5.

### 6.1 Metaphors in this data

In this section, I present patterns of metaphoric expressions across the medical websites and make comparisons between the Danish and US metaphors. Table 6.1 shows which metaphoric expressions I have interpreted in relation to which schema and how frequently each schema is evoked. The table also gives the frequency of metaphoric expressions in the Danish and the US texts related to the assigned conceptual schemas. Some scenarios combine metaphoric expressions, as they do in the women's magazines (see Section 5.7). Such instances may be seen to combine scenarios or constitute one scenario. Due to this ambiguity, I count metaphoric expressions rather than scenarios in this section, as I did in Section 5.2.

<b>Conceptual schema</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions DK (raw frequency)</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions DK translated</b>	<b>DK total frequency of expressions</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions US (raw frequency)</b>	<b>US total frequency of expressions</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>			<b>0</b>	cultivate (1)	<b>1</b>
<b>Conflict</b>	rammer (1)	strikes	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Connection</b>			<b>0</b>	closer (1) together (1)	<b>2</b>
<b>Container</b>	ind (1) udsat (1) igennem (1) åbent (1)	into put out through open	<b>4</b>	filled (1) in (2)	<b>3</b>
<b>Cooking</b>			<b>0</b>	ingrediens (2)	<b>2</b>
<b>Direction</b>	udspringer (1) stiger (1)	springs out increase	<b>2</b>	rise (1) fall (1)	<b>2</b>
<b>Force</b>	skubber (1) rammer (1)	push strikes	<b>2</b>	strain (1)	<b>1</b>
<b>Movement</b>	kommer tilbage (1) nærmer sig (1) skarpt hjørne (1) udsat (1) igennem (1) udspringer (1) brede sig (1) gå (1) veje (1) fører til (1) stiger (1)	come back approaches sharp turn put out through springs out spread (reflexive) walk paths lead to increase	<b>11</b>	step (1) rise (1) fall (1) reach (2) return(ed) (2) move (1) skip (4)	<b>12</b>
<b>Nature/Superstition</b>	(for)varsler (2)	signals/is an omen	<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>	give(r) (2) berigende (1)	give enrichening	<b>3</b>	put (1) on (1) level (1) end (1) loss (1) pattern (2) find (1)	<b>8</b>
<b>Senses</b>	klarhed (1) ser (2)	clarity see	<b>3</b>		<b>0</b>

<b>Conceptual schema</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions DK (raw frequency)</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions DK translated</b>	<b>DK total frequency of expressions</b>	<b>Metaphoric expressions US (raw frequency)</b>	<b>US total frequency of expressions</b>
<b>Size</b>	vokser sig (3) større (4)	grow (refleksive) bigger	<b>7</b>	shorter (1)	<b>1</b>
<b>Space</b>	foran (1) udsat (1)	in front of put out	<b>2</b>	place (1)	<b>1</b>
<b>Speech</b>			<b>0</b>	tell (1)	<b>1</b>
<b>Sports</b>	spille (1)	play	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Theatre</b>	spiller komedie (1)	play a comedy	<b>1</b>	stage (1)	<b>1</b>
<b>Water</b>	udspringer (1) brede sig (1)	springs out spread (refleksive)	<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>

Table 6.1: Metaphoric expressions by conceptual schema

On the medical websites I found fewer metaphoric expressions (41 Danish and 35 US) that motivate a metaphor scenario compared to the women's magazines (55 Danish and 60 US). Movement is the most frequent conceptual schema in both the Danish and the US articles, with a little more variety in the Danish terms, as 'reach' and 'return' are repeated in the US articles. The Container schema is similarly used in both languages with almost equal frequency and a little more variety in Danish. The schema with the second most occurrences on the Danish website is Size, but only two expressions are used repeatedly and only in one article. They form part of a narrative that is developed throughout the article and I will address how this metaphoric concept characterises a problem solution pattern in Section 6.5.1. In the following, I present instances with the Movement schema first in Section 6.1.1, followed by the Container schema in Section 6.1.2.

#### 6.1.1 Movement schema

Movement is the most commonly evoked schema in the metaphor scenarios from the medical websites in both languages. This is also the case for the women's magazines as presented in Section 5.2, so it may be a typical schema of discourses of menopause. I will discuss this in Chapter 7.

Movement metaphors construct relations between parties one of which is moving towards the other with terms such as 'nærmer sig' (approaches) (10) or 'reach' (57, 9).

9

Menopause is the end of menstruation. In clinical terms, you reach menopause when you haven't had a period for 12 months. Vaginal bleeding after menopause isn't normal and should be evaluated by your doctor. (Laughlin-Tommaso, 2020)

The metaphoric expression 'reach' constructs menopause as a place the reader, expressed with 'you', can move towards. The metaphoric expression 'end' constructs menopause as a point after which bleeding is no longer normal. Both metaphoric expressions contribute to the scenario by constructing menopause in terms of space, while the distance between the reader and menopause is represented as decreasing with the movement metaphor 'reach'. This spatial distance maps on to time, which is expressed with '12 months' without a period as the defining measure of menopause.

10

Når man nærmer sig menopausen, kan der være forvarsler i form af blødningsforstyrrelser og symptomer som hedeture. (Trolle, 2019b)

When one approaches the menopause, there may be signs in the form of bleeding disruptions and symptoms like hot flashes.

The metaphoric term 'nærmer sig' (approaches) constructs a relation between 'man' (one) and menopause. This metaphor also constructs the distance between them as decreasing. The second part of instance 10 conveys an event that happens before the social actor 'man' (one) has reached menopause. The metaphor 'forvarsler' (signals) construes the symptoms of perimenopause as signs. The basic meaning of 'forvarsler' (signals) is used in relation to weather or labour disputes, but it can also be used in relation to superstition. Hence, this metaphor maps forces of nature, disruption and potentially sorcery onto the female body.

The Danish instances with Movement metaphor construct relations between those experiencing menopause and their 'gener' (bothers) (58), 'symptomer' (symptoms) (51) or 'problemer' (problems) (65, 59) or 'overgangsalderen' (the menopause) itself (10, 51). The US

Movement metaphors typically represent relations between those experiencing menopause and menopause itself (9), menstruation (7, 60) or sexual interest (56). Further, Movement metaphor is used to represent the relation between HCPs and those experiencing menopause in two US instances (57, 47).

47

When health care providers initiate the conversation and ask the questions to identify genitourinary syndrome of menopause, that is a step toward helping women identify the problem and understand that it can be treated. (Luckstein, 2017)

The metaphoric expression 'step' in the basic meaning refers to walking, an action taken by the health care provider. In this context, taking a step means doing something, initiating the conversation and asking questions, in order to achieve something, namely helping women. Also, the Danish data use a walking metaphor.

48

I næsten alle tilfælde kan du bedre eller normalisere den seksuelle situation. Men det kræver tålmodighed og vilje til dialog. Og det kræver, at du tør gå nye veje og eksperimentere dig lidt frem. (Trolle, 2020)

In almost all cases you can improve or normalise the sexual situation. But it requires patience and a will to have a conversation. And it requires that you dare to walk on new paths and experiment a little.

The metaphoric expressions 'gå' (walk) and 'veje' (paths) construct solving sexual problems during menopause in terms of walking in a new direction. Notably, the reader represented with 'du' (you) is represented as acting alone in this instance, while most of the Movement scenarios construct relations between social actors. In instance (49), Movement metaphors are used to represent the fluctuation in hormone levels, which influences tests that aim to determine whether the reader is in menopause.

49

But, since FSH<sup>10</sup> levels rise and fall during the course of your menstrual cycle, home FSH tests can't really tell you whether or not you're definitely in a stage of menopause. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020a)

The metaphoric terms 'rise' and 'fall' indicate an image metaphor referring to the image of a graph showing the hormonal serum levels. These metaphoric terms also convey the idea of Movement in a vertical direction. The metaphoric term 'tell' construes the test as a potentially talking person, who in this case is unable to give an answer due to the continuous Movement of the FSH hormone. The hormones' movement maps onto the literal fluctuation in amount of this hormone in the blood over time. The test's inability to tell maps onto the fact that, although the test may show what the level of FSH in the blood is at a given point in time, this means nothing without a steady reference. The metaphoric term 'level' constructs the relative amount of hormone in the bloodstream with the conceptual metaphor MORE IS UP.

The metaphoric expressions 'in' and 'stage' construct menopause as a place. The most basic meaning of 'stage' refers to the place in a theatre where performance takes place. The contextual meaning - stage as part of a process - divides menopause up in different parts. The term 'in' constructs these parts of menopause as containers. In one instance (50) in the Danish data, metaphoric expressions of Movement and Container are also combined.

50

Hvis man vil bruge systemisk behandling, bør man begynde senest 10 år efter menopausen, ellers stiger risikoen for bivirkninger. Mange andre forhold spiller ind på risikoen for bivirkninger: livsstil, vægt, almindelig sundhedstilstand og arvelige forhold. (Trolle, 2019c)

If one wants to use systemic treatment, one should start no later than 10 years after menopause, otherwise the risk of side effects will increase. Many factors play into the risk of side effects: lifestyle, weight, general health condition and congenital factors.

The metaphoric expression 'stiger' (increase) construes the risk in terms upwards direction. The same conceptual metaphor as described above for the expression 'level', MORE IS UP, here conveys the idea that the risk becomes greater. This risk is constructed as a Container with the

---

<sup>10</sup> FSH stands for 'follicle stimulating hormone'.

term 'ind' (into). The contextual meaning of the combined expression 'spille ind' (play into) is to affect the goal; 'risikoen for bivirkninger' (the risk of side effects). The basic meaning of 'spiller' (play) is to participate in a game or a performance. The metaphoric expression then creates a relation between the abstract concept of 'risiko' (risk) and the various factors. The social actor engaged in the process 'spille' (play) is 'mange forhold' (many factors). I discuss this narrative in Section 6.3.1.

In the Danish data, two metaphoric terms combine the Movement and the Container schemas in the same instance, namely 'udsat' (exposed) and 'igennem' (through). The latter term is used in the same way as in the women's magazine (see Section 5.2.1) as it constructs women moving through menopause.

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet, og hvis man opfatter forandringen som noget negativt, er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer. De fleste kvinder kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde og ser positivt på den nye livsfase. (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life and if one perceives the change as something negative, one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms. However, most women do come through menopause in a good way and view the new life-phase positively.

The metaphoric expression 'skarpt' (sharp) and 'hjørne' (corner) construe menopause in terms of a sharp turn. When used in conjunction like this they convey the idea of moving and suddenly having to change direction. This works with the other metaphoric expressions 'udsat' (at risk - lit. put out) and 'igennem' (through) which places 'man' in space (outside) and most women as going through menopause. With these metaphors, menopause is represented as a container. Instance 51 constructs menopause as a container that women move through, a scenario also found in the women's magazines (see Section 5.2.1).

### 6.1.2 Container schema

The metaphoric expressions evoking the Container metaphor in the US data typically construct something abstract as a container. In instance 52, the container is 'their life' and in instance 53, it is 'a sexual situation'.

52

The biggest misconception that women have about menopause is that...the rest of their life is going to be filled with a lack of interest in sex, feeling hot and sweaty all the time, and just being sleep deprived... (Weiss, 2019)

The metaphoric expression 'filled' constructs a relation between the unpleasant things, 'a lack of interest in sex... sleep deprived' and 'life'. The contextual meaning is that women will experience these unpleasant things as taking all of their attention. However, this is labelled a 'misconception' with non-metaphoric language. Hence, the metaphor scenario is represented as untrue.

53

So a woman may find herself in a sexual situation and notice that she is aroused before she experiences sexual desire. Becoming more playful about sexual activity may help cultivate situations that can lead to arousal (and then desire) and also help maintain intimacy. (Sparks, 2015)

In instance 53, the metaphoric expression 'find' suggests a split self. The metaphoric expression 'in' constructs a physical relation between the woman and a sexual situation where the situation is construed as a container. The metaphoric expression 'cultivate' constructs situations as places where plants can be tended to.

Instances on the Danish medical websites typically also evoke the Container schema in ways that construct relations between people.

54

Det er vigtigt at kunne diskutere problemerne åbent, for ellers har de en tendens til at vokse sig større og større... (Trolle, 2020)

It is important to be able to discuss the problems openly, because otherwise they have a tendency to grow bigger and bigger...

The metaphoric expression 'åbent' (open) construes the discussion as a container that can be open or closed. Conventionally, this metaphor has the same mapping as it would in English when you talk about an ongoing discussion as open and a finished discussion as closed. But another mapping is an association with honesty and directness. To discuss something openly in Danish also means that all parties can say anything and the other party will listen and respond without trying to shut anything down. In the context, this mapping is probably the most relevant as the topic of sexual problems can be sensitive and make people defensive. The relation described with this metaphor is the relationship between sexual partners, although the social actors are not mentioned explicitly (see Section 6.2).

The Container and Movement metaphors create relations between menopause and those experiencing it on the medical websites, as they do in the women's magazines. Additionally, both schemas are also used to characterise other relations.

## 6.2 Agency

The main actors in the identified metaphor scenarios include menopause and those experiencing menopause as well as other bodily processes and hormones. I also identified these actors in the women's magazines, which is to be expected, considering the topic of the articles and my research focus.

I identified three types of actors in the metaphor scenarios:

1. those experiencing menopause;
2. bodily processes, incl. menopause;
3. health care professionals and products.

In chapter 5, one type of actor identified is 'actions as actors', a form of grammatical metaphor in the terms of functional linguistics. In articles from the medical websites, I found a greater variety as well as frequency of grammatical metaphor. In this chapter, I address them according to their sociological actor. Similar to Potts and Semino's (2017, p. 75) category of disease/injury/death as social actors (see Section 4.2.1.3), I treat bodily processes as social actors, because they are represented engaged in various processes in the data (see Section 7.1

for a discussion of this agency). The type of actors in Category one and two were also identified in the women's magazines presented in Section 5.3. The type of actors in Category three were not identified in the women's magazines, but similar actors were identified by Potts and Semino (2017, p. 73) and categorised in their study as 'professionals' and 'care/treatment'. I have combined them in one category in this section as they are not the main focus of my research and occur rarely in my identified text instances. Further, there is one instance that endows hormone levels with agency, which I consider when I present the third type, as it co-occurs with a health care product. In the following, I show examples of each category in turn.

#### 6.2.1 Those experiencing menopause

The medical websites address the reader directly and use collective representation of women as well as the generic personal pronoun in Danish. In the US data, six instances refer to a woman, two in the singular form and four in the plural. Three instances use 'you', while the first personal pronouns 'I' and 'our' are used one time each. A little unexpectedly, one instance refers to 'patients'. In the Danish data, seven instances refer to 'kvinde' (woman), two in the singular form and five in the plural. Five instances use the generic pronoun 'man' (one) and two use 'du' (you). A further two make no reference to the person experiencing menopause at all (55, 64), although they can be inferred as a sociological actor.

I will begin this section with a presentation of an instance where no reference is made to the person experiencing menopause, as it illustrates a backgrounding strategy used throughout the medical websites. Section 6.2.1.1 address the collective representations and Section 6.2.1.2, the instances which address the reader.

In instance 55, a process is represented with a noun in a prepositional phrase 'ved en samtale... praktiserende læge' (through a conversation...general practitioner). This prepositional phrase is the social actor in the process 'lykkes' (is possible) and the goal is expressed with the pronoun 'det' (it).

55

Ved en samtale med den praktiserende læge lykkes det som regel at få klarhed over de seksuelle problemer og deres årsager. (Trolle, 2020)

Through a conversation with the general practitioner it is usually possible to get clarity about the sexual problems and their causes.

The action 'samtale' is a nominalisation with two sociological actors; one implied (the woman) and one explicitly mentioned (the GP). The aim of a conversation is to achieve 'klarhed' (clarity). This metaphoric expression constructs understanding in terms of seeing clearly.

#### 6.2.1.1 Collective representations

The collective representation of those experiencing menopause is predominantly achieved with the terms 'kvinder' and 'women'. Gender-neutral expressions such as those I described in Section 5.3.1.2 are very rare on the medical websites and only achieved using personal pronouns ('du', 'man', 'vi', 'you' and 'we'/'our'). In both languages, women are mostly engaged in mental processes. While the Danish text suggests some women experience sexual problems (62, 65, 54, 59), the US text suggests women experience 'changes in sexuality'.

56

Women frequently experience changes in sexuality around menopause. These can include a change in sexual interest or desire which may move from a more spontaneous sexual desire pattern to more of a willingness or receptive desire pattern. This means that a woman may feel like being sexual if the situation is right and all the necessary ingredients are in place... (Sparks, 2015)

Instance 56 demonstrates how the plural and singular form of 'woman' are used to represent women as engaged in mental processes such as experiencing and feeling. The noun 'change' is represented as the actor engaged in moving from one pattern to another. The metaphoric processes of Movement are represented as happening to women.

In another instance from the US website, women are similarly engaged in a mental process. They are represented as having a misconception.

52

The biggest misconception that women have about menopause is that it's awful, that it's life-altering, and that all of a sudden, the rest of their life is going to be filled with a

lack of interest in sex, feeling hot and sweaty all the time, and just being sleep deprived... (Weiss, 2019)

The misconception is described using the metaphor 'filled'. The noun 'life' is the goal of a metaphorical, material process. The sociological actor holding the misconception is 'women', but there is no indication of an actor engaged in the process 'filled'. Other metaphor scenarios represent women as engaged in metaphoric processes.

53

So a woman may find herself in a sexual situation and notice that she is aroused before she experiences sexual desire... (Sparks, 2015)

In instance 53, the actor 'woman' is engaged in the process of 'find[ing] herself'. This metaphor splits her self as described in Section 6.1.2. She reflects on her situation, which is different than before menopause. The basic meaning of 'find' denotes a material process, while the contextual meaning can be understood as a mental process. Hence, the metaphor represents her with a higher degree of semantic agency compared to the mental process she is engaged in. A similar example in the Danish data represent women coming through menopause; another mental process represented as a material process.

51

...De fleste kvinder kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde... (Trolle, 2019b)

...However, most women do come through menopause in a good way...

The contextual meaning of 'kommer igennem' (come through) menopause in instance 51 can be understood as a mental process, due to the evaluative prepositional clause 'på en god måde' (in a good way). This suggests that 'come through' maps on to most women's positive attitude towards their experience of menopause. Representing this mental process with a metaphor that construes it as a material process represents 'de fleste kvinder' (most women) with a higher degree of semantic agency in the metaphoric narrative compared to the implied meaning. In one US article, women are also represented with the mental processes to 'know'

(4), 'identify' (47) and 'understand' (47), although it is implied that they do not currently engage in these processes (see Sections 6.2.2 and 6.5.1).

Curiously, one instance in the US data refers to 'patients'. This is related to a particular 'syndrome' during menopause, which is framed as a medical condition requiring treatment in this instance.

57

Despite these treatments, the lack of awareness of the frequency of genitourinary syndrome of menopause makes reaching patients with this condition difficult.  
(Luckstein, 2017)

In instance 57, 'patients' are represented with a low degree of semantic agency as the goal of the process 'reaching'. Presumably, they are the sociological agent who lacks awareness. The 'lack of awareness' is a noun phrase representing a mental process. This noun is engaged in the material process, 'makes', which has another material process, 'reaching', as the goal. I address the agent engaged in the process of 'reaching' in Section 6.2.3. This instance demonstrates the more complex representation of agency I found in on the medical websites compared to the women's magazines. Use of nominalisations and gerunds achieve backgrounding of the sociological actors while foregrounding the actions and processes.

In addition to the representation of 'patients', the gender-neutral generic pronoun 'man' (one) is used in the Danish data to represent those experiencing menopause. It is represented as engaged in metaphoric Movement (58, 10), other material processes (50, 58), as the goal of the material process 'udsætte' (expose) (51) and engaged in mental processes (58, 51).

58

Når man stopper behandlingen, opdager man hurtigt, om generne kommer tilbage.  
Men man skubber ikke generne foran sig, så man bare udsætter symptomerne. (Trolle, 2019d)

If one stops the treatment, one quickly discovers whether the bothers will come back.  
One does not push the bothers in front of oneself, just postponing the symptoms.

While 'stopper' (stops) is a material process, 'opdager' (discovers) is mental. The metaphoric expression 'skubber' (push) constructs the bothers as physical entities that are moveable. The contextual meaning is explained with the term 'udsætter' (postponing). Time is constructed in terms of space and the process to make something happen later is constructed as moving that something in space. While most representations of 'man' (one) have high degrees of semantic agency, in instance 51, 'man' is represented with a low degree of semantic agency as the goal of the passive construction 'udsat' (exposed).

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet, og hvis man opfatter forandringen som noget negativt, er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer. De fleste kvinder kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde og ser positivt på den nye livsfase. (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life and if one perceives the change as something negative, one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms. However, most women do come through menopause in a good way and view the new life-phase positively.

The conditional clause, expressed with 'hvis' (if), modalises the statement 'er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer' (one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms). In the conditional clause, 'man' (one) is the actor engaged in the mental process 'opfatter' (perceives). If this mental action takes place, it can expose the person who holds it to psychological symptoms. Although mental processes are usually considered less agentive than material processes, this is perhaps an exception as it is represented with the potential to have a physical impact. This demonstrates the occasionally fluid boundaries between different degrees of semantic agency.

In two instances, 54 and 63, 'man' does not refer to those experiencing menopause but rather to the speaker and her medical colleagues. Here, the speaker refers to her own experience consulting menopausal women.

54

Det er vigtigt at kunne diskutere problemerne åbent, for ellers har de en tendens til at vokse sig større og større. Og ikke sjældent ser man, at et seksuelt problem med tiden udvikler sig til et intimitetsproblem, som kun gør frustrationerne større. (Trolle, 2020)

It is important to be able to discuss the problems openly, because otherwise they have a tendency to grow bigger and bigger. And it is not rare to see that a sexual problem over time develops into a problem with intimacy, which only makes the frustrations bigger.

In this instance, 'ser' (see) is used metaphorically for the realisation that the problem evolves. This constructs the problem as something visible, while the process is mental both at the metaphoric and the contextual level. The representation of the speaker is subtle and it is a characteristic of the Danish articles from the medical websites that they do not mention healthcare professionals as engaging in metaphor scenarios.

Collective representations of those experiencing menopause, whether represented with the term women, patients or a generic pronoun, then represents those experiencing menopause with low degrees of semantic agency or through metaphorical material processes, which represents them with more agency metaphorically than literally. In the Danish data, 'kvinder' are engaged in the mental processes 'oplevelse' (experience) (13:1) and 'beskrive' (describe) (63). In the US data, 'women' are engaged in the mental processes 'experience' and 'identify'.

#### 6.2.1.2 The reader

Direct address is achieved in the data with the second person pronoun in one Danish and three US articles. This is similar to the Danish women's magazines but less frequent compared to the US magazines. One US instance on the medical websites further use the imperative verb form.

7

...If you've skipped a period but aren't sure you've started the menopausal transition, consider a pregnancy test. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b)

In instance 7, the reader is addressed with the second person pronoun 'you' and the imperative 'consider'. The metaphoric action represented with 'skipped' constructs the reader with a high degree of semantic agency at the metaphoric level, although the contextual meaning is a non-event (see Section 6.1.1). Likewise, the process to 'have started' appears to

represent a high degree of semantic agency, although menopause is not a conscious choice in the same way as for example taking a pregnancy test is. The process of taking a test has a high degree of semantic agency, but the process to 'consider' is a mental process with a lower degree of semantic agency. The reader is then represented with a high degree of semantic agency over their bodily processes but a lower degree over something they can in reality control, namely whether or not they take a test. A similar pattern of agency is represented in instance 9.

9

Menopause is the end of menstruation. In clinical terms, you reach menopause when you haven't had a period for 12 months. Vaginal bleeding after menopause isn't normal and should be evaluated by your doctor. (Laughlin-Tommaso, 2020)

In instance 9, menopause is metaphorically constructed as some place the reader can 'reach'. The reader is the sociological agent of the implied process to go and see their doctor if they have vaginal bleeding after menopause. But in the implied process of seeing your doctor, the reader is backgrounded, while the doctor is represented with agency albeit in a passive process.

In the Danish data, direct address is only used in the article 'Seksuelle problemer i overgangsalderen', but in contrast to the US instances discussed above, the reader is represented as agentive in processes where they make conscious choices.

59

Hvis du lader som ingenting eller spiller komedie, risikerer du, at problemerne vokser sig større – og du risikerer, at de seksuelle problemer fører til misforståelser. (Trolle, 2020)

If you pretend like nothing is happening or you are playing a comedy you risk that the problems grow bigger – and you risk that the sexual problems lead to misunderstandings.

In instance 59, the reader is warned that their actions, 'lader som ingenting eller spiller komedie' (pretend like nothing is happening or playing a comedy), can have negative

repercussions. These actions are behavioural processes, which have a medium degree of semantic agency. The only other instance of direct address in the Danish data represent women engaged in material processes, which have a higher degree of semantic agency.

48

I næsten alle tilfælde kan du bedre eller normalisere den seksuelle situation. Men det kræver tålmodighed og vilje til dialog. Og det kræver, at du tør gå nye veje og eksperimentere dig lidt frem. (Trolle, 2020)

In almost all cases you can improve or normalise the sexual situation. But it requires patience and a will to have a conversation. And it requires that you dare to walk on new paths and experiment a little.

While the processes 'bedre' (improve), 'normalisere' (normalise) and 'gå' (walk) are material, the process 'tør' (dare) is mental. In the context, the metaphor 'gå nye veje' (walk on new paths) also becomes a mental process as it refers to how the reader thinks about menopause if they follow the writer's suggestion. This metaphor represents the reader with a higher degree of semantic agency at the metaphoric level compared to the contextual meaning in contrast with instance 7, where the reader's agency to take a pregnancy test is represented as less agentive by introducing the process 'consider'.

The inclusive first-person pronoun 'we' is used sparingly across the data (see Section 5.3.1.1 for the use in women's magazines). The only time it is used in the articles from the medical websites, it is the possessive pronoun 'our', which expresses a lower degree of semantic agency than 'we' in instance 3. It represents the relation between people with menstrual cycles and these cycles.

3

Over time, "the loss of the consistent, regular pattern of our menstrual cycles is what becomes so disruptive, along with fluctuating hormone levels," says Dr. Thielen. (Weiss, 2019)

The statement represents the speaker, Dr. Thielen, and every other menstruating person as the sociological actor who loses the regular pattern. Even though the nominalised construction

'the loss' backgrounds this actor, the inclusive 'our' suggests that the speaker aims to express a sense of community with the reader. The metaphorical 'loss' is described in a relational process with the attribution 'disruptive'. The 'fluctuating hormone levels' are also described as contributing to the same process. The metaphoric term 'loss' describes a process where someone loses something. From the context, we can understand that the sociological actor is anyone who experiences menopause. This actor is said to lose the regular pattern of their menstrual cycles. The metaphoric term 'pattern' construes the reoccurrence of the menstruation as something more concrete.

### 6.2.2 Bodily processes

Bodily processes, including menopause, is endowed with agency on both the US and the Danish websites across the genres in this study. In Section 5.3.2, I presented how this is used in the women's magazines and in this section, I present how it is used on the medical websites.

11

Menopausen ... varsler afslutningen på hendes evne til at blive gravid. (Sundhed.dk, 2020)

The menopause ... signals the end of her ability to become pregnant.

In instance 11, menopause is engaged in the metaphorical action 'varsler' (signals). While this instance endows menopause with the agency to communicate something, a more typical representation of menopause in this data describes menopause using relational processes (9, 51).

9

Menopause is the end of menstruation. In clinical terms, you reach menopause when you haven't had a period for 12 months. Vaginal bleeding after menopause isn't normal and should be evaluated by your doctor. (Laughlin-Tommaso, 2020)

In instance 9, menopause is described with the metaphoric expression 'the end of menstruation'. The relational process expressed with 'is' represents a lower degree of semantic agency compared to the material process 'reach', a process with the agentive

participant 'you' and the goal 'menopause'. In this way, the instance constructs menopause with a low degree of semantic agency compared to the reader, represented with 'you'.

A defining part of menopause is changes in menstrual patterns. One way these changes are described is with Movement metaphors (60, 7), which endow them with agency in material processes.

60

I'm taking hormone therapy for menopause symptoms, and my monthly menstrual periods have returned. Is this normal? (Burnett, 2020)

In instance 60, menstrual periods are engaged in the metaphorical process 'returned'. This metaphor constructs the periods in terms of Movement, a material process. The contextual meaning refers bleeding monthly, a bodily process that repeats itself monthly, i.e. in terms of time. While only a few instances refer specifically to periods, the mapping of Movement to Time is recurrent in this data.

In instance 7, further Movement metaphors are used to endow menstruation with agency.

7

... Often, menstrual periods will skip a month and return, or skip several months and then start monthly cycles again for a few months. Periods also tend to happen on shorter cycles, so they are closer together... (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b)

Menstrual periods are represented as an actor that skips and returns. Further, periods are represented as moving in cycles that are described in terms of size and connection. The cycles are represented as 'shorter', 'closer' and 'together'. This construes periods as Physical entities, to express that they happen more frequently. This maps Physical properties to stretches of Time.

10

Når man nærmer sig menopausen, kan der være forvarsler i form af blødningsforstyrrelser og symptomer som hedeture. (Trolle, 2019b)

When one approaches menopause, there may be signs in the form of bleeding disruptions and symptoms like hot flashes.

The term 'forvarsler' (signs) is a nominalised process that is represented in an existential process with the verb phrase 'kan der være' (there may be). The modal verb 'kan' (may) in this context functions as an epistemic modaliser, suggesting possibility. This suggests that not all women experience it. The 'forvarsler' (signs) consist of bodily processes such as bleeding and hot flashes. Two actors then interact in this instance: As 'man' (one) moves towards menopause, bodily processes are sending signs to 'man' (one).

Another way of backgrounding the actor is to use a gerund. This only occurs in the US data, as the construction does not exist in standard Danish.

7

Skipping periods during perimenopause is common and expected... (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b)

The '-ing' construction of the first 'skip' backgrounds the actor, who is the bodily process, 'periods'. The gerund 'skipping' together with the goal 'periods' and the circumstance 'during menopause' is described with the attributes 'common' and 'expected'.

Another experience during menopause, which is represented on both the Danish and the US websites, is dryness in the genital area and associated medical conditions.

4

Aside from the physical discomfort, genitourinary syndrome of menopause can put a strain on relationships, and women need to know that this is common and nothing to be embarrassed by. (Luckstein, 2017)

In instance 4, the genitourinary syndrome of menopause is endowed with agency to apply metaphorical force to relationships. The contextual meaning of 'put strain on' describes how the syndrome affects the person experiencing it and their sexual partner. The general reference to 'women' indicates all women, but can also be understood as those who experience the symptoms of genitourinary syndrome of menopause. They are represented with a lower degree of semantic agency as 'knowing something' is a mental process type, in

comparison with the material processes genitourinary syndrome of menopause is engaged in. Further, the writer expresses deontic modality with 'need to', which might suggest that many women do not know this in the writer's view. The Danish website endows a similar condition with the agency to apply metaphorical force.

61

Skedekatar er meget hyppig og rammer omkring halvdelen af alle kvinder efter overgangsalderen. (Trolle, 2019e).

Infection in the vagina is very prevalent and strikes up to half of all women after menopause.

The lexical metaphor 'rammer' negatively evaluates the effect of infection in the vagina, a condition that already carries negative evaluation inherent in the term 'infection'. Women are the goal of this process, which is a representation with a low degree of semantic agency. 'Skedekatar' (infection in the vagina) and genitourinary syndrome of menopause in (instance 4) are represented as externalised forces with the material agency to affect women. Such conditions can lead to sexual problems, discussed in another Danish article.

62

Men for de kvinder, som oplever seksuelle problemer, er der grund til at gøre noget, så problemerne ikke vokser sig større. (Trolle, 2020)

But for the women who experience sexual problems, there is a reason to do something so the problems do not grow bigger.

In instance 62, the problems are endowed with agency in the process 'vokser' (grow). This is a reflexive verb in Danish, expressed with the pronoun 'sig' (themselves, not included in the translation). In addition to affecting their own size (62, 54), the article also use metaphor to give problems the agency to move (65), to make frustrations bigger (54) and lead to misunderstandings (59). The development of this metaphor scenario contributes to the characterisation of menopause as problematic, which is a discursive strategy I present in Section 6.5.1. Although negative evaluation of the agency of bodily processes recurs

throughout the data, one instance from the Danish website positively evaluates agency of menopausal changes.

63

...Tværtimod beskriver ikke så få kvinder, at de kropslige og psykosociale forandringer giver dem en ny ro og modenhed, som virker berigende for deres seksuelle liv. (Trolle, 2020)

...On the contrary, not just a few women describe that the bodily and psycho-social changes give them a new sense of calm and maturity, that functions in an enriching way for their sexual life.

The changes give women a new sense of calm and maturity. The goal of the action 'give' (give) is 'en ny ro og modenhed' (a new sense of calm and maturity). This sense is the actor of the second metaphor, 'berigende' (enrichening).

The bodily processes represented with agency in the metaphor scenarios on the medical websites address menstrual patterns and sexuality in contrast to the women's magazines, which primarily address skin and body attractiveness (see Section 5.3.2). I discuss this difference in Chapter 7.

### 6.2.3 Health care professionals and products

Health care professionals are represented in one Danish and three US instances in the data. In the Danish text as 'den praktiserende læge' (the GP) (55) and in the US as a 'health care provider' (47). These terms indicate a difference in how these professionals are conventionally referred to in the two countries, which I will discuss in Chapter 7.

47

When health care providers initiate the conversation and ask the questions to identify genitourinary syndrome of menopause, that is a step toward helping women identify the problem and understand that it can be treated. (Luckstein, 2017)

In instance 47, health care providers are represented as engaged in verbal processes expressed with 'conversation' and 'ask'. These actions are conceptualised in the metaphoric expression 'step', which is material at the metaphoric level. While this is a representation of health care

professionals with a high degree of semantic agency, women are represented with a lower degree of semantic agency as engaged in mental processes.

57

Despite these treatments, the lack of awareness of the frequency of genitourinary syndrome of menopause makes reaching patients with this condition difficult.  
(Luckstein, 2017)

The actor in the metaphorical process 'reaching' is health care providers. This is a material process although the contextual meaning refers to communication, a verbal process. While the healthcare providers are represented with a high degree of semantic agency, the noun phrase 'lack of awareness' suggests a mental process that does not exist. The actor 'patients' is represented with a low degree of semantic agency as they are the goal of 'reaching'. They are also the implied actors of the noun phrase 'the lack of awareness'. In both instances, the person experiencing menopause is backgrounded in contrast to other instances, that directly address the reader, usually with the second person pronoun (see Section 6.2.1).

The US and Danish websites represent a medical product in one instance each. On the US site, the product is a home test.

49

But, since FSH levels rise and fall during the course of your menstrual cycle, home FSH tests can't really tell you whether or not you're definitely in a stage of menopause.  
(Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020a)

The 'FSH tests' are represented as unable to engage in the metaphorical process of telling. This implies an assumption that they might be able to provide that information. An assumption that would be reasonable to have for a consumer who bought a test marketed for that purpose. The reader is represented with a low degree of semantic agency, described as possibly 'in a stage' but not engaged in any agentive process.

On the Danish medical website, hormonal therapy products are engaged in the metaphorical process of 'giving' menstruation and small bleedings.

3

Også hormonpræparater, som normalt ikke skal give menstruation, kan give uskyldige småblødninger. (Trolle, 2019a)

Also hormonal products, which normally shouldn't give menstruation, can give innocent small bleedings.

Menstruation in the US data is represented with its own agency (see Section 6.2.4), but here the bodily process itself, as well as the person experiencing it, are backgrounded. Bleeding is represented as being given by the product, as opposed to being something that happens in the female body or as an independent agent.

Although representation of health care professionals and products in metaphor scenarios is rare on the medical website, in contrast to the women's magazines, they are present. Across the articles of the women's magazines and the medical websites in both languages, nominalisations, nouns and gerunds are represented as social actors. This grammatical choice expresses a strategy to background bodily processes and those experiencing menopause in metaphor scenarios.

### 6.3 Narrative

To describe the narrative elements of metaphor scenarios, I proposed a distinction between narratives at the metaphoric and the literal level in Section 5.4. I presented some examples to illustrate how the metaphoric narratives map certain ideas onto the literal meaning. As mentioned in Section 4.2.1, narratives consist of agency, a sequence of events and an outcome (Thornborrow, 2010). These are realised at the metaphoric level, but may not take the form of narratives at the literal level. Yet, as illustrated in Section 5.4, the outcome must be expressed or implied at the literal level for the mini-narrative to qualify as a metaphor scenario. In this Section, I will present narratives I found on the medical websites and compare with the findings from the women's magazines, beginning with Movement metaphor (see Section 6.3.1) and following with Container metaphor (see Section 6.3.2).

#### 6.3.1 Narrative with movement metaphors

One of the most frequently evoked schemas across all the data included in this study is that of Movement, and indeed Movement narratives engage most of the social actor types in the articles from the medical websites as well as the women's magazines (see Section 5.4.1). In

Section 6.1.1, I demonstrated how Movement metaphors on the medical websites are used to construct certain relations between different actors. Movement metaphor is also used to represent an actor's movement in a chain of events. In this section, I focus on how metaphoric narratives are constructed through Movement metaphor. These metaphors contribute to the characterization of menopause and those experiencing it.

As mentioned in Section 6.2.3, I found health care professionals represented in the scenarios on the medical websites but not in those in the women's magazines. Two instances in the US articles construct the relation between healthcare professionals and women with Movement metaphors. As demonstrated in Section 6.2.3, the HCPs feature twice in the US instances and only once explicitly in the Danish (55). In both instances in the US data, the HCP is agentive engaged in 'reaching' (57) patients or 'helping' (47) women.

57

Despite these treatments, the lack of awareness of the frequency of genitourinary syndrome of menopause makes reaching patients with this condition difficult.  
(Luckstein, 2017)

In instance 57, the metaphoric narrative is motivated by the expression 'reaching'. This suggests that the author is metaphorically moving towards patients with genitourinary syndrome of menopause. The literal agency is not explicitly stated, but from general knowledge about how the healthcare system works, we can infer that this action is a conversation. This conversation is explicitly represented elsewhere in the same article (47). The author represents the process as difficult and attributes these difficulties to a general lack of awareness about the frequency of the condition.

47

When health care providers initiate the conversation and ask the questions to identify genitourinary syndrome of menopause, that is a step toward helping women identify the problem and understand that it can be treated. (Luckstein, 2017)

The metaphoric narrative in instance 47 is motivated by the expression 'step'. This action is facilitated by the literal actions 'initiate the conversation and ask the questions' and the desirable outcome is that the metaphorically closer proximity between the healthcare

professional and women enables the literal 'helping'. The metaphor then describes the relation between the healthcare professional and the women as well as the agency of the healthcare professional, while social actors are represented in literal terms.

In addition to using Movement metaphor to describe relations, these metaphors are also used to describe agency that is connected to other events in a narrative. This takes three different forms. In the Danish instance 48, the reader is represented as needing to move in order to normalise their situation. I discuss this instance in Section 6.1.1. In the Danish instance 50, a risk is rising, a movement that is represented as dependent on a combination of actions and circumstances. In the US instance 49, the hormones move, which affects a test's ability to 'tell'.

49

But, since FSH levels rise and fall during the course of your menstrual cycle, home FSH tests can't really tell you whether or not you're definitely in a stage of menopause.  
(Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020a)

The metaphoric narrative begins with the 'rise and fall', the manner in which the hormone FSH moves. The second event is that the tests are unable to tell the reader where they are, due to the movement of the FSH levels during the course of a menstrual cycle. The non-metaphoric term 'since' represents this Movement as the logical reason why tests are not able to tell. The outcome is that the reader still does not know if she's menopausal.

50

Hvis man vil bruge systemisk behandling, bør man begynde senest 10 år efter menopause, ellers stiger risikoen for bivirkninger. Mange andre forhold spiller ind på risikoen for bivirkninger: livsstil, vægt, almindelig sundhedstilstand og arvelige forhold.  
(Trolle, 2019c)

If one wants to use systemic treatment, one should start no later than 10 years after menopause, otherwise the risk of side effects will increase. Many factors play into the risk of side effects: lifestyle, weight, general health condition and congenital factors.

Instance 50 combines metaphors of Movement; 'stiger' (increase), Sports; 'spille' (play) and Container; 'ind' (into). Metaphorically, the risk of side effects is represented as moving

upwards, but many other factors affects this movement. These factors as well as the initiation of treatment must logically happen prior to the effect they can have on the risk. The desirable outcome is to have a low risk of side effects.

### 6.3.2 Narrative with container metaphors

In the women's magazines, container metaphors are used to construct the relation between menopause and those experiencing; with menopause represented as the container and those experiencing it as moving through this container. While this scenario is also used on the medical websites (51), other instantiations of the Container schema represent relations between actors and circumstances, namely 'a sexual situation' (53), 'forhold' (factors; 50) and 'risiko' (risk; 50) and 'life' (52). In one case, the Container schema characterises a process in terms of a container, namely 'diskutere' (discuss; 54). Instance 51, from the Danish medical website, suggests the evaluation that inside is safe while outside is unsafe. This is similar to the instances of combined Conflict and Container metaphor, 'barrier' and 'invader' presented in Section 5.2.2.

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet, og hvis man opfatter forandringen som noget negativt, er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer. De fleste kvinder kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde og ser positivt på den nye livsfase. (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life and if one perceives the change as something negative, one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms. However, most women do come through menopause in a good way and view the new life-phase positively.

This metaphoric narrative first construct menopause as a sharp corner, suggesting a moving person needs to change direction suddenly. If this person has a negative perception of the changes, they are more exposed to psychological symptoms according to the text. The Container metaphor 'udsat' (at risk, directly translated: put outside) suggests that perceiving the changes negatively places one outside some kind of protective space. Another metaphor constructs a better outcome with the Movement/Container metaphor 'igennem' (through).

This is presented as an alternative to the undesirable outcome of having psychological symptoms. Moving through a Container is conceptually in line with the idea of moving around a sharp corner.

54

Det er vigtigt at kunne diskutere problemerne åbent, for ellers har de en tendens til at vokse sig større og større. Og ikke sjældent ser man, at et seksuelt problem med tiden udvikler sig til et intimitetsproblem, som kun gør frustrationerne større. (Trolle, 2020)

It is important to be able to discuss the problems openly, because otherwise they have a tendency to grow bigger and bigger. And it is not rare to see that a sexual problem over time develops into a problem with intimacy, which only makes the frustrations bigger.

Instance 54 combines a Container metaphor, 'åbent' (openly), with a Size metaphor, 'større' (bigger), an expression that is repeated. In the metaphoric narrative, the problems can be discussed openly, which ensures that they don't grow bigger. The open discussion is construed as able to stop the metaphorical growth of the problems. This maps the experience of problems as increasingly unsolvable on to metaphorical growth. The undesirable outcome is bigger frustrations.

While most Container metaphors are used together with other metaphors to construct a particular space, the metaphoric term 'filled' is used alone.

52

The biggest misconception that women have about menopause is that it's awful, that it's life-altering, and that all of a sudden, the rest of their life is going to be filled with a lack of interest in sex, feeling hot and sweaty all the time, and just being sleep deprived. Generally speaking, most women will have mild to moderate symptoms. (Weiss, 2019)

Instance 52 conveys two separate potential experiences, one is deemed to be untrue (the metaphor scenario) and the other true. The experience deemed a 'misconception' includes the metaphor of life as a container, which is being filled up with unpleasant bodily sensations.

These unpleasant sensations are a series of events at the literal level, constructed metaphorically as one solid mass that can fill up a container.

#### 6.4 Appraisal

On the medical websites, appraisal expresses negative attitude towards menopause in most cases, with a few exceptions. Further, judgement expresses what the authors consider normal and common. I found no systematic differences between how this is achieved with Movement and Container metaphors and, as demonstrated above, these are often combined. Therefore, I address them together in the following.

On the Danish website, some experiences of menopause are represented with terms that inherently appraise menopause negatively. These terms are 'gener' (bothers) (58), 'symptomer' (symptoms) (51) and 'problemer' (problems) (65, 59) and they refer to unwanted bodily processes. But that does not necessarily mean that menopause is constructed in purely negative terms in the scenarios that use these terms. The appraisal in instance 51, for example, contrasts different experiences.

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet, og hvis man opfatter forandringen som noget negativt, er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer. De fleste kvinder kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde og ser positivt på den nye livsfase. (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life and if one perceives the change as something negative, one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms. However, most women do come through menopause in a good way and view the new life-phase positively.

First, menopause is represented as 'et skarpt hjørne' (a sharp corner). The metaphoric expressions 'skarpt' (sharp) and 'hjørne' (corner) construe menopause in terms of a sharp turn. When used in conjunction like this, they convey the idea of moving and suddenly having to change direction. This represents menopause as abrupt; something you need to adjust to.

The metaphoric term 'udsat' (at risk) can also be translated as 'exposed' and it judges the generic 'man' (one) as vulnerable. It could be seen as counterpart to the classification '(in)security' under affect. I consider 'udsat' (exposed) a judgement because it is a characteristic. In this text, it is an assessment made by an authority (the author of the article, an MD), who represents an institutional assessment. The term 'udsat' (exposed) entails something unpleasant, which in this instance is represented with 'psykologiske symptomer' (psychological symptoms).

In contrast to this negative representation, the terms 'god' (good) and 'positivt' (positively) appraise the manner of movement and the outlook respectively with a positive attitude towards menopause. This is judged to be the most common experience, expressed with the term 'fleste' (most) in the collective 'de fleste kvinder' (most women). This can contribute to a normalisation of a good experience of menopause, representing women as capable of handling it.

Interestingly, the term 'igennem' (through) which was frequent in both languages in the women's magazines is only used once in the Danish medical articles and not at all in the US. In instance 51, it is associated with a positive appraisal of menopause, contrary to the findings I presented in Section 5.5.2.

Another term with inherent negative evaluation, 'problemerne' (the problems), is represented as being able to grow bigger and lead to misunderstandings, dependent on the reader's actions (59). In addition to this representation of possible consequences, the metaphoric expression 'spiller komedie' (play a comedy) appraises the reader as (conditionally) dramatic.

59

Hvis du lader som ingenting eller spiller komedie, risikerer du, at problemerne vokser sig større – og du risikerer, at de seksuelle problemer fører til misforståelser. (Trolle, 2020)

If you pretend like nothing is happening or you are playing a comedy you risk that the problems grow bigger – and you risk that the sexual problems lead to misunderstandings.

In instance 59, the reader is warned that their actions, 'lader som ingenting eller spiller komedie' (pretend like nothing is happening or playing a comedy), can have negative repercussions. The Movement metaphor 'fører' (lead) suggests that the behaviour makes the problems move towards misunderstandings. The phrase 'spiller komedie' (playing a comedy) literally refers to an aim to entertain and have positive outcomes such as laughter. But in this context, where the phrase is used metaphorically, the outcome is negative. The contextual meaning is to pretend like nothing is wrong, and this pretence is associated with hypocrisy and creating a fuss in the DDO ('komedie', sb. Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2022). This contextual meaning appraises with negative propriety. This instance implies deontic modality by suggesting how the reader should (not) behave, yet the modality expressed with 'hvis' (if) is epistemic.

The medical websites express judgement of bleeding or a sexual situation as '(ab)normal'. This is most frequently expressed using some form of the term 'normal' and contributes to a discursive strategy, I discuss in Section 6.5.3. It is typically used to indicate that normal is desirable. Some form of the term 'normal' occurs twice in the Danish data (48, 64) and twice in the US (60, 9).

64

Også hormonpræparater, som normalt ikke skal give menstruation, kan give uskyldige småblødninger. (Trolle, 2019a)

Also hormonal products, which normally shouldn't give menstruation, can give innocent small bleedings.

In instance 64, 'normalt' (normally) is used to appraise menstruation, occurring during the use of some HT products, as abnormal, with the epistemic modality marker 'ikke skal' (shouldn't). The experience of small bleedings some people might have are appraised as 'uskyldige' (innocent), indicating that nothing serious is wrong if it happens.

## 6.5 Discursive strategies of identified metaphor scenarios

In this section, I present the discursive strategies in the metaphor scenarios I have identified on the medical websites. Some text instances realise more than one discursive strategy and several scenarios in the same article realise the same strategy. Therefore, the table below

illustrates how the strategies are dispersed across the articles, and do not account for frequency of scenarios.

Article	Problem-solution pattern	Mitigate negative attitude	Construe a normal menopause	Total
Overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2019b)		1	1	2
Overgangsalderen og hormonbehandling (Trolle, 2019c)	1			1
Overgangsalderen, spørgsmål og svar til hormonbehandling (Trolle, 2019d)	1			1
Skedekatar efter overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2019e)	1			1
Ophør af menstruation (menopause) (Sundhed.dk, 2020)			1	1
Seksuelle problemer i overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2020)	7	1	1	9
Blødning efter overgangsalderen (Trolle, 2019a)	1		1	2
Menopause overview (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b)			2	2
Menopause Diagnosis and treatment (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020a)			1	1
Menopause hormone therapy: Does it cause vaginal bleeding? (Burnett, 2020)			1	1
Stephanie Faubion, M.D., talks genitourinary syndrome of menopause (Luckstein, 2017)	3		1	4
Women's Wellness: Menopause misconceptions (Weiss, 2019)	1	1		2
Women's Wellness: Experiencing Changes in Sexuality Around Menopause (Sparks, 2015)	2		2	4
Bleeding after menopause: Is it normal? (Laughlin-Tommaso, 2020)			1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	

Table 6.2 Discursive strategies distributes across articles

For each article, I identified discursive strategies realised with metaphor scenario that contribute to the characterisation of menopause and those experiencing it in the same way as presented in Section 5.6. The most prevalent on the Danish medical website is the problem-solution pattern. This is also the case for the women's magazines. But the US medical website

has more scenarios concerned with construing a normal menopause. In Sections 6.5.1-3, I illustrate the realised discursive strategies, as I did in Chapter 5.

#### 6.5.1 A problem-solution pattern

In the medical website articles, menopause is construed as a medical problem (see Section 2.2 on medicalisation). In a recurring pattern, a situation is described with two possible outcomes depending on whether or not a particular action is taken. These are appraised as the desirable and undesirable outcomes of the metaphor scenario. I found this pattern in articles from both sundhed.dk and the Mayo Clinic.

In article 13, I identified seven text instances that represent experiences during menopause as problematic. The 'problem' is represented as reacting (in metaphoric terms) to actions taken (or not taken) by those experiencing menopause in the Danish texts. Solutions are generally represented as some action the reader takes, which are often represented as mental or verbal processes.

Problems are endowed with the ability to grow and spread, which is conventionally undesirable. More specifically in instance 65, they may 'udspringe' (spring) and 'brede sig' (spread) from the body to the mind and social relations.

65

...selvom problemet udspringer i kroppen (fx som et fald i kvindeligt kønshormon), kan det brede sig til kvindens selvfølelse og evt. parforhold. (Trolle, 2020)

...even if the problem springs in the body (e.g. as a fall in female sex hormone), it may spread to the woman's self esteem and any relationship.

The term 'udspringer' (springs) denotes a material process with the problem as the actor. The basic meaning indicates a movement from a point of origin to somewhere else. The prepositional prefix 'ud' (out) emphasises the movement in space from one place (the body) to another that is conceptualised as being outside (which is the woman's self-esteem and relationship). This indicates a split between body and mind, which is conventional in Western medicine (Declercq, 2021; Scheper-hughes & Lock, 1987). The basic meaning of 'udspringer' denotes a sportsperson who jumps out from a diving board/tower into a pool. The body is represented as a place where the process occurs, which backgrounds the woman to a place

where agency is performed by other forces. These forces are bodily processes related to menopause on a semantic level and represented as 'problems' on the lexical level.

The association of 'udspringe' with water works with 'brede sig' (spread itself) as the problem can be thought of as water. This scenario is also in harmony with the 'grow' metaphor through the Danish idiom 'mange bække små, stor en å' (many small brooks can become a big stream), which is a common way of expressing that many smaller occurrences of something may lead to something bigger. It is conventionally used to encourage someone to pay attention to the little things with the rationale that they may develop into something bigger if they reoccur.

In instance 65 above, a problem is represented as being able to move with the modality marker 'kan' (may), which indicates dynamic modality in this scenario. The problem is represented with the ability to move from the bodily part of the woman to her mental and potentially her social life. Epistemic modality (evt.) in the representation of 'parforhold' (couple relationship) shows an understanding of different circumstances rather than assuming a conventional heterosexual relationship. While this does not strike me as unusual in this type of text, it is worth mentioning because of assumptions discussed in Section 2.2.3: it indicates progress from a feminist perspective.

Suggesting two alternative outcomes, one that is negatively evaluated where problems grow, spread or lead to misunderstandings and one where they do not, depending on the actions of the reader, is a persuasive technique to get the reader to pay attention to their sexual problems.

This representation of experiences during menopause as problematic construes a need for medical intervention, as in the following instance from the same article.

62

Men for de kvinder, som oplever seksuelle problemer, er der grund til at gøre noget, så problemerne ikke vokser sig større. Og der er heldigvis hjælp at hente. (Trolle, 2020)

But for the women who experience sexual problems there is reason to do something so the problems don't grow bigger. And fortunately there's help to get.

Instance 6.2 proposes that an unspecified action is needed for women experiencing sexual problems during menopause to prevent the problems from becoming 'bigger' (i.e. worse). The need (deontic modality) is expressed in 'er der grund til at gøre noget' (there is reason to do something).

The lexical metaphor 'vokser sig større' (grow bigger) transfers an ability that is usually only available to people, animals and plants – namely, the ability to grow – to the abstract concept of problems. The fact that this growth is endogenous is made clear by the reflexive pronoun 'sig' (themselves). This entails that the women are not directly accountable for the problems but have the power to limit them, like weeds in a garden.

The present metaphor scenario represents women experiencing sexual problems as a collective and expresses potential agency for these women. Evaluation helps to construe it as desirable for them to take action. In contrast to the negative evaluation inherent in 'problemer' (problems), there is a positive evaluation in the proposition that there is help to be had, which is judged with the adverb 'heldigvis' (fortunately). In this way, getting help is construed as desirable for women who experience sexual problems.

A more specific solution to the problems is presented later in the article with a metaphor of clarity.

55

Ved en samtale med den praktiserende læge lykkes det som regel at få klarhed over de seksuelle problemer og deres årsager. (Trolle, 2020)

Through a conversation with the general practitioner it is usually possible to get clarity about the sexual problems and their causes.

The potential, and desirable, outcome is clarity and it is represented as the outcome of a conversation. This instance opens the part of the text that deals with the diagnosis. A diagnosis is conventionally part of the solution to medical problems and therefore it is implied that 'clarity' is part of that solution.

Instance 55 introduces the metaphor of 'clarity' as a desirable state. Through this metaphoric expression, a scenario is created where murky problems grow while clarity will help to stop the

growth or perhaps even solve the problems. Similarly, the same text suggests that problems should be discussed 'openly'.

54

Det er vigtigt at kunne diskutere problemerne åbent, for ellers har de en tendens til at vokse sig større og større... (Trolle, 2020)

It is important to be able to discuss the problems openly, because otherwise they have a tendency to grow bigger and bigger...

Instance 54 repeats the grow-metaphor discussed above and suggests open discussion as a concrete solution. Here, the ability to have an open discussion of the sexual problems is appraised as important, expressed with the phrase 'det er vigtigt' (it is important). Dynamic modality is expressed with 'at kunne' (to be able to). Appraising something as 'important' could be seen as an attempt to imply obligation on the woman experiencing sexual problems to discuss problems openly. Conversation as a solution is also represented in the term 'dialog' (dialogue) in the same article.

48

I næsten alle tilfælde kan du bedre eller normalisere den seksuelle situation. Men det kræver tålmodighed og vilje til dialog. Og det kræver, at du tør gå nye veje og eksperimentere dig lidt frem. (Trolle, 2020)

In almost all cases, you can improve or normalise the sexual situation. But it demands patience and will to dialogue. And it demands that you dare walk new ways and experiment a little.

Here, a verbal process is represented as part of a solution that combines it with the metaphor scenario 'gå nye veje' (dare to walk new ways). This constructs the solution of trying new things in terms of movement and paths. The repeated term 'kræver' (demands) expresses a verbal process with the verbiage 'tålmodighed og vilje til dialog' (patience and will to dialogue) and 'at du tør gå nye veje og eksperimentere dig lidt frem' (that you dare to walk new ways and experiment a little). This verbiage is represented as needed with high dynamic modality, which implies a positive attitude on the part of the speaker towards this approach. The sayer is

represented as 'det' (it), which refers back to the desirable outcome of the scenario: 'bedre eller normalisere den seksuelle situation' (improve or normalise the sexual situation). Here, the metaphor scenario expressed in 'gå nye veje' (walk new ways) plays one part in the solution that is presented. The other part, representing a conversation as a solution in the context of menopause, is a strategy I also found in the women's magazines (see Section 5.6.1).

While the previous instances I presented in this section have suggested what to do, the following explains what not to do

59

Hvis du lader som ingenting eller spiller komedie, risikerer du, at problemerne vokser sig større – og du risikerer, at de seksuelle problemer fører til misforståelser. (Trolle, 2020)

If you pretend like nothing or are playing a comedy you risk that the problems grow bigger – and you risk that the sexual problems lead to misunderstandings.

This example combines three metaphors; one with the woman, represented through direct address, and another two with the problem as actor. The solution suggested is a reiteration of the open discussion proposed in instance 54 as that is the opposite of pretending and acting. The development of this scenario throughout the text is used to persuade the reader to discuss their sex life with their partner and/or GP if they experience any problems.

While the US data also mentions 'problems', these are not constructed as growing, spreading or leading. In fact, I did not identify any metaphor scenarios attributing abilities to the term 'problem'. In the American data, menopause is problematised in other ways. For example, menopause is represented as the loss of a pattern, which is appraised as disruptive.

3

...the loss of the consistent, regular pattern of our menstrual cycles is what becomes so disruptive... (Weiss, 2019)

The metaphoric expression 'pattern' is based on the metaphoric grounds of organisation, a concept that is reinforced by the terms 'regular' and 'cycles'. This organisation is juxtaposed to the problem, i.e. lack of organisation is a problem because it is disruptive and a loss. The

negative attitude is explicitly evaluated in the terms 'loss' and 'disruptive'. It is an undesirable outcome when something becomes 'disruptive' but in contrast to most realisations of the problem-solution strategy, it is represented with high certainty and without a proposed solution.

Typically, mental and verbal processes are constructed as helpful in both languages. I demonstrated this with the 'open discussion' (54) and 'comedy' (59) scenarios above. In a US article about the condition, genitourinary syndrome, women are represented as ideally engaging in the mental processes 'identify' and 'understand'.

47

When health care providers initiate the conversation and ask the questions to identify genitourinary syndrome of menopause, that is a step toward helping women identify the problem and understand that it can be treated. (Luckstein, 2017)

The verbal actions initiated by health care providers are represented as able to move them closer to helping women with the mental processes to identify and understand. The movement metaphor represents the health care professional with a high degree of semantic agency, suggesting they are an important part of the solution. This is in contrast to the findings in the women's magazines, where HCPs are not represented as engaged in metaphor scenarios. However, on the medical websites, women are also represented as social actors in relation to solving the problems that occur during menopause (53, 66).

66

Identifying the ingredients that need to be in place in order to maximize willingness and desire, and being more playful about sexual activity, may help women maintain intimacy beyond menopause. (Sparks, 2015)

Even though women are the sociological actor engaged in the process 'identifying' in instance 66, they are backgrounded with the gerund form. The metaphoric expression 'ingredients' frames this solution in terms of cooking, a material process, while the contextual meaning is a mental process.

On the medical websites of both languages, a problem-solution strategy is realised. The solution strategy is to think about menopause differently and talk about it more, a strategy I also found in the women's magazines. The next strategy I will present, adopts a less negative view of menopause.

#### 6.5.2 Mitigate negative approaches to menopause

Some metaphor scenarios challenge negative perceptions of menopause and suggest a better reality. This strategy is pursued by contrasting unpleasant experiences with less negative (52) or even positive experiences (63, 51).

52

The biggest misconception that women have about menopause is that it's awful, that it's life-altering, and that all of a sudden, the rest of their life is going to be filled with a lack of interest in sex, feeling hot and sweaty all the time, and just being sleep deprived. Generally speaking, most women will have mild to moderate symptoms. (Weiss, 2019)

The term 'misconception' challenges the negative representation of menopause. In this representation, menopause is negatively evaluated as 'awful'. Elaborating with specific unpleasant experiences further contribute to negative evaluation of menopause in this example. The instance sets up two potential experiences of menopause, one evaluated as true, where 'most women will have mild to moderate symptoms', and the scenario as false (labelled a misconception). This is the only attempt to mitigate the negative approach to menopause in the scenarios on the US website.

The Danish medical website suggests that menopause may bring positive experiences to some women.

63

Selvom man ser en større forekomst af seksuelle problemer i overgangsalderen, betyder det ikke, at alle kvinder i denne aldersgruppe oplever seksuelle gener. Tværtimod beskriver ikke så få kvinder, at de kropslige og psykosociale forandringer giver dem en ny ro og modenhed, som virker berigende for deres seksuelle liv. (Trolle, 2020)

Even though one sees more of an occurrence of sexual problems in menopause, this does not mean that all women in this age group experiences sexual bothers. On the contrary, not just a few women describe that the bodily and psycho-social changes give them a new sense of calm and maturity, that functions in an enriching way for their sexual life.

In instance 63, 'seksuelle gener' (sexual bothers) is the unpleasant experience. The text claims that even though more women in menopause experience this compared to other age groups, there are also many stories of women who experience that reaching this age has benefits for their sexual life, namely it provides them with 'en ny ro og modenhed' (a new sense of calm and maturity).

Menopause is also represented more generally in a positive light. Another Danish article conceptualises menopause as something women move through and have a positive view of.

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet, og hvis man opfatter forandringen som noget negativt, er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer. De fleste kvinder kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde og ser positivt på den nye livsfase. (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life and if one perceives the change as something negative, one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms. However, most women come through menopause in a good way and view the new life-phase positively.

This instance suggests that women who have a positive view of menopause will have an easier experience. However, it does not reframe menopause in the same direct way I found in the women's magazines ('Menopause is not the end; it's just the beginning'; 34). Rather, it acknowledges the challenges with the metaphoric expression 'skarpt hjørne' (sharp corner). This metaphor entails that a change of direction must be made suddenly and this requires an ability to orient oneself to the new circumstances and react quickly or perhaps slow down. In any case, the positive experience of menopause is represented as achievable for most women.

### 6.5.3. Metaphor scenarios that construe a normal menopause

Some metaphor scenarios appraise menopause and related bodily functions in terms of what is considered (ab)normal and (ir)regular. This is expressed with 'normal' twice in the Danish data (48, 64) and twice in the US (60, 9). In these instances, 'normal' is something desirable. It is typically related to bleedings, although instance 48 addresses how to 'normalise the sexual situation'.

48

I næsten alle tilfælde kan du bedre eller normalisere den seksuelle situation. Men det kræver tålmodighed og vilje til dialog. Og det kræver, at du tør gå nye veje og eksperimentere dig lidt frem. (Trolle, 2020)

In almost all cases you can improve or normalise the sexual situation. But it requires patience and a will to have a conversation. And it requires that you dare to walk on new paths and experiment a little.

Instance 48 suggests that the reader has the ability to 'bedre eller normalisere' (improve or normalise) their situation. This suggests negative appraisal of the situation. The metaphor 'gå nye veje' (walk on new paths) is represented as contributing to the improvement or normalisation of the situation.

64

Også hormonpræparater, som normalt ikke skal give menstruation, kan give uskyldige småblødninger. (Trolle, 2019a)

Also hormonal products, which normally shouldn't give menstruation, can give innocent small bleedings.

In Section 6.2.3, I mentioned that instance 64 constructs HT products as potential 'givers' of small bleedings. In this instance, it is deemed normal for some HT products not to give menstruation, yet a small deviation from this norm is represented as possible.

One of the American articles provide a definition of menopause, which focuses on the end of monthly bleedings as the norm in relation to menopause. As demonstrated in Section 6.1.1,

menstruation is a recurring theme, particularly on the US website, where it is used to construe a normal menopause.

9

Menopause is the end of menstruation. In clinical terms, you reach menopause when you haven't had a period for 12 months. Vaginal bleeding after menopause isn't normal and should be evaluated by your doctor. (Laughlin-Tommaso, 2020)

Instance 9 construes menopause and the time after it, as the time when a woman no longer has monthly bleedings. This is in line with conventional definitions of menopause as described in Sections 1.3 and 2.2.3. In instance 9, menopause is metaphorically conceptualised as a destination while menstruation is represented as a continuum that has been going on until the reader arrives at menopause. While there is no appraisal of menopause in this scenario, vaginal bleeding after menopause is judged 'not normal' and deontic modality emphasises the need for the reader, who experiences this, to have it evaluated by a doctor. Thus menopause without bleeding is constructed as the norm.

60

I'm taking hormone therapy for menopause symptoms, and my monthly menstrual periods have returned. Is this normal? (Burnett, 2020)

Instance 60 demonstrates how a woman questions having periods after starting HT treatment for menopause, suggesting that something may be wrong. In Sections 6.2.1.2 and 6.5.1, I discuss another metaphor scenario relating to the regularity of menstruation from the American data, where 'a regular pattern' is represented as a 'loss' (3). This scenario represents the fact that menopausal women no longer experience regular bleedings as a disturbance of normality, while instances 9 and 60 construct menopause as normal, with bleedings later in life as the abnormality.

Other instances that address what is normal also construct bleedings as an indicator of normality (11, 10, 7). These instances represent normality with the terms 'natural', 'common and expected', 'often', 'irregular' and by expressing epistemic modality.

11

Menopausen er det tidspunkt, hvor menstruationerne hører op. Den er en naturlig del af en kvindes aldringsproces. Den varsler afslutningen på hendes evne til at blive gravid. (Sundhed.dk, 2020)

The menopause is the time when the menstruations stop. It is a natural part of a woman's aging process. It signals the end of her ability to become pregnant.

The term 'naturlig' (natural) in instance 11 is used to construct menopause and the stop of menstruations as a normal part of getting older as a woman. This normal occurrence is further endowed with agency to signal to the woman that she will no longer be able to get pregnant. By association, this is also constructed as normal.

7

Skipping periods during perimenopause is common and expected. Often, menstrual periods will skip a month and return, or skip several months and then start monthly cycles again for a few months. Periods also tend to happen on shorter cycles, so they are closer together. Despite irregular periods, pregnancy is possible. If you've skipped a period but aren't sure you've started the menopausal transition, consider a pregnancy test. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020b)

Instance 7 constructs 'irregular periods' as 'common and expected', which suggests that one norm is the regularity of the periods until menopause, while the irregularity of periods becomes the norm in perimenopause.

10

Når man nærmer sig menopausen, kan der være forvarslere i form af blødningsforstyrrelser og symptomer som hedeture. (Trolle, 2019b)

When one approaches menopause, there may be signs in the form of bleeding disruptions and symptoms like hot flashes.

In instance 10, the epistemic modality marker 'kan' suggests that the 'blødningsforstyrrelser og symptomer som hedeture' (bleeding disruptions and symptoms like hot flashes) are not abnormal if they happen.

While norms surrounding menopause predominantly are represented with reference to bleeding on both websites, the Danish instance 48 demonstrates how sexuality is also represented with references to norms. Three instances on the US website address this topic (4, 53, 56).

56

Women frequently experience changes in sexuality around menopause. These can include a change in sexual interest or desire which may move from a more spontaneous sexual desire pattern to more of a willingness or receptive desire pattern. This means that a woman may feel like being sexual if the situation is right and all the necessary ingredients are in place. For example, the necessary ingredients might be that she is well rested, that she isn't stressed and that the relationship with her partner is in a good place. (Sparks, 2015)

In instance 56, the norm is represented in terms of frequency. Changes in sexuality during menopause are constructed as normal.

4

Aside from the physical discomfort, genitourinary syndrome of menopause can put a strain on relationships, and women need to know that this is common and nothing to be embarrassed by. (Luckstein, 2017)

The term 'common' suggests that it is normal for the genitourinary syndrome of menopause to put a strain on relationships.

53

So a woman may find herself in a sexual situation and notice that she is aroused before she experiences sexual desire. Becoming more planful about sexual activity may help cultivate situations that can lead to arousal (and then desire) and also help maintain intimacy. (Sparks, 2015)

The wording that 'cultivating situations' can help to 'maintain intimacy' suggests that 'intimacy' is a norm that can be preserved. The four instances which address changes in sexuality during menopause as normal typically provide suggestions for how to address these

changes. The strategy to construct this as normal may serve to encourage women to address it and improve their situation.

## 6.6 Main scenario patterns in medical websites

A combination of metaphor in one instance is typical of the medical websites, as it is of the women's magazines (see Section 5.7). Eight text instances on the US medical website combine metaphoric expressions, while five rely on one metaphoric expression. Ten text instances on the Danish medical website combine metaphoric expressions, while four rely on one metaphoric expression. In relative frequencies, this is 62% of the US text instances that combine metaphor, while the percentage for Danish is 71%. These differences are slightly larger than for the women's magazines.

The Danish medical website uses a greater variety of metaphor compared to the US website, but in both languages the conceptual schemas of Movement and Container are the most frequent. They typically represent relations between those experiencing menopause and some experience related to menopause.

The social actors on the medical websites include HCPs and medical products in a few instances, which sets them apart from the women's magazines. Similar to the women's magazines, the medical websites address the reader directly with the assumption that they experience menopause. The medical websites prefer the term 'women' to gender-neutral alternatives, when they do not use personal pronouns. Those experiencing menopause are typically represented as engaging in mental processes, although some metaphoric expressions represent the actions of people experiencing menopause as a material process.

Menopause is with very few exceptions appraised negatively with metaphor scenarios. Similar to the women's magazines, some instances represent actions women can take to improve a problem. In Chapter 7, I discuss the differences in how these actions are represented across the two languages and genres.

The most frequent discursive strategy on the Danish website is to represent a problem solution pattern, while the strategy to construe a normal menopause is more frequently realised on the US websites. However, the problems, solutions and norms appear rather similar while there

are differences in how the strategies are realised and how the experiences are represented. I discuss this further in Chapter 7.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

The metaphor scenario analysis has enabled me to describe how menopause is represented in contemporary women's magazines and medical websites from Denmark and the US. Patterns of metaphor scenarios consist of interwoven connections of schematicity, agency, narrative and appraisal. In the previous two chapters, I first took the perspective of each of these elements. I then discussed how the scenarios may realise discursive strategies from construing menopause as a problem to considering how to address this problem.

In this chapter, I discuss the findings presented in the previous two chapters as I address my research questions, outlined in Section 1.6. The discussion in Section 7.1 reveals networks of beliefs (see Section 1.2 or Koller, 2014c, p. 155) expressed by the producers of the texts in my data. I compare my findings to previous studies of metaphor in health discourses presented in Section 3.2. I make this comparison to reflect on how my research contributes to existing knowledge about menopause and linguistic research of health. In Section 7.2, I discuss the beliefs I have identified in my data in relation to ideologies and processes discussed in previous academic literature and grey literature identified in Chapters 2 and 3. I compare and contrast findings across the genres and languages as well as with previous linguistic work presented in Section 3.2. To account for similarities and differences, I draw on information about the data and discursive practices as presented in Section 4.1 as well as the broader socio-cultural and institutional context described in Section 2.1.

### 7.1 Representation of menopause and those experiencing it

In this section, I discuss the representations of menopause and those experiencing it. The aim is to answer Research Question 1:

How do metaphor scenarios represent menopause and those experiencing it in Danish and US American texts published between 2013 and 2021? In particular, how is menopause represented in:

- i. Articles mentioning menopause in women's magazines
- ii. Medical websites written with the aim of informing the general public about menopause

Menopause and those experiencing it are represented in various ways across the data as described in Chapters 5 and 6. Most notable is that both are represented as engaged in various processes. This is interesting because it indicates a split between an experience and the person experiencing it. This has been described as 'externalisation' and has been used in therapy to objectify problematic experiences (M. White, 2007, p. 9, see Section 2.2). White suggests the strategy helps to separate these problems from the identity of those experiencing them. This enables problem resolution because it becomes possible to dissociate the problem from feelings of guilt. For menopause, this means that those experiencing it are able to describe it without thinking of it as an integrated part of themselves. White points to Foucault's work on cultural history of thought to explain why many integrate problems they experience into their identity in the first place (Foucault, 2001/1961, 2014/1963). Interestingly, this explanation refers to an othering of the body as it becomes objectified in the context of medicalization. In my data, I found instances of the personification of menopause and the body. In the following, I compare these findings to similar findings by other linguists in discourses on health.

These strategies are talked about in terms of a split self or a personification of the experience by metaphor linguists (see Section 3.2). The split-self metaphor described by Lakoff (1996, p. 105) occurs when 'incompatible aspects of a person' are represented as 'different people'. In my data, this is expressed with a woman 'finding herself' (53), implying that part of her has been away from another part of her. In other instances, her body is split from her self esteem (65) or from her self (40, 20, 1, 32). These indicate a perspective of mind-body dualism as discussed in Section 2.2.1.

53

So a woman may find herself in a sexual situation and notice that she is aroused before she experiences sexual desire... (Sparks, 2015)

65

...selvom problemet udspringer i kroppen (fx som et fald i kvindeligt kønshormon), kan det brede sig til kvindens selvfølelse og evt. parforhold. (Trolle, 2020)

...even if the problem springs in the body (e.g. as a fall in female sex hormone), it may spread to the woman's self esteem and any relationship.

40

Your body is going through some drastic changes at this point that will probably affect your training and nutrition — and unfortunately not the ones you want. (Outside, 2022a)

Split-self metaphors enable the construction of a conflict between parts of the self. Littlemore and Turner (2020) found othering of the body, which was used to attribute blame for the loss of pregnancy. Bullo (2018) found metaphor that represented bodies as *broken* by endometriosis. In my data, some metaphors construct the parties as being in a conflict with the desirable outcome that the mind wins over matter, for example represented as the reader versus their physique (25). Another representation of this conflict suggests a unity between the reader and their body (32), indicating that the conflict between mind and matter exists, but that the reader and their body find a resolution rather than one party ‘conquering’ the other.

25

...Now that you have all the advanced and proven tools to conquer your physique  
...(Outside, 2022a)

32

Du skal lære at forenes med en krop, der bliver ældre og føler dig måske ikke attraktiv.  
(Askgard, 2017)

You must learn to unite with a body that gets older and maybe you do not feel attractive.

The self is also split in more complex ways in my data. In some cases, a body part is endowed with independent agency, for example the skin acts ‘in a bewildering fashion’ (6), signs of aging accelerate (14) or hormone levels drop (18). In one case, the skin is split from the rest of the body (26).

26

Yep, this combination of conditions results in a dry, compromised moisture barrier, the outer layer which protects our bodies from external invaders and irritants. (Booker, 2020)

When parts of the person experiencing menopause are represented with independent agency, this suggests that the person experiencing menopause is not fully in control of themselves. The experience of parts of the self that are out of control is represented with negative appraisal in some cases, in metaphors that describe having a short fuse (29) or an inner jellyfish (5).

29

Det værste var, at jeg blev langt mindre tolerant og enormt omtåget og fik en meget kort lunte, fordi jeg manglede søvn. (Bøge, 2020)

The worst thing was that I became a lot less tolerant and felt extremely foggy and had a very short fuse because I lacked sleep.

5

Jeg havde ikke noget behov for at kunne stå i en stram bikini, men jeg havde brug for at føle mig stærkere. At få styr på den der indre vandmand og få noget rygrad... (Hast, 2018)

I did not feel any need to stand up in a tight bikini, but I did need to feel stronger. To get the inner jelly fish under control and get a spine...

As mentioned above, splitting the experience from the person experiencing it can enable problem solution. In the instance with the jelly fish, the idea of having a jelly fish inside is perhaps less frightening compared to using literal terms to describe how she feels. This externalisation is used to resolve challenging feelings about menopause. This strategy further has the effect of representing the condition as being outside of the control of the individual. The distance between the self and the experience may make it easier to overcome any feelings of shame associated with a stigmatised health condition (Hunt & Brookes, 2020).

In cases of personification of menopause, the experience is endowed with agency usually reserved for humans. Previous studies have found personification of depression and eating disorders, for example the ED voice and depression 'rearing its head' (Hunt & Brookes, 2020).

In my data, such metaphors are used to construct an adversarial relation between menopause and those experiencing it (see Section 5.2.2 and 6.2.2). For example, menopause is endowed with the agency to strike. This recalls the findings of Hunt and Brookes (2020), who found depression represented as 'hitting'. They suggest that when depression is represented with the agency to hit, the metaphor can provide a vehicle for difficult emotions and actions. This observation also applies to the scenario where menopause strikes; the impact of being struck is unpleasant; in my data it is associated with shock, vaginal infection and a need to find their way afterwards.

17

Menopause is one of those huge life changes that all women know is coming but no one ever feels fully prepared for when it does. But when it strikes before you've even turned 40, the shock is all the more distressing. (Graham, 2017)

61

Skedekatar er meget hyppig og rammer omkring halvdelen af alle kvinder efter overgangsalderen. (Trolle, 2019e)

Infection in the vagina is very prevalent and strikes up to half of all women after menopause.

1

Hun fandt sin egen vej, da hendes krop tog en tur i hormonrutsjebanen, og hun blev ramt af overgangsalderen. (Truelsen, 2017)

She found her own path after her body took a ride on the hormonal rollercoaster and she was struck by menopause.

Rather than attributing this forceful action to their body, those experiencing menopause can blame menopause, which is constructed as an external entity. This strategy was also found in other discourses of health. Ho (2020) describes how both menstruation and symptoms are constructed as adversaries to the woman experiencing them in relation to pregnancy. Cancer is also often constructed as an opponent (Gustafsson & Hommerberg, 2016; Koller & Bullo, 2019;

Semino et al., 2018). Different functions of these metaphors are proposed, including empowering aspects (see Section 3.2).

The metaphoric expressions I have chosen to interpret as Conflict metaphors could in some cases also have been characterised as War or Violence metaphors. However, I chose the term 'conflict' for two reasons. First, because some of the expressions do not necessarily entail violence (for example 'face', 'counter' and 'against'). The second reason is that the idea of conflict opens up for new ways of thinking about these metaphors. Typically, a war has winners and losers. But in the context of health where the conflict is between different parts of the self, this entailment becomes challenging (as pointed out by Flusberg et al., 2018; Olza et al., 2021; Sontag, 1978 and others). Indeed, very few of the metaphors point to the outcome (for example 'succumb' and 'conquer'). The majority focus on some other aspect, namely the struggle (for example 'battle' and 'combat'), the conflicting interests (for example 'counter' and 'barrier') or the violence aspect (for example 'impact' and 'strike'). The concept of a Conflict is a schema that can be evoked by all these metaphors and it opens up for different possible strategies, including aggression, submission and negotiation.

The Conflict metaphor used in the US women's magazines is noticeable in contrast with other metaphors of Nature, Senses and Water used in the Danish articles. Metaphors of War, Conflict or Violence have previously been documented in English language discourses, including on health, as mentioned above (and in Chapter 3). The only Danish instance of Conflict metaphor (8) conveys the individual experience of an interviewee, while the US instances (for example 20) are general observations made by the writers.

8

Jeg kæmpede med overgangsalderen, hvilket for mit vedkommende ikke mindst ville sige søvnløse nætter, som gjorde mig hudløs og grådlabil om dagen... (Hast, 2018)

I struggled with the menopause, which for me meant sleepless nights that made me skinless and easy to tears in the daytime...

20

...you can tailor your diet and exercise regime to combat most of these alterations and get your body back on a level playing field with your younger self. (Outside, 2022a)

This suggests that while the Danish Conflict metaphor is used to convey experience, the US metaphors may be an automated part of a general discourse. Another possible explanation is that these metaphors may be used as a tool of empowerment, as suggested above (see also Sections 3.2 and 3.3.4). In my view, the reason these metaphors are less prolific on the US medical website compared to the women's magazines may be an awareness amongst healthcare professionals about the potential consequences of the use of such metaphors in discourses on health as a consequence of public debates addressing this (see Demjén & Semino, 2017 for a review of this public debate). The slight Danish preference for metaphors of Water, Senses and Nature may be due to the way Nordic culture is associated with these conceptual schemas. I have only found literature that illustrate how other cultures brand products as 'Nordic' with such associations (Strandberg, 2020), and the embeddedness of these concepts in our culture is based on anecdotal evidence.

Some experiences during menopause may cause worries about what is 'normal'. As described in Sections 1.4 and 2.2, 'normal' can be defined as something that is to be expected because it happens to many. In my data, judgements of normality relate to bleeding and sexuality on the medical websites (see Section 6.5.3). Both are represented as changing in relation to menopause. Regular menstrual bleeding is represented as normal before the menopausal transition, while it is represented as not normal to bleed after. This is in line with the definition of menopause as the end of menstruation ('menopause', noun, Macmillan Education Limited, 2022). In my data, 'normal' sexuality is equated with good sexuality and intimacy. Obstacles to achieving this in menopause are said to include genitourinary syndrome, difficulties in any relationship with a sexual partner, as well as stress. Thinking differently, trying new things and planning are all presented as ways to 'normalise' the sexual situation. In the women's magazines, normality is not an explicit theme. Still, a couple of metaphors implicitly judge behaviour as abnormal either by referring to menopausal women as turning their insides out or by representing the speaker as having an inner jelly fish or a short fuse (see Sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3). These findings show how menopause can be represented as disruptive to normality, particularly in relation to bleeding, and sexuality, which are all experiences I introduced as generally associated with menopause in Section 2.3. Even though literature on menopause has discussed these experiences for decades, my data suggests that menopause might not be well-known to the public.

Menopause is namely characterised as surprising, more specifically as ‘a thief in the night’, ‘a sharp turn’ and ‘bewildering’. This indicates that menopause is unexpected. Other health conditions have the element of surprise and in discourses of cancer and covid-19, this has been expressed with the metaphor of an uninvited or unwelcome visitor (see more in Section 3.2.2).

For me, cancer arrived as an unwelcome lodger, parking itself in the back room and demanding attention. For three years I tried to be a courteous if unwilling host (Graystone, 2013).

Vi har besøgt af en ubuden og farlig gæst, som har sat sit præg på hele landet (#ReframeCovid, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, 16th April 2020, contributed by Pernille Bogø-Jørgensen)

We have a visit from an uninvited and dangerous guest, who has set their mark on the entire country

13

Overgangsalderen, menopausen, klimakteriet ... uanset, hvad vi kalder det, kommer det for nogle som en tyv om natten; overraskende og uden forvarsel. (Vichy, 2022)

The transition age , the menopause, the climactery...whatever we call it, for some it comes like a thief in the night; surprising and without warning.

These metaphors are personifications, but the thief also comes with the entailment that it is trying to take something from the person experiencing menopause, whereas the Visitor metaphors entail uncertainty about how long this cancer or virus might stay. The ‘sharp turn’, on the other hand, does not personify menopause but entails that the person experiencing it needs to react quickly and change direction in some way.

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet... (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life...

6

The conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark, especially when menopausal skin starts to act in a bewildering fashion — namely, rashes, acne, rosacea, and an overall sensitivity to, well, everything. (Booker, 2020)

The adjective 'bewildering' appraises the action of menopausal skin, which is split from the person and endowed with agency to act independently, in a manner characterised as bewildering. These three expressions demonstrate how metaphor can be used to represent a health condition as surprising, while expressed in different ways; as attribution with an adjective or a relational process or as personification. The three metaphor scenarios appraise metaphor with a negative attitude, either as a person that will steal, as a change that requires drastic action or as the cause of skin problems.

Such negative evaluation of menopause is recurrent in the data. Across the data sets, menopause is represented as a problem. In addition to metaphors that personify menopause, the problem is represented as physical changes, such as weight gain or acne, or as passing but recurring experiences, such as hot flashes or unexpected bleeding. Such experiences are also referred to as a 'problem' or more euphemistically as a 'change'. Affective experiences are frequently represented with mental processes, in particular with the verbs 'feel' and 'want', and they relate to sex, well-being or appearance. The desire expressed throughout the data is to feel and look as good as possible, but menopause is also represented as making it difficult to achieve this. However, different solutions to the problems menopause poses are also suggested in the text, and these include talking more about menopause, thinking about it differently, as well as changing diet, exercise and skincare routines.

The unpleasant surprise aspect of menopause discussed above could be addressed by increasing awareness about menopause in public discourses. The very production of these texts about menopause addresses a need to increase awareness about menopause. Further, I identified this need in a few instances during my analysis, for example, the lack of awareness about genitourinary syndrome is represented as an obstacle for getting treatment to patients (for example 6.11). The need to know about menopause is also explicitly stated (for example 19).

57

Despite these treatments, the lack of awareness of the frequency of genitourinary syndrome of menopause makes reaching patients with this condition difficult. (Luckstein, 2017)

19

Luckily, some advanced research studies show how you can combat the hormonal alterations that negatively impact your body and still reach your goals. Here's everything you need to know about menopause and, more important, how to use advanced dietary and training techniques to conquer it. (Outside, 2022a)

This need is also expressed in metaphor as one article mentions 'breaking' the taboo surrounding menopause (33). The actor engaged in breaking is represented with an inclusive we (see Section 5.3.1.1). Uniting the text producers and the readers with this inclusive pronoun may evoke a sense of community.

33

Overgangsalderen er et tabu for mange kvinder, for hvem har lyst til at tale om manglende sexlyst, tyndere hår og hedeture? Læs med, når vi bryder tabuet og sætter fokus på nogle af de symptomer, der følger med overgangsalderen. (Askgaard, 2017)

The menopause is a taboo for many women 'cause who wants to talk about a lack of sexual desire, thinning hair and hot flashes? Read along when we break the taboo and focus on some of the symptoms that follow along with the menopause.

The process 'breaking' is then represented in a way that suggests a community of people talking about menopause acting together in the metaphorical, material process of 'breaking' something. This material process represents the actor with a higher degree of semantic agency (Darics & Koller, 2019) compared to the verbal process of talking. In Section 3.2.1, I presented arguments that construing symptoms and illnesses as adversaries could lead to empowerment, made in relation to previous studies. Here, I argue that representing readers as engaged in processes with higher degrees of semantic agency at the metaphoric level compared to the literal level may empower readers.

When a health condition that has been a taboo starts gaining attention in public discourses, this increased awareness can have several benefits, including sharing emotional support. Metaphors may work as a communicative tool to share emotional support between people with similar experiences (see Section 3.2.1). In my data, women repeatedly represent themselves as engaged in mental processes, either reflecting on their experiences or describing them in terms of metaphor. People reading such testimonials can learn about others facing similar challenges and I think this can make them realise that they are not alone (see Section 5.6.3) and perhaps help people manage their expectations of menopause. Further, I think that if the increased general awareness can reach their social networks, this may enable understanding and empathy from others. Metaphor has proven useful for this purpose, as it may connect the experience with a basic embodied conceptualisation accessible to most people (see Semino, 2010, pp. 211–214 for a review of neurological and neurolinguistic evidence). This may be why embodied metaphor, such as those evoking a Movement schema, are prolific in the data. A further strategic aim of raising awareness about a problematic health condition is the possibility to raise money, for research into the condition and potentially to commercialise (possible) alleviations. I discuss how my data contributes to a monetisation of the problem of menopause in Section 7.2.2.

In addition to raising awareness and talking more about menopause, I also found some attempts to reframe the problem of menopause as not so bad or even appraised with a positive attitude. In other words, one solution proposed to the problem of menopause is changing how it is thought about. Coupland and Williams (2002) also found positive attitudes to menopause (see Section 3.1.3). While some of their data suggest a political, emancipatory aim, my data seems to promote these attitudes to menopause for other reasons, mainly to help the reader achieve well-being and good health. Studies have indicated that people with negative expectations to menopause are more likely to report some symptoms (Ayers et al., 2010; Sood et al., 2016, see also Sections 2.3 and 6.5.2). The belief that a negative attitude increases the risk of menopausal symptoms is represented in the data in instance 51.

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet, og hvis man opfatter forandringen som noget negativt, er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer. De fleste kvinder

kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde og ser positivt på den nye livsfase. (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life and if one perceives the change as something negative, one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms. However, most women come through menopause in a good way and view the new life-phase positively.

In contrast to the claim that most women have a positive experience of menopause, most of my findings indicate a representation of menopause as problematic. The representation of menopause as problematic is likely to instil negative expectations of menopause in readers, which can be counterproductive if we align with the view that such negative expectations can lead to more symptoms. This dilemma is most evident in the instances from the Danish medical website, whereas the instances from the US medical website do not represent menopause with a positive attitude. Representing menopause predominantly as problematic may have the benefit that those who indeed experience it as problematic, feel seen. But it can also have the disadvantage that people who read it are led to think that menopause is necessarily horrible and this may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. This balance between positive and negative appraisals can be a difficult one to strike. The fact that people experience menopause in different ways is acknowledged in some metaphor scenarios (see Section 5.6.4).

16

Det er utroligt forskelligt, hvilke gener og udfordringer der venter den enkelte. Nogle danser let gennem årene, hvor andre bliver mere påvirkede. (Vichy, 2022)

It is incredibly different, which bothers and challenges await the individual. Some dance lightly through the years while others are more affected.

Instance 16 represent the easy experience of menopause with the metaphoric expression 'dance' and another instance uses the expression 'glide' (15). These representations of smooth movement through menopause are contrasted with more challenging experiences. This conveys the belief some have an easy and others a challenging menopause. This belief is characteristic of the Danish women's magazines and I discuss the ideological implications of this representation in Section 7.2.

In the women's magazines of both languages, those experiencing menopause are encouraged to address physical changes with changes to diet and exercise. In metaphoric terms, diet and exercise can be used to 'combat' changes, but exercise is also represented as a means to 'vaske[r] sludderet væk' (wash[es] away the nonsense) and get the inner 'wobblyness' under control.

28

Jeg havde ikke noget behov for at kunne stå i en stram bikini, men jeg havde brug for at føle mig stærkere. At få styr på den der indre vandmand og få noget rygrad. Jeg kan tydeligt mærke, at træningen har gjort en forskel. Jeg har tabt nogle kilo siden sidst og på trods af sorg og spekulationer, så føler jeg mig stærkere – både fysisk og mentalt. der er jo også det med motion, at den vasker sludderet væk, siger Mette, der stort set samtidig gik til sin læge og bad om at få hormoner imod sin overgangsalder. (Hast, 2018)

I did not feel any need to stand up in a tight bikini, but I did need to feel stronger. To get the inner jelly fish under control and get a spine. I can feel clearly that the work out has made a difference. I have lost some kilos since last time and in spite of grief and speculations I feel stronger - both physically and mentally. there is the thing with exercise that it washes away the nonsense, says Mette, who about the same time went to her doctor and asked for hormones against her menopause.

I discuss possible reasons why Conflict metaphors are more recurrent in the US women's magazines compared to the Danish as well as the medical websites in Section 7.2. The promotion of diet and exercise as solutions to the problem of menopause is in line with suggestion to change lifestyle as a tool to improve individual health (see Section 2.2). As is the case for most of the other solutions proposed in the data, the person experiencing menopause is responsible for such actions. This is in contrast with the typical solution for the problem of menopause during most of the 20th century, which was to prescribe hormone treatment, an action where the medical practitioner made the decision to prescribe or not (see Section 2.2). I will discuss this shift towards more individual responsibility in more detail in Section 7.2.1.

A few of the text instances, I identified, did suggest to involve a health care professional (see Section 6.2.3). This was for treatment of a specific condition, genitourinary syndrome of

menopause. In these cases, the healthcare professionals interest in helping is foregrounded while the individual in need of help is represented with a lower degree of semantic agency. This indicates a belief in medical authority (see Section 2.1). I will discuss this representation further in Section 7.2.2.

47

When health care providers initiate the conversation and ask the questions to identify genitourinary syndrome of menopause, that is a step toward helping women identify the problem and understand that it can be treated. (Luckstein, 2017)

57

Despite these treatments, the lack of awareness of the frequency of genitourinary syndrome of menopause makes reaching patients with this condition difficult. (Luckstein, 2017)

A repeated pattern in my data places the responsibility for solving the problem that is menopause on those experiencing it, either by consuming skincare products, changing their diet or exercise routine, talking about the challenges posed by menopause or thinking about it in a different way. My findings indicate a positive evaluation of the person who handles their menopause in a proactive way.

## 7.2 Scenarios across languages and genres

In the first section of this chapter, I have discussed representations of the person experiencing menopause, as well as attitudes towards menopause. I discussed beliefs underlying these representations across the data, most notably how the idea of a split-self, where the different parts can fight with each other or be reunited, enables the social construction of menopause as a problem. The aim of Section 7.2 is to answer my second research question:

2. How do metaphor scenarios expressed differ across the two genres and across the two countries? How can any such differences be accounted for?

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I see ideologies as a 'network of beliefs that gives rise to expectations, norms and values about events, ideas and people' (Koller, 2014a, p. 155). In Chapter 2, I compared the US and the Danish healthcare systems and presented consumerism,

neoliberalism and healthism as underlying ideologies that to some extent shape the development of healthcare systems in both countries. I have discussed expectations of menopause as well as values and norms expressed in the data and how the metaphor scenarios reflect and challenge beliefs about menopause and those experiencing it in Section 7.1. In this section, I discuss which ideological belief systems are implied by these representations and how they align with healthism (7.2.1) and consumerism (7.2.2). Further, I discuss how the belief that a positive attitude is essential in the context of menopause is expressed (7.2.3) and finally, I discuss representations of gender in my data, compared to previous representations of gender in relation to menopause (7.2.4).

Before I discuss different ideologies and belief systems, which I see expressed or implied in my data, I give one example of how different beliefs may contradict each other and indicate different worldviews.

One belief discussed in Section 7.1 is that people experience menopause in different ways. This is expressed in the Danish women's magazines with metaphors that appraise how people move through menopause (see Section 5.6.4). When they have an easy menopause, they 'dance' or 'glide' through it. This is represented as something that 'awaits the individual' or 'happens to' them. Under these metaphors lies the belief that whether you have an easy or a difficult menopause is up to chance or fate. This differs from the representation in the US women's magazines, where menopause is frequently represented as a problem that can be fought or opposed. These two conceptualisations of menopause correspond to the two different ideas about health I presented in Section 1.2. When the WHO (2020) describes health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being', one entailment is that this 'complete state' can be achieved in some way. The construal of menopause as a problem that can be fought or opposed suggests a possibility of winning the fight or solving the problem, and this 'win' or 'solution' might be envisioned as 'complete health'. The alternative conceptualisation of health proposed by Huber et al. (2011, p. 3) suggests the definition of health should include 'the ability to adapt and self manage in the face of social, physical, and emotional challenges'. This is more in line with the representation of menopause as something that awaits the individual or just happens to them.

The idea that you can ‘win over’ or ‘solve’ menopause enables social control mechanisms by those who have the authority to provide advice about health, (Briggs & Hallin, 2007; Defibaugh, 2019) a topic I discuss in Section 7.2.1. It also makes it possible to commercialise means to affect these circumstances, which I discuss in Section 7.2.2. The representation of menopause as affecting people at random on the other hand entails that some are just luckier than others. The individual may not need support from the healthcare system. This would be in the interest of a healthcare system that is publicly funded (see Section 2.1).

#### 7.2.1 Medicalization and healthism

At the core of medicalization is the construction of something as a medical problem (see Section 2.2). The medicalization of menopause is affirmed in the present data set through the use of medical terminology such as ‘symptoms’, as well as through the expression of the belief that various actions, such as exercising or thinking differently about menopause, can influence the severity of such symptoms. Noticable though, is the absence of pharmaceuticals represented as a solution to the problem of menopause. Although the medical websites refer to health care professionals and products in a few instances, only one of these instances explicitly suggests the healthcare professional may ‘help’ (see Section 6.2.3). The medical websites are predominantly written by health care professionals (see Section 4.1.4.1). While the women’s magazines have other authors, I did not find any signs of counter-discourses to the medical discourse in these data, such as those found by Coupland and Williams (2002, see Section 3.1.3) in the promotion of alternative remedies for menopause. The US women’s magazines even draw on the authority of ‘experts’ (18) and ‘dermatologists’ (38) in some presentations of solutions to menopause. Health care professionals may rarely feature as social actors in metaphor scenarios that characterise menopause and those experiencing it, but a medical way of thinking about menopause is nonetheless pervasive across the data.

Medical thinking has implications for the representation of those experiencing menopause. They may be represented as patients, but that only occurs explicitly once in my data, on the US medical website. This representation construes people as passive receivers of medical treatment.

Despite these treatments, the lack of awareness of the frequency of genitourinary syndrome of menopause makes reaching patients with this condition difficult.  
(Luckstein, 2017)

The social actors are backgrounded but the implied actor of 'reaching' is the HCP, a HCP who finds it difficult to reach patients with genitourinary syndrome of menopause, even though there are treatments for it. The patient is backgrounded, represented as the goal, who does not know that many people experience their condition. This representation corresponds to what Briggs and Hallin (2007; 2016) call the biomedical authority model. The healthcare professional is the expert, administering treatment to the patient. Briggs and Hallin suggest that this model is displaced by what they call the patient consumer model although they find traces of both in US news coverage of health news (see Section 3.2.2.3). I also found traces of both models, as medical professionals provide information about menopause while they encourage readers to take actions to improve their experience of menopause. Still, there are differences between the genres in my study. The metaphor scenarios I identified in the women's magazines represent the readers and those experiencing menopause with higher degrees of semantic agency compared to the medical websites, which more frequently background these actors in metaphor scenarios. This suggests the scenarios in the women's magazines lean towards the patient consumer model, while those on the medical websites lean towards the medical authority model.

Menopause has not received much attention by critical discourse analysts but in Section 3.1.3, I presented a previous linguistic study on the topic of menopause, which found menopause constructed as a medical problem in British pharmaceutical leaflets and newspapers/magazines (Coupland & Williams, 2002). The authors also analysed feature articles and popular books (I will compare these to my findings in Section 7.2.3). A shared finding of their analysis of the leaflets and newspapers/magazines is that hormonal imbalance is accepted as the underlying cause of menopause. This has been the explanation since the link was discovered in the 1930s (Bell, 1987, see also Section 2.2.3). This is also accepted in my data; the women's magazines even provide this causal explanation using metaphor scenarios, representing hormone levels as dropping or falling (see Section 5.3.4). Hormones do not feature as actors in metaphor scenarios from the medical websites (with one exception in instance 49).

18

As you near the end of menopause — when your ovaries stop producing eggs — your estrogen levels drop, which can lead to weight gain... (Dunn, 2013)

14

... når de går ind i overgangsalderen. Når østrogenniveauet falder, er tørhed i huden et af de første symptomer. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

... when they enter menopause. When the estrogen level falls, dry skin is one of the first symptoms.

49

But, since FSH levels rise and fall during the course of your menstrual cycle, home FSH tests can't really tell you whether or not you're definitely in a stage of menopause. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020a)

64

Også hormonpræparater, som normalt ikke skal give menstruation, kan give uskyldige småblødninger. (Trolle, 2019a)

Also hormonal products, which normally shouldn't give menstruation, can give innocent small bleedings.

In instances 18 and 14, the declining levels of estrogen are represented as causing weight gain and dry skin, respectively. In instance 49, the FSH levels are represented as rising and falling, but the represented consequence of this is not menopause. Rather, the consequence of these fluctuating levels is that a home test for menopause will not work. In instance 64, the hormonal products referred to are tablets containing estrogen (and perhaps another female hormone) prescribed to alleviate menopausal symptoms. These products assume that menopausal symptoms are caused by changes to the hormonal balance. This reproduction of the causal link between hormonal imbalance and menopausal symptoms in my data further contributes to a medicalised view on menopause.

While the leaflets included in Coupland and Williams's study suggests a pharmaceutical solution, the newspapers and magazines suggest alternative therapies to what is also framed as a medical problem, even though some texts distance themselves from the medical establishment (see Section 3.1.3). My findings also indicate the strategy of framing menopause as a medical problem, as described above. But while menopause is framed in terms of deficiency in the study by Coupland and Williams (2002), in my data, menopause is frequently represented as problematic as those going through menopause are represented with unpleasant experiences, as in instance 39.

39

Lige inden jeg fik mine hedeture, begyndte det at prikke i kroppen, så fik jeg en susen for ørerne, og så vågnede jeg, fordi hedeturen kom buldrende. (Bøge, 2020)

Right before I had my hot flashes, it started to tingle in the body, then I had a buzzing in my ears, and then I woke up because the hot flash came rumbling.

The solutions proposed by Coupland and Williams's pharmaceutical leaflets and newspapers/magazines are pharmaceuticals and alternative medicine, respectively, both promoted with similar argumentation, based on trust in scientific methods. The solutions suggested in the metaphor scenarios I identified are changes to diet and/or exercise, positive thinking and conversation, either with a partner or a doctor. These solutions are based on the belief that the individual can achieve optimal health with lifestyle changes or good communication.

The differences between my findings and those of Coupland and Williams may be explained by the different contexts on which these studies focused (i.e. Britain vs. the US and Denmark), or the different time periods covered (Coupland and Williams published their study around 20 years ago). Time is likely to be a more influential factor, if we consider the studies presented in Section 3.1.3. These studies indicate more indifferent and even some positive attitudes to menopause by US and Danish women. These studies are roughly 10 years old. Another contextual factor that differs is the genres involved in both studies. While Coupland and Williams studied printed material, more specifically pharmaceutical leaflets, national newspapers/magazines and books, I included online data from women's magazines and medical websites. As all texts, these are characterized by their discursive practices, production,

distribution and reception and they are products of their institutional context. For my studies the texts are shaped by the women's magazines brand as well as the publishing houses behind them. For the medical websites, the institutional contexts are shaped by the Mayo Clinic corporation and the public healthcare system in Denmark (for more detail, see Section 4.1.4). They are distributed online, in contrast to the data from Coupland and Williams's study, which are printed and distributed either in doctors' surgeries/pharmacies, or traditional distribution channels of newspapers/magazines or books. The reception also differs because the online medium enables faster and more wide spread distribution. While online text can be accessed from anywhere in the world, printed text is limited because of physical limitations of how many copies are printed as well as the logistics of distributing them. The readers of printed materials have to be in the same physical space as the material to come across it, while online material can be accessed from anywhere. On the other hand, my Danish data is restricted to Scandinavian language readers. Further, the users have to either navigate to the websites because they have an interest in them or find the text via searches, recommendations or social media. It is possible these differences affect the way menopause is represented. I think that differences in national culture, time as well as institutional concerns and conventions account for such differences. For example, the UK newspapers may hold on to conservative views of women and female bodies as discussed by Brookes and Baker (2021) (see Section 3.1). They found that women were represented as more concerned with their appearance than their health in discourses of obesity in the UK press. In my data, appearance is represented as a concern in a couple of the women's magazine articles (see Section 5.3.1.3 and 3.3) but it is typically represented with ambiguity.

25

...While it may seem that the world is against you, preventing you from achieving the body of your dreams, these advanced methods are extremely powerful and have already worked for thousands of women going through a similar battle to your own. (Outside, 2022a)

Instance 25 shows how an expression like 'the body of your dreams' could be understood as a beautiful body or healthy one. In this instance, the metaphor 'dreams' expresses a desire the reader is assumed to have. Other instances use metaphor to describe changes happening to

the body during menopause, but ambiguity about the values underlying this desire is pervasive in the women's magazines. A few instances mention the desire to be attractive, but either it is represented with epistemic modality (32) or it is represented together with a reference to how 'we feel' (34).

32

Du skal lære at forenes med en krop, der bliver ældre og føler dig måske ikke attraktiv.  
(Askgard, 2017)

You must learn to unite with a body that gets older and maybe you do not feel attractive.

34

By taking simple care of ourselves, we can look good and feel great for a long time.  
Menopause is not the end; it's just the beginning. (Booker, 2020)

These examples demonstrate that no assumptions are made about whether the reader wishes to appear attractive or is more concerned with their health.

As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, the ideology underpinning the process of medicalization has been described as healthism. This ideology entails the belief that the individual can achieve well-being through lifestyle choices. Such beliefs can be inferred from the solutions suggested in my data, which include changes of diet and exercise with the aim of improving the menopausal person's health. A central value of this ideology is that the individual is responsible for maintaining and improving their own health. This belief is also evident in my findings; the responsibility for solving the problems caused by menopause is placed on the individual and well-being is represented as the goal. This is in line with Roy's (2008) findings that health articles place responsibility on individual women. As described in Section 2.1, there is a difference between how the individual is made responsible for their own health in the two countries. In the US, the marketisation of healthcare is supposed to keep providers in competition for the individual consumer. The individual consumer's role is to buy from the best and cheapest provider, but in reality there are socioeconomic and structural restrictions placed on the consumer. In Denmark, the individual contributes to the financing of the healthcare system via taxes. Medicalisation in such a country entails the belief that each

individual has a responsibility to stay healthy in order not to burden the system unnecessarily. This form of social control was documented by Hindhede (2011). I did not find traces of this belief in my data, which may be explained by the move towards a more market-driven form of healthcare (see Section 2.1). Discourses of marketisation and consumerism are expressed or implied in my data on the other hand, and I discuss this in Section 7.2.2.

Social control is central to Zola's (1972) definition of medicalization. An effective form of social control is normalization. This can be used to encourage certain behaviour by appraising it as normal. In the context of medicalization, another strategy is to suggest that those who are having abnormal experiences see a doctor. Judgements of normality in my data revolve around changes in bodily functions and sensations or behaviour exhibited by those experiencing menopause. It is a recurrent topic on the medical websites, where it is used to refer to changes in sexuality and bleeding during and after menopause. As mentioned in Section 1.4, Harvey et al. (2007) conducted a corpus linguistic study of emails sent to a health website operated by two doctors based in the UK. This study found that teenagers' health questions about normality often revolves around sexuality and bodily changes. They use the term 'normal' as a reference, for example asking about whether they are normal. This is expected as the teenage years are marked by hormonal and bodily changes, just as menopause is. It is apparent that what is considered normal bleeding, changes, since menopause means the end of menstruation. The concept 'normal' is used to encourage people to see a doctor when their bleeding is abnormal, and to reassure them when it is normal. In general, the medical websites use 'normal' to appraise what is considered healthy in relation to changes to bleeding patterns and sexuality during menopause. In the Danish women's magazines, a certain behaviour is appraised as abnormal with metaphor, but it is stated that few menopausal women will exhibit this behaviour (see Section 5.5.2).

15

Vidste du, at det er en myte, at kvinder i overgangsalderen vender vrangen ud på sig selv og muterer til uforudsigelige og urimelige hystader. Det sker kun for ganske få. Størstedelen af alle kvinder glider nogenlunde smerte- og symptomfrit gennem den periode. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

Did you know that it is a myth that women in menopause turn their insides out and mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches. This only happens to very few. Most women glide reasonably pain and symptom free through that period.

This demonstrates how metaphor is be used to appraise abnormal behaviour. The Danish term 'vrangen' refers to the insides of clothes, which are normally out of sight. Further, the manner of movement with which, 'most women' go through menopause is positively appraised with metaphors 'dancing' and 'gliding' (see Sections 5.6.4 and 7.1). The implications of epistemic probability (very few and most women) may also reassure those entering menopause (see Section 5.5.2) as they perhaps modify their expectations of menopause. The belief that a normal menopause is easy and a difficult menopause unusual, contrasts with the representation of sexual problems as able to move and grow on the Danish medical website and with the representation of menopause as problematic in general. These representations encourage a reasonable and predictable behaviour.

#### 7.2.2 Marketisation and consumerism

Representing menopause as a problem creates the opportunity to commercialise solutions to this problem; in other words, it presents commercial actors with the possibility to sell solutions to the problem of menopause to consumers. As mentioned in Section 3.1, women's magazines and medical websites may seek to persuade people to change behaviour. Women's magazines seek to monetize their relationship with readers in different ways, including selling information about the users of the website for advertising (described in Sections 3.3.2.2 and 4.1.4.2). While the US medical website also attempts to establish a commercial relation to the reader, the Danish website seeks to inform the public about menopause in the context of a healthcare system that has an interest in people resolving their health problems without contact to the healthcare system (see Section 2.1 and 4.1.4.2).

One way of constructing the readers of women's magazines as consumers is to appraise fitness of the body and the skin as problematic. This is achieved by using metaphor to endow skin and body with social agency, as discussed in Section 7.1.

The conversation we're not having enough leaves so many in the dark, especially when menopausal skin starts to act in a bewildering fashion — namely, rashes, acne, rosacea, and an overall sensitivity to, well, everything. (Booker, 2020)

Such representations of the skin makes it possible to attribute blame to the skin and construe this as a problem external to the reader. In addition to the functions mentioned in Section 7.1, such a split of the self can also be used as a persuasive marketing strategy. To address the 'problematic' skin, branded skin care products are promoted in connection to some of the articles from the women's magazines (see Section 5.6.1). This strategy benefits both the promoted skin care brands and the magazines, who can position themselves as knowledgeable. By providing readers with 'everything you need to know about menopause' (19), the women's magazines position themselves as an important resource for those experiencing menopause. The aim is to encourage readers to keep consuming women's magazines.

A recurrent topic on the medical websites and the Danish women's magazine is sexuality. In the Danish women's magazines, it is referred to openly, although most metaphor use on the topic is euphemistic (see Section 5.2.3). Changes in relation to a partner, desire and visual sex appeal are addressed. The US women's magazines do not mention sex at all in the identified metaphor scenarios, nor elsewhere in the selected articles. Even in the article where an actress from *Sex and the City* is interviewed, the topic is sidestepped. The cliché 'Sex Sells' does not seem to extend to US women's magazines, when it comes to women over 45. On the other hand, there is an implied connection between preserving looks and sex appeal, but this reduces the readers sexuality to being an object for someone else's desire. As mentioned in Section 2.3.1, this reduced view of female sexuality is being challenged and female pleasure has received some attention in recent years. This change is reflected more in representations of sexuality on the medical websites compared to the women's magazines.

Although sexuality is represented in a broader sense on both medical websites, it is represented differently on each website. While the Danish website endows sexual problems with agency, the US website refers to 'changes' in sexuality and judges them as normal, common and natural. This difference is surprising, considering that the Danish website is not interested in marketing their services and the problem-solution strategy is a strategy

commonly used in advertisements (Flowerdew, 2009; Hoey, 1983). However, it is also a strategy of medicalisation (see Sections 2.2.2 and 7.2.1) and may simply reflect the way a doctor thinks of this topic. Both of the medical websites provide advice to the reader about how to improve their sex life, including talking honestly to any sexual partner (54) and being more 'planful' about intimacy (66).

54

Det er vigtigt at kunne diskutere problemerne åbent, for ellers har de en tendens til at vokse sig større og større... (Trolle, 2020)

It is important to be able to discuss the problems openly, because otherwise they have a tendency to grow bigger and bigger...

66

Identifying the ingredients that need to be in place in order to maximize willingness and desire, and being more planful about sexual activity, may help women maintain intimacy beyond menopause. (Sparks, 2015)

Through this advice, they legitimise their position as a medical authority and create a relation to the reader, that aligns with the biomedical authority model mentioned in Sections 3.3.2.3 and 7.2.1. The US medical website also has traces of the patient consumer model. It uses appraisal of normality as a strategy that works as a persuasive tool to make women take certain actions, for example decide when to see their healthcare provider. An example of this is the appraisal of bleeding after menopause as 'not normal', which 'should be evaluated by your doctor' (9). Construing a normal menopause is the most realised discursive strategy on the US medical website. This sets it apart from the Danish medical website and the women's magazines, which all realise the problem solution strategy most frequently.

The few times the healthcare professionals are mentioned on the other hand, they are represented differently on the two medical websites; as trying to help on the US website (see Section 6.2.3) and in a more passive, observing role on the Danish (see Section 6.2.1.1).

47

When health care providers initiate the conversation and ask the questions to identify genitourinary syndrome of menopause, that is a step toward helping women identify the problem and understand that it can be treated. (Luckstein, 2017)

55

Ved en samtale med den praktiserende læge lykkes det som regel at få klarhed over de seksuelle problemer og deres årsager. (Trolle, 2020)

Through a conversation with the general practitioner it is usually possible to get clarity about the sexual problems and their causes.

In the US data, the term 'health care provider' (47) suggests that health care is seen as a service that is provided. In contrast, the Danish term 'den praktiserende læge' (the General Practitioner; 55) suggests a professional that is doing something; namely, practising medicine. The US medical website represents the healthcare provider with a high degree of semantic agency and backgrounds the person experiencing menopause in the few instances that mention healthcare professionals. The Danish website, on the other hand, represent the healthcare professional as backgrounded. The difference in the way the two websites represent HCPs reflect that the US has a market driven healthcare system and that Denmark has a largely publicly financed and managed healthcare system. However, the metaphor scenarios on the two medical websites do not differ as much as I expected considering the differences between the two healthcare systems. This may be because these differences are lessening with increasing privatisation of the Danish healthcare system and increasing public financing of the US healthcare system (see Section 2.1).

### 7.2.3 Positive thinking

The idea that a positive attitude can ease challenging situations has been studied for decades and is used proactively by some HCPs (see Sections 2.2.1 and 7.1). It has been suggested that negative expectations of menopause correlate positively with bothersome experiences of menopause (Ayers et al., 2010). In spite of this, the representation of menopause is overwhelmingly negative in the metaphor scenarios I analysed. The few positive representations of menopause I found on the Danish medical website indicate a belief in this effect.

51

Overgangsalderen er et skarpt hjørne i livet, og hvis man opfatter forandringen som noget negativt, er man mere udsat for at få psykologiske symptomer. De fleste kvinder kommer dog igennem overgangsalderen på en god måde og ser positivt på den nye livsfase. (Trolle, 2019b)

The menopause is a sharp corner in life and if one perceives the change as something negative, one is more at risk of getting psychological symptoms. However, most women come through menopause in a good way and view the new life-phase positively.

The Danish medical website appraises menopause with a positive attitude in two ways: By suggesting that beneficial outcomes of menopause are happening to some (63) and by suggesting that most women have a good experience with menopause and a positive attitude to the time after (51). Yet these representations occur in articles that also appraise menopause negatively. This contradiction can be explained in the following way: Positive evaluations of menopause may be presented together with an acknowledgement of the challenges associated with it, in order for the Danish text producer to convey empathy to the intended reader. Further, suggesting a positive attitude to menopause places the responsibility for addressing menopause with the person experiencing it. This belief aligns with the ideology of healthism described above, as the individual is at the centre when it comes to solving their medical problem.

The US medical website challenges negative evaluation by contrasting it with less negative evaluation. The negatively evaluated representation is challenged by calling it 'a misconception', which does not exhibit compassion towards those readers who may have such an experience of menopause.

52

The biggest misconception that women have about menopause is that it's awful, that it's life-altering, and that all of a sudden, the rest of their life is going to be filled with a lack of interest in sex, feeling hot and sweaty all the time, and just being sleep

deprived. Generally speaking, most women will have mild to moderate symptoms.  
(Weiss, 2019)

The US women's magazines show a similarly simplified attitude towards menopause, suggesting that taking care of oneself opens up possibilities for good looks and feels after menopause.

34

By taking simple care of ourselves, we can look good and feel great for a long time.  
Menopause is not the end; it's just the beginning. (Booker, 2020)

The Danish women's magazines do not suggest a positive attitude towards menopause either, but it is suggested that menopause is not as bad as expected for most people.

15

Vidste du, at det er en myte, at kvinder i overgangsalderen vender vrangen ud på sig selv og muterer til uforudsigelige og urimelige hystader. Det sker kun for ganske få. Størstedelen af alle kvinder glider nogenlunde smerte- og symptomfrit gennem den periode. (Hindø-Lings & Knutzen, 2019)

Did you know that it is a myth that women in menopause turn their insides out and mutate into unpredictable and unreasonable bitches. This only happens to very few. Most women glide reasonably pain and symptom free through that period.

Some instances indicate that menopause happens to be easy for some and challenging for others (see Sections 5.6.4 and 6.5.2). This fate based belief contrasts the healthist suggestion that you can shape your experience of menopause with your actions. Notably, the fate based belief is found in scenarios from both medical websites and the Danish women's magazines, while the US women's magazine does not show traces of this belief. In my view these beliefs may coexist and the tension between them can be resolved with realistic optimism (Schneider, 2001). Realistic optimism combines a belief in a good outcome with a realistic appreciation of the current circumstances. From this view, it is possible to acknowledge that menopause is challenging while working towards a better outcome.

#### 7.2.4 Gender

In Section 2.1.1, I illustrated societal regulation of female bodies as a way of demonstrating how the role of potential mothers in society is and has been contested for generations. The idea that decisions about female bodies should be made by the individual in that body is relatively new. In the US, a woman's right to choose whether to terminate a pregnancy is contrasted with the 'right to life' by some religious and political groups (Holland, 2023). Both of these positions frame the rights of the individual as the contested point, whereas previous arguments included considerations such as the health of the child or whether it was likely to grow up to be a valuable member of society. The recognition of a woman's right to make decisions over her own body is relevant to the question of how menopause is discussed in society because it reveals a change in female roles and opportunities. Whether menopause is framed as a liberation or a problem (Coupland & Williams, 2002), the person experiencing it seems to be at the centre of contemporary discourses of menopause – at least according to the very limited research carried out on the topic, including the present study. This tendency is more pronounced on the medical websites compared to the womens' magazines, but both address the reader assuming this is the person experiencing menopause. This was not always the case. In Section 2.2.3, I presented historical views of menopause including the idea that menopause should be medically treated because it posed problems to other people, most notably to men married to menopausal women (Wilson, 1966). In this account, menopause should be medically treated on the request of the husband and the decision should be made by the doctor. The data in this study contributes to the social construction of a woman as an individual in charge of her own body. However, she is encouraged to adhere to normative expectations of how to take care of her health through exercise and diet as well as positive thinking and conversation about menopause.

In the data of this study, two types of social relations are acknowledged. One is the doctor-patient relationship discussed above and another is any sexual relationship. In contrast to the anecdotes of Dr. Wilson, these are consistently represented with gender-neutral language, making it possible to think of doctors of any gender as well as sexual relationships that are heteronormative or not. This, together with the fact that the texts address those experiencing menopause directly, suggests progress from both feminist and queer perspectives. While women's magazines in both languages used some gender-neutral references to people

experiencing menopause, the medical websites in both languages use 'kvinder'/'women' more consistently. This reflects the binary construction of the sexes I discussed in Section 2.2.4. However, the women's magazines also express the assumption that all women experience menopause (see Section 5.3.1.2):

35

Den dårlige nyhed er, at alle kvinder skal igennem overgangsalderen. Den gode nyhed er, at alle kvinder kommer igennem den. (Vichy, 2022)

The bad news is that all women must go through menopause. The good news is that all women get through it.

This suggests that menopause is an integral part of the social construction of a woman. But this definition excludes some intersex and trans-people. Constructing menopause as linked to a certain time in life where 'the' children have left home as in instance 5, excludes those who have an early menopause or who do not have children living at home till they are grown. This becomes a very narrow interpretation of a woman. Any social representation that suggests 'menopause' and 'woman' cannot exist separately contrasts with the gender-neutral representations. In the case of the article by Vichy, both gendered and gender-neutral language is found in scenarios, indicating this is probably not a conscious choice. The gender-neutral representations used in the women's magazines are unmarked and by using such language for collective representation also on the medical websites, the information could be made inclusive of gender-queer people, as well as those with an unconventional experience of menopause.

### 7.3 Characteristics of the genres and languages

In this section, I compare the main points I have made for medical websites and women's magazines in each language. Both medical websites background the reader or person experiencing menopause with nominalisations and similar strategies. The US medical website shows traces of the medical authority model, by referring the reader to a healthcare provider, and even construing the HCP as more agentive part compared to women in some cases.

47

When health care providers initiate the conversation and ask the questions to identify genitourinary syndrome of menopause, that is a step toward helping women identify the problem and understand that it can be treated. (Luckstein, 2017)

Establishing what is normal in relation to menopause is a central discursive strategy on this site. This includes appraising changes to sexuality as normal. The Danish medical website problematizes sexuality more explicitly, yet also claims that not many experience these problems in relation to menopause. When people experience such problems though, honest conversation (54) and a will to try out new things are suggested. This website also contains the only positive evaluations of menopause (see Section 7.2.3). I expected to find this type of appraisal on the Danish medical website, since those who have a good experience with menopause are less likely to need help from the publically funded Danish healthcare system. All across the data, traces of medicalization were identified, but commercialisation beliefs are seen least on the Danish medical website. The problem-solution strategy is also seen across the data, but relatively less so on the US medical website. Rather, they pursue the strategy to judge what is normal in relation to menopause, which may be a strategy to appear competent, as Mayo Clinic is in competition with many other healthcare providers in the US market.

Solutions to the problem of menopause include talking about it, but while the medical websites encourage private conversations between those experiencing menopause and their doctor or any partner, the Danish women's magazines encourage a more public conversation about menopause. They suggest 'breaking the taboo'.

54

Det er vigtigt at kunne diskutere problemerne åbent, for ellers har de en tendens til at vokse sig større og større... (Trolle, 2020)

It is important to be able to discuss the problems openly, because otherwise they have a tendency to grow bigger and bigger...

33

Overgangsalderen er et tabu for mange kvinder, for hvem har lyst til at tale om manglende sexlyst, tyndere hår og hedeture? Læs med, når vi bryder tabuet og sætter fokus på nogle af de symptomer, der følger med overgangsalderen. (Askgaard, 2017)

The menopause is a taboo for many women 'cause who wants to talk about a lack of sexual desire, thinning hair and hot flashes? Read along when we break the taboo and focus on some of the symptoms that follow along with the menopause.

Women's magazines of both languages promote branded skincare products and appraise actions, which they suggest the readers take, with a positive attitude. The US women's magazines represent those experiencing menopause as more empowered to affect their situation and limit their menopausal symptoms, yet they are represented as less sexually liberated compared to the Danish women's magazines and both the Danish and the US medical websites. Concerns about appearance of the body and skin after menopause can be inferred, but there is ambiguity about whether appearance or well-being is represented as the problem readers need to address. This allows for a flexible interpretation. In contrast to the other data, the US women's magazines show no traces of a belief that menopause just happens to be easier for some and harder for others in the identified scenarios. The Danish women's magazines contain negative self-appraisal in some of the individual accounts of menopause, which contrasts with the US magazines use of Conflict metaphor to negatively appraise menopause as an opponent to those experiencing it. The Danish women's magazines appraise the manner in which some 'move through menopause' in terms of ease and elegance. The women's magazines then represent those experiencing menopause with different criteria for a desirable outcome of the menopause: while the US Americans are encouraged to win a fight and look good and feel well doing it, the Danish are encouraged to hope for the best and remain graceful.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

In the previous chapters, I have presented my research on the topic of menopause. The approach of metaphor scenarios (Musolff, 2006) enabled me to see how menopause is represented and appraised in metaphoric narratives. I discussed how my findings contribute to the ideologies of healthism and consumerism and I reflected on differences between the two genres and countries of my data. This chapter rounds off the thesis by suggesting implications and potential further research.

### 8.1 Contribution, implications and a recommendation

In this thesis, I made empirical contributions that are of relevance to the public and healthcare professionals. In terms of relevance to the academic linguistic community, my research addressed the gap of literature on menopause from a Critical Discourse Studies approach. Further, a theoretical contribution to the field of metaphor in discourses of health (see e.g. Demjén & Semino, 2017; Tay, 2017) was made. Finally, I made a methodological contribution, adding operational detail to Musolff's (2006) approach to metaphor scenarios.

#### 8.1.1 Relevance for the public and healthcare professionals

The way menopause and those experiencing it are talked about is relevant to everyone who at some point in their life either experiences menopause first hand or knows someone who does. I would imagine that is most people. When I have told people what I am working on, I have received interested and engaged questions from very young people as well as those who are around the typical age of menopause (45-55 years of age). Older people have often had stories to share about menopause and even some younger people have sometimes told me about their mother or someone else they know, who experienced challenges with menopause.

My impression, from these conversations as well as from my research, is that menopause is a very different experience from person to person but there seems to be a willingness to talk about it. My analysis showed that medical websites encouraged people to talk to any partner or their doctor about it, while the Danish women's magazines suggested more public conversations about menopause. This research provides a space for practicing such conversations as well as some observations to reflect on. In other words, one implication of my

research is to raise awareness about menopause and help provide a language to talk about a condition that has previously been a taboo.

For healthcare professionals in particular, this research demonstrated that different ways of talking about menopause has different implications and may be useful or problematic in different contexts. For example, I found that US medical websites use metaphor scenarios to construct normality in relation to menopause, which can help readers to decide when it is relevant to see a doctor. The Danish medical website and women's magazines in both languages on the other hand use metaphor scenarios to problematise menopause, which can have the benefit that those with a difficult menopause feel seen. On the other hand, it may set negative expectations to menopause, which can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. This effect is mitigated in some scenarios by representing menopause as a different experience to different people. The Danish medical website even presents a positive attitude to menopause. Another way of mitigating negative appraisal of menopause is to negate the negative representation.

These considerations of how metaphor scenarios can work, may be useful for healthcare professionals in the clinical consultation as well as when communicating publicly. This is in line with other research on metaphor in various health conditions and supports the point that: 'a well-informed and context-sensitive approach to metaphor selection can be an important part of public health messaging' (Semino, 2020).

#### 8.1.2 Relevance for the academic community

Within the academic field of linguistics, this research contributed to Critical Discourse Studies of health and gender. In discourses on health, this work contributed to the conversation about how health is discursively reconstructed (see Declercq, 2018; Hallin & Briggs, 2016). It has been argued that we should think less about how to achieve 'complete physical, mental and social well-being' (World Health Organization, 2020) and more about how we can learn to live with chronic illness or disabilities (Huber et al., 2011). Since views on menopause have been shown to have an association with how many bothers they report (Ayers et al., 2010; Sood et al., 2016), it may be more useful to represent menopause as a challenge to cope with rather than an obstacle in the way to 'complete' health. This view is in line with Sood et al.'s (2016, p. 585) recommendation that 'interventional studies assessing the impact of menopause-specific

education and resilience training need to be done, with the goal of improving menopausal women's quality of life'.

In discourses on gender, I have contributed to the discussion of the social constructions of 'biological sex' and gender. The assumption that all women and only women go through menopause was found across the data (see Section 7.2.4). However, some of the metaphors in the women's magazines also represent those experiencing menopause in gender-neutral terms, suggesting menopause and women do not mutually contribute to the construction of each other. These conflicting discourses reflect contemporary debates about the social construction of gender and the sexes (Butler, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Göttgens & Oertelt-Prigione, 2023).

More specifically, this research addressed four notable research gaps. First, there is no research on menopause from the perspective of Critical Discourse Studies (Fairclough, 1989) carried out in the last 20 years, to the best of my knowledge. This research addresses this gap with a qualitative analysis of the representation of menopause, which I discussed considering the cultural and institutional context it is set in. Different representations were found within the data as described above. But a comparison with representations of menopause in historical discourses showed that representations of those experiencing menopause in my data is more considerate. The representations in my data show empathy towards those experiencing menopause, and provide a range of solutions. Previous representations were found to either focus on the impact of menopause on people surrounding the menopausal person (Wilson, 1966), address menopause as predominantly a chemical imbalance or politicise menopause as a liberation movement (Coupland & Williams, 2002).

Secondly, Critical Metaphor Analysis has not addressed metaphors representing menopause, although other aspects of female health are addressed (see Section 3.2). A comparison of the use of metaphor in various health conditions with my findings showed that personification and split-self are used in discourses on menopause, other female health conditions, but also in other health conditions including cancer and depression. While War and Violence metaphors are prevalent in discourses on e.g. cancer, the most prevalent conceptual schema I found was that of Movement. The US women's magazine was the only genre that used more Conflict metaphors, but not all of them had clear connotations to War or Violence.

Thirdly, research on metaphors in Scandinavian discourses on health are scarce (see Section 3.2.2). This thesis provides research on metaphor used in Danish and compares it to similar data from the US, providing linguistic examples throughout in both languages. My review of metaphor in Scandinavian health discourses did not reveal systematic differences to the literature on metaphor in English health discourses that might be explained by language differences. I therefore did not expect differences in conceptualisation of health conditions in English and Danish to be caused by language. Indeed, the differences I did find could be accounted for by differences in discursive practices.

Fourthly, the genres I included in my study have not received that much attention from CDS scholars in recent years (see Section 3.1). CDS research on popularisation of science has addressed changes to healthcare systems, public health crisis and media representation of some health issues. But I have not found any research of medical websites for the public, such as those included in this study. Some linguistic work on *Cosmopolitan* has indicated a focus on female empowerment, more specifically as female representation in politics and increased attention to female, sexual pleasure. The latter topic received a little attention in my data, as changes to sexuality were discussed in the US women's magazines, while sexuality was more explicitly represented as problematic in the Danish women's magazines.

#### 8.1.3 Metaphor scenarios and how to find them

Metaphor scenarios were developed for political discourse (Musolff, 2006, 2016) but have also proven useful in discourses of health (Semino, 2019b; Semino et al., 2015) and in discourses where politics and health intertwine (see e.g. Musolff, 2022; Nerlich, 2011). In this thesis, I have described and demonstrated a way to analyse metaphor scenarios in greater detail than anything I have seen published. This contributes to the discussion about the nature of metaphor scenarios and how to describe them. This has enabled me to make observations about metaphor, narrative, appraisal and the representation of agency and combine these to answer my research questions. In future applications of this model, I imagine different elements will be given more or less attention, depending on the findings. In my analysis and discussion, I paid most attention to metaphor and agency. Had my research questions not been concerned with the representation of people and their experiences, I might have emphasised agency less.

For the metaphor identification, I tried to apply MIPVU (G. J. Steen et al., 2010) first and then decided that much of the detail recorded with MIPVU was not important to answer my research question. I therefore decided to apply MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). While it was very useful to have a validated framework to work with, I did come across a few challenges when implementing this on my data. As observed by Semino (2019a, pp. 316–318) it can be challenging to determine the lexical unit for analysis. Meanings have a tendency to span across several words. The hardest challenge for me was when the contextual meaning changed the meaning of other words in the sentence. For example, the term ‘filled’, which constructed ‘life’ as a container and ‘a lack of interest in sex, feeling hot and sweaty all the time, and just being sleep deprived’ as something concrete that goes in that container. The process remains the same in the basic and contextual meaning but the participants are constructed in more concrete terms through the metaphor compared to the basic meaning of those terms in separation from the term ‘filled’.

The data may also influence choice of analysis frameworks. For example, the Social Actor Theory (van Leeuwen, 1996) was useful because it allowed me to reflect on which actions are typically performed by humans and which actions were represented as beyond human agency. This distinction proved relevant in metaphor identifications, as the data contained human actions performed by body parts and experiences, such as menopause. It helped me identify split-self metaphors and personifications as well as describing the difference between the two.

The analysis demonstrated how integrated the different elements of metaphor scenarios were, as I found all elements expressed in the metaphoric expressions, although literal terms also contributed to the scenarios in many cases. The elements form a web of scenarios across the data, where the individual metaphor scenarios are connected by one or more similar elements. For example, the same actors may appear in relation to different metaphors.

The methods used in this thesis have all been developed for English. The only framework that has been applied to Danish before, to the best of my knowledge, is MIPVU (Nacey, Greve, et al., 2019). By applying these frameworks to Danish, I demonstrated how well they extend to another Germanic language and hence contributed to the literature on Scandinavian metaphor as well as studies of agency, narrative and appraisal.

## 8.2 Limitations and further research

Like any research, this study also has some limitations. My study design does not allow me to make claims about which metaphoric frames or scripts are typical for menopause due to the scope and data size. A larger data set would make it easier to find conceptual patterns, but with my data set, I could only find patterns at the most schematic level. I hope future research will investigate whether metaphors of Movement and Conflict can be verified as pervasive in larger data sets on the discourse of menopause. This could enable an interesting comparison of metaphors used to represent menopause versus other health conditions and reasons for such differences. For example it struck me that menopause represented with Movement metaphors may be explained by the fact the menopause is defined in relation to time and we often conceptualise time in terms of movement (Lakoff, 1993, pp. 14–16).

In order to be able to make such claims, either a large corpus study of so-called general language should be conducted or/and studies investigating various data sources such as social media, film, series, newspapers, blogs, online fora, advertising for hormone therapy or alternative treatments or books dealing with menopause.

Further studies of metaphor in health could investigate how split-self metaphors and personification of experiences are employed and discuss how they contribute to an understanding of our relationship with illness and health as human beings.

I also hope that future research will address gender queer experiences of menopause because this group of people have other health needs than gender conforming people, particularly in relation to any health condition that involves hormones such as estrogen. It has received even less attention than women's health and needs to be addressed by research to improve healthcare for gender queer individuals. Through my research about menopause I have become aware of gender queer experiences of menopause, such as that of a transmasculine person (Owen & Willett, 2022). Queer menopause has been addressed by disciplines other than linguistics (Glyde, 2021), but the literature is still scarce. Linguists might start with looking at how healthcare for transpeople is represented in public discourse, e.g. on websites promoting such services.

### 8.3 Concluding remarks

This work has allowed me to challenge my own bias. With a background in pharmaceutical product information, my automatic perspective on health is removed from the person experiencing it. Before starting this project, I was used to thinking about menopausal women as potential users of hormone therapy. I knew about some of the experiences that characterise menopause, but only if they could be helped by hormone therapy or if they were mentioned as a side effect. This means, it seemed natural to me to refer to menopause and its symptoms as bodily processes. It was natural to me to think of menopause and hot flashes as something the body does, rather than something a person experiences. Because these processes happen autonomously, the idea of them as part of the body and not initiated by the mind was instinctive to me. But through the work with this thesis I have also learned to see health in a more holistic way. Menopause, and other health conditions, comprises experiences that transcends any boundaries between the body, the mind and other people. Hot flashes may cause a lack of sleep, which can affect someone's mood and consequently, their relations to other people. Working on the topic of menopause has transformed how I think about health, including how it is talked about in public discourses.

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