Conceptualizing parenthood: American newspaper discourse analysis

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to elucidate the metaphorical representations of the concept PARENT within American media discourse. By analyzing the conceptual metaphors employed in newspaper discourse, we seek to reconstruct the metaphorically derived understanding of parenthood within English-speaking community. These conceptual metaphors, crafted by media presenters, exert a profound influence on the societal comprehension of this concept, both directly and indirectly. The study draws upon the Conceptual Metaphor theory, Conceptual Integration theory, and Discourse analysis. Within the scope of our investigation, the target domain PARENT encompasses four primary source domains: DUTIES, DIFFICULTIES, OWNER, and BURDEN. Our emphasis lies in scrutinizing the cross-domain mappings, which delineate systematic correspondences between the target and source domains. We investigate novel conceptualizations that emerge from conventional metaphoric patterns, employing cognitive mechanisms such as extension, elaboration, questioning, and combination. We also explore the conceptual blends and emergent structures that introduce additional layers of interpretation of being a parent. They are elucidated using Conceptual Integration Networks, specifically double- and multiple-scope models. Our analysis has unveiled the existence of four metaphorical clusters, each providing unique perspectives on how parenthood is conceptualized within the newspaper discourse.

KEYWORDS: conceptual metaphor; conceptual integration network; mapping; media discourse; discourse analysis; cognitive devices

1. Introduction

The exploration of language's intricate role in shaping cognitive imagery has captivated scholars for decades, with the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) standing out as a cornerstone in understanding how metaphor molds our perception of various concepts. Against this backdrop, this research delves into the realm of the 21st century American newspaper discourse, embarking on an exploration of the concept PARENT through the complicated interplay of metaphorical representation and blending.

Metaphor, often described as a linguistic instrument, transcends its literal confines by invoking semantic tension when placed in novel contexts. In contemporary linguistics, metaphor is defined as a linguistic representation that arises when a word or phrase is utilized in a different context or domain than its expected usage, thus creating semantic tension (Charteris-Black, 2004). This study's primary objective is to meticulously analyze the metaphoric expressions embedded within newspaper

conversations, thereby illuminating the profound impact of culture on metaphor utilization. By treating newspaper discourse as a repository of cultural insights, we are poised to uncover the nuanced underpinnings that shape the portrayal of concept PARENT within English-speaking communities.

Within this context, metaphors emerge as textual elements that convey multi-layered meanings and evoke associations. Despite the concept PARENT being universal, it remains a relatively understudied facet within the domain of newspaper discourse, partly due to its inherent complexity. Nevertheless, the study of metaphors presents an invaluable avenue for comprehending intricate concepts like parenthood, especially when adapted to resonate with specific audiences.

Literature review

Metaphor plays a significant role in shaping cognitive images and is widely employed in media discourse to attract the audience's attention, persuade them, and reflect ideology (Amaireh, 2022). Newspaper discourse, deeply embedded in specific cultural contexts, is a rich source for exploring the hidden meanings of metaphors (van Dijk, 1998). However, the concept of "PARENT" has been underrepresented in linguistic studies, particularly within newspaper discourse. To address this gap, this study draws on previous research that explores parenting conceptualization in various contexts, such as television discourse, children's books, and gender-specific portrayals (Bryant, 2001; Gerber et al., 1980; Fogel, 2012; etc.).

Previous studies have explored the use of metaphors in media discourse in various contexts and languages. Chiang and Duann (2007) investigated naming strategies and conceptual metaphors in broadsheet newspapers, while Linh (2011) conducted a comparative study of metaphors in English and Vietnamese newspapers. Krennmayr (2011) analyzed metaphor use in newspapers through quantitative analysis and found that metaphorical language is more prevalent in news discourse.

Studies on metaphors in media discourse have also explored how metaphors are used to influence readers' perceptions and emotions. Hu and Xu (2017) found that the war metaphor was frequently used in Chinese media discourse as a rhetorical device to persuade the audience and convey economic concepts. Semino (2021) analyzed metaphors used to describe the COVID-19 crisis, demonstrating that metaphorical expressions serve various purposes, such as conveying urgency and outlining the future after the pandemic.

Recent studies by Amareih (2022) and Zeng and Ahrens (2023) have investigated the use of metaphors in media discourse during significant events, highlighting the politicized nature of metaphorical language and its impact on readers' perspectives.

Moreover, Bilyk et al. (2022) have examined COVID-19 metaphoric blends in media discourse, emphasizing how the analysis of conceptual metaphors can provide valuable insights into the understanding of complex concepts within speech communities. Velykoroda (2019) has explored the role of precedent-related phenomena in conceptual metaphorization in media discourse, emphasizing their potential cognitive effects on the audience.

This body of research underscores the importance of metaphors in media discourse and their role in shaping public perception, highlighting the need for a comprehensive analysis of metaphors in American newspaper discourse to understand the conceptualization of parenthood in this context.

2. Data and method

2.1. Theoretical background

Defining metaphor in discourse

Over the past few decades, numerous scholars have dedicated their efforts to examining the role of metaphor in shaping cognitive images. This form of imagery is most effectively elucidated through the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Cameron, 2008; Coulson, 2001; etc.). In the realm of modern linguistics, metaphor is characterized as a linguistic device that materializes when a word or phrase is employed in a context or domain that deviates from its customary use, consequently generating a sense of semantic contrast (Charteris-Black, 2004). The same conceptual metaphors can conjure different cognitive images, depending on their linguistic contexts, experience of a reader, and his or her culture (Kulchytska and Malyshivska, 2022).

Approaching the matter from a methodological perspective, examining metaphors within newspaper discourse can offer a window into the figurative frameworks of cultural contexts. Consequently, we acknowledge that dissecting conceptual metaphors within media discussions permits the rebuilding of knowledge about the concept PARENT in English-speaking communities. This is because each distinct newspaper "conversation" is embedded within a cultural backdrop, allowing a communicator to not only comprehend the direct message content but also the intricate underpinnings of a particular cultural context (Bilyk et al., 2022; Velykoroda 2019). In this context, it is crucial to perceive media discussions as intricate reservoirs of knowledge that are exchanged among individuals of a particular culture, specifically focusing on the English-speaking context.

Media text is frequently likened to the "proverbial tip of the iceberg", where many of its implied or presupposed meanings are concealed (van Dijk, 1998). Metaphors, in this context, can be seen as the textual components that possess the ability to imply significant "hidden" meanings by evoking associations with the situations or texts they pertain to.

An approach centered around language has not been frequently employed to grasp how the general public comprehends parenting. The concept PARENT is poorly represented in linguistic studies of media discourse, mainly in newspaper discourse. It could be explained as researchers and scholars might prioritize studying topics that are more immediate or trending, leaving less attention for concepts that are considered quite solid and universal. Concept of parenting intersects with multiple fields, and falls between the boundaries of sociology, anthropology, biology, psychology, sexology, so, it might be overlooked or not fully addressed in any single field.

Our findings stem from prior studies that have examined the utilization of conceptualization of parenting: the representation of parents in the television discourse (Bryant, 2001 Gerber et al., 1980; Fogel, 2012; Vavrus, 2002; Kaufman and Gayle, 1999); the portrayal of parents in the discourse of children's books (Anderson and Hamilton, 2005), gender peculiarities of parenting in media discourse (Chan et al., 2011; Stewart, 1999; Riggs, 1997; Podnieks, 2012).

When employed within a particular context and tailored for a specific audience, metaphors become valuable and potent tools for understanding such a universal phenomenon as being a parent. In order to cultivate this viewpoint, we will utilize the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993; Ko¨vecses, 2010a, 2010b, 2015a, 2015b, Charteris-Black, 2004), Conceptual Integration Theory (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2002), and discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 2002).

2.2. Methods of research

This paper presents metaphor analysis in newspaper discourse, employing Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA). CMA encompasses three sequential phases: identification,

interpretation, and explanation. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory serves as a foundational framework for the linguistic analysis, with a focus on the concept PARENT as the target domain. At the first stage we construct the corpus by monitoring the texts of the 10 most widely circulated contemporary American newspapers in the United States: The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, New York Post, Tampa Bay Times, Chicago Tribune, Newsday, Star Tribune for occurrences of topic of parenting in their texts.

The pool consists of 582 articles from various sections of the mentioned newspapers published in the 21st century (2000–2022). The sample is not limited to specific sections of newspaper publications because different sections cover different aspects of societal life, which enables comprehensive tracking and analysis of the concept of PARENT in the American newspaper discourse.

We extracted 793 fragments through a systematic random sampling method by monitoring the mentioned 10 American newspapers. This means that we carefully selected these fragments from a larger pool of content in a way that ensures they are representative of the entire dataset, allowing us to draw meaningful conclusions from our analysis. These fragments that serve as illustrations of the activation of the analyzed concept in the American newspaper discourse and could be viewed as methaphorical expressions of the above mentioned concept. It is important to state that in this study, we have showcased only a handful of the most characteristic instances from the pool, chosen for their high representativeness.

The second stage seeks to discover systematic correspondences between the source and target domains as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980 (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). In this context, the "source domain" represents the original concept, while the "target domain" is the concept being explained or understood through the source domain. This fundamental image schema serves as the foundational structure for the mapping system of conceptual metaphors. Within this mapping, we conceptualize the target domain by drawing upon the attributes of the source domain. The metaphor includes interpretation, as the source domain offers an interpretive lens through which we understand the target domain (Bystrov, 2014).

Discourse analysis involves investigating the circumstances that prompted the text and the context in which metaphorical expressions are employed. The subsequent stage seeks to create a linkage between metaphors and the cognitive and pragmatic factors that impact them (Charteris-Black, 2004), thereby uncovering how readers might interpret the metaphor. When elucidating metaphors, our attention extends beyond just linguistic context to encompass ideology and cultural nuances.

The fourth stage involves investigating the cognitive processes underlying new metaphoric depictions of parenting. We examine the four cognitive techniques outlined by Kövecses (2010b): extension, elaboration, questioning, and combination. Lastly, for the analysis of original conceptual blends and emerging structures that contribute supplementary dimensions to interpreting the concept PARENT, we will employ the principles of the Conceptual Integration Theory (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2002).

Based on these theories, we examine metaphors through which the concept PARET is verbalized within American newspaper discourse. Media exert considerable influence on public sentiment by directing attention to specific matters and conveying messages to audiences (Miller and Dinan, 2009; Philo, 2008).

The goal of the newspaper discourse is to shape public opinion and convey aspects of social reality. This content is consumed by a diverse mass audience, requiring texts to be understandable to the average reader. Mass media selectively filter events based on certain values, reflecting national-cultural specifics

and current contexts. This serves as an illustration of the concept within newspaper discourse. In this article, we will analyze the representation of the socially and culturally significant institution of parenthood in American newspaper discourse to showcase the primary metaphorical interpretations of the concept PARENT.

3. Results

The analysis of American journalistic discourse in the 21st century has shown that the target domain PARENT incorporates the following source domains: DUTIES, DIFFICULTIES, OWNER, and BURDEN. Three of these source domains are further elaborated and consist of both metaphoric blends and single metaphors. These same source domains form four groups of metaphors based on their quantitative and frequency representation in the examined type of discourse.

Furthermore, due to its familiarity and ease of processing and comprehension, the concept of PARENT has become conventional and universal. The mentioned source domains are used to convey a wide range of topics, signifying both concrete entities, such as material objects and items, and abstract concepts.

According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) classification, the concept of PARENT is actualized in American newspaper discourse through implicitly expressed traditional structural metaphors. This is because the analyzed concept is embodied in publications figuratively through the use of other concepts. According to Kovecses (2010b), the metaphors analyzed in this article add new conceptual features to the analyzed concept through the following cognitive devices: extending, elaborating, and combining.

3.1. PARENT IS DUTIES

The first group consists of metaphors that convey the ethical and societal obligations of parents and their traditional roles. These are the most frequently used metaphors in the analyzed type of discourse and actualize the source domain DUTIES. When examining newspaper publications, we noticed that within this source domain, individual metaphors are often combined with each other, and one discursive fragment can contain several metaphors that are often inseparable. This is because they objectify aspects of parenthood that are interconnected, forming metaphorical blends. In this way, the source domain is elaborated through combining. Examples of such metaphorical combinations and collaborations are provided below.

The most prevalent metaphorical blend, PARENT IS DECISION-MAKER + PARENT IS PROTECTION, can be analyzed through the following excerpts from articles:

> … *There are many reasons parents decided to pull their kids out of public schools or otherwise move into less urban areas. … So a lot of COVID policies and controversy over those policies led to parents moving out of cities or choosing other schooling options.*

> … *a subsection of parents who've decided that the curriculum being taught wasn't appropriate for their own children, whether it was history classes about race and the history of racism, or literature that is LGBTQ + inclusive. A lot of social issues that are embedded into curriculum started bubbling up and influencing parents' decisions …* (USA Today, 2022)

These excerpts indicate that the metaphors are implicitly expressed and can be decoded from the context, thanks to logical elements such as parents making decisions like moving out of cities or choosing other schooling options, social issues embedded into curriculum influencing parents' decisions, and a lot of fear about health and safety, social issues. This suggests that parents are making decisions and

protecting their children from both physical dangers like COVID and societal issues like racism or literature that is LGBTQ + inclusive.

The metaphorical blend PARENT IS CARE + PARENT IS ATTENTION + PARENT IS KNOWLEDGE emphasizes the seriousness of parenthood. Parents are depicted as all-knowing individuals who, through their knowledge, transmit care and concern, as exemplified in:

> *Finding safe and healthful foods for children with food allergies can be difficult … as parents of kids with allergies know. … Mahr recommends that parents read food labels very carefully.* (The Washington Post, 2011)

> *For parents of children with Asperger's, what advice would you offer, especially to those with children who have just been diagnosed?*

> *Go out and gather as much information as possible... Parents will help you so much on many levels, from referrals for therapists and schools, to helping you understand what it is that you're about to go through.* (The Washington Post, 2011)

Certain parts of the illustrations indicate that parents need to take care of their children's nutrition and carefully choose food for them (*safe and healthful foods for children with food allergies*). Parents must also read food labels attentively and understand the ingredients in food (*parents read food labels very carefully*). Additionally, parents should find and possess information about their children's health conditions (*children with Asperger's, what advice would you offer, gather as much information as possible*). This is how childcare can be implemented.

The combination of metaphors PARENT IS POWER + PARENT IS PUNISHER actualizes the dominance of parental authority over children, both physically and in other aspects. For example,

> *Many parents grew up with punishments, and it's understandable that they rely on them. …*

> *The use of spanking to discipline children has been in decline for 50 years. Almost everybody still yells at their kids sometimes, even the parents who know it doesn't work. … Yet for many parents, taking the temper tantrums and meltdowns in stride presents a challenge …* (USA Today, 2019)

The words and phrases "*punishments*", "*spanking to discipline children*", "*yells at their kids*", and "*taking the temper tantrums and meltdowns*" indicate the use of force and punishment, meaning that parents are the ones who hold power or a physical advantage over their children and can utilize it.

The challenges of parenting are actualized in the metaphorical blend of PARENT IS ANGUISH + PARENT IS WORRY, which embodies a spectrum of parental emotions and concerns. This blend not only elaborates on the source domain DUTIES but also extends it by introducing ANGUISH as a new conceptual element, adding an unconventional feature to the experience of being a parent, somewhat optional, as in:

> *He dropped out of college and was fired from the company he founded. Imagine the anguish his parents must have felt. In retrospect, it seems laughable, but you can imagine his mom and dad losing sleep wondering: Will Steve ever amount to anything?* (The Washington Post, 2011)

The provided excerpt from the newspaper publication serves as an illustration of how parents are perceived as individuals who are concerned (*Will Steve ever amount to anything?*) and suffer (*the anguish his parents must have felt*) due to their children.

It is worth noting the combination of metaphors that are opposite in meaning. The following discourse fragment contains the actualization of antonymous metaphors PARENT IS PROTECTION +

PARENT IS THREAT: parents can simultaneously be in the role of both protectors, ensuring the child's safety, and a threat to the child.

What most middle-class parents don't seem to realize is how physically safe their children are by historical standards. From 1960 to 1998 … death rates from accidents among children ages one to four fell a remarkable 68%; for children five to 14, accidental deaths dropped 57%. Deaths from disease have also fallen sharply. While child homicide has increased, it remains rare-and except among teenagers these killings typically occur at home at the hands of a parent or other "caregiver". (The Wall Street Journal, 2000)

The first source domain in this case is elaborated (PROTECTION) and extended (THREAT). The antonymy is realized through parts of the text that discuss children's safety and the reduction in mortality rates. The extension is observed through the second part of this metaphoric blend, which is realized through the sentence …*these killings typically occur at home at the hands of a parent …*—parents are the cause of the killings, making them a threat. This introduces a novel and unconventional aspect to the source domain since parents are generally seen as providers of unconditional security.

The metaphor, which is one of the most frequent in the type of investigated discourse PARENT IS FINANCIAL SUPPORT, is actualized through depictions of a luxurious and extravagant lifestyle or through stories about parents paying for their children's education in a university or college. For example:

Social Finance … announced a new loan on Wednesday geared toward parents of undergraduate and graduate students. Parents sign up for the loan to cover some or all of a student's college expenses…

A parent loan is different from most private student loans, which require the student to sign up for the loan and usually also need an adult co-signer, who is often the parent. (The Wall Street Journal, 2015)

And when Abdesselam … isn't spending a small fortune on Haute handbags and dresses, she's charging costly Pilates classes, facials, feasts at Cipriani or Zero Bond and excursions to Saint Tropez and Mykonos to her parents' Amex Black cards. (New York Post, 2022)

She told the Times that the backlash against her film and the subsequent cancellations left her in debt to the point that she needed to borrow money from her parents. (New York Post, 2022)

The personification of parents as money or financial support is manifested both implicitly and explicitly. Thus, the conventional metaphor PARENT IS DUTIES is elaborated into PARENT IS FINANCIAL SUPPORT, characterized by the following elements: "*Parents sign up for the loan…, …to borrow money from her parents*", which clearly indicate that parents assist their children with financial matters, such as paying for their education, taking out loans for education, or lending money. The later example from newspaper publications, specifically the lines "*...spending [my parents'] money, …she's charging costly… to her parents' Amex Black cards*", indicates that parents provide money to their children and serve as their financial support.

The metaphor PARENT IS IDOL is intriguing as it objectifies the best qualities of a parent and encompasses a spectrum of feelings of respect and adoration toward parents, which are then transferred to another person:

But "mom" needn't be reserved for celebrities. Your best friend can also be your mom. So can your high school English teacher—if you really, really like them. And, actually, your mom can be a mom, too—when she's not embarrassing you by being your actual mother.

"In my eyes, it just means when you admire someone so much that calling them one of your parents is the ultimate compliment—but, like, in a noncreepy way." (The New York Times, 2016)

In this case, the extension of the source domain is indeed observed: referring to someone as one's parent creates a novel conceptual feature that is entirely unconventional. The metaphorical linguistic expression of this elaboration is evident through the verb "*admire*". In these discourse fragments, it is highlighted that, particularly among teenagers and in informal language, referring to someone (who is not a relative) as one of your parents (mom or dad) is considered the ultimate way of showing respect, marking a novel and unconventional use of the 'PARENT IS IDOL' metaphor.

Certain emergent characteristics resulting from the metaphorical blending process can be explicitly identified using the conceptual integration model (depicted in **Figure 1**).
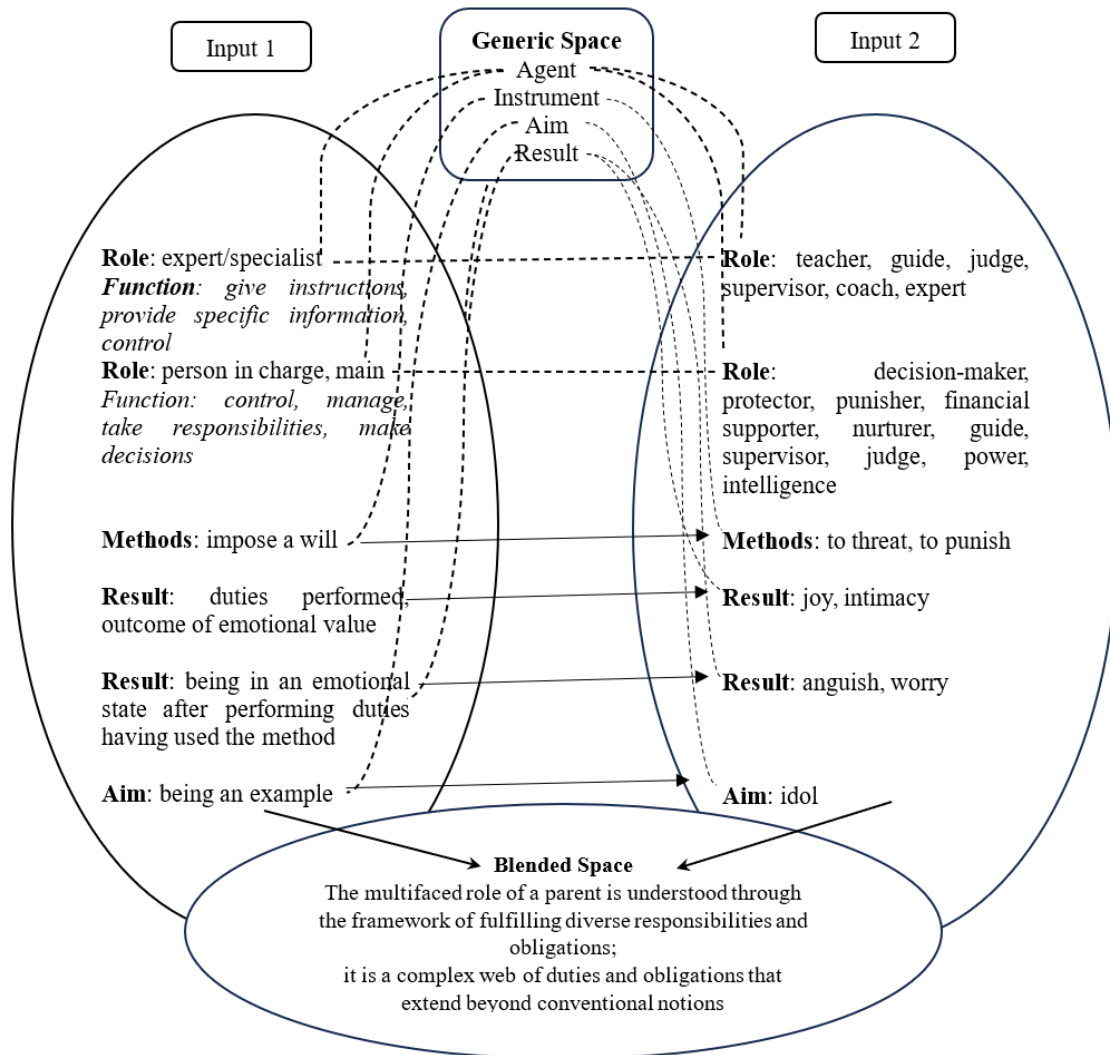

Figure 1. Conceptual integration network: PARENT IS DUTIES.

In the double-scope network, input space 1 focuses on DUTIES, while input space 2 relates to PARENTS and family caregiving. These inputs share a common structure, influencing each other. Dotted lines show connections between input spaces, while solid arrows represent differences leading to unique attributes in the blended space.

Among the metaphors and metaphorical blends identified in American journalistic discourse of the 21st centuries, in addition to the source domain PARENT IS DUTIES, the following metaphors and metaphorical blends are noted: PARENT IS EXPERT+ PARENT IS TEACHER+ PARENT IS GUIDE, PARENT IS INTIMACY+PARENT IS JOY, PARENT IS TRUST, PARENT IS

PROTECTION + PARENT IS SUPERVISOR, PARENT IS FEAR + PARENT IS CHALLENGE + PARENT IS CHOICE, PARENT IS COMFORT + PARENT IS NEED, PARENT IS NURTURER + PARENT IS COACH + PARENT IS JUDGE, PARENT IS HELP + PARENT IS INTELLIGENCE. These metaphors and blends illustrate the various facets and roles attributed to parents in American discourse, reflecting the complexity of the parent-child relationship and the multifaceted nature of parenting itself.

3.2. PARENT IS DIFFICULTIES

The second group of metaphors we've identified relates to the second source domain DIFFICULTIES. This group of metaphors represents the notion of trials, difficulties, and complex tasks that parents encounter while carrying out their direct duties towards their children. Cognitive mechanisms responsible for introducing new conceptual aspects within this source domain mainly involve elaboration.

The most frequent metaphor in this group relates to the entire spectrum of parenting difficulties—PARENT IS CHALLENGE, as in the following examples:

… Meghan hosts this Q&A to answer questions from parents trying to raise kids of any age. Send us your question or dilemma and try to provide as much context as possible. (The Washington Post, 2022)

The post struck a chord with working parents trying to juggle children and jobs … (The Washington Post, 2019)

I know as a parent I can be part of the problem or part of the solution. … Your child's anxiety is not your fault, but it's possible that some of the parenting practices you're most proud of are actually making things worse. (The Washington Post, 2018)

Also, while many working parents would like to start their own businesses to gain flexibility, they don't because health insurance would become so hard to afford. Finally, many parents of college-age kids stick to jobs they don't like, just to maintain their kids' coverage amid a shortage of entry-level jobs offering benefits. (The Wall Street Journal, 2010)

The mentioned metaphor PARENT IS CHALLENGE objectifies the challenges and obstacles that parents encounter, including financial challenges *(…many working parents would like to start their own businesses to gain flexibility, they don't because health insurance would become so hard to afford*), health-related challenges (*Your child's anxiety is not your fault*), parenting challenges (…*parents trying to raise kids of any age … question or dilemma …*), and time management challenges between work and childcare (…*working parents trying to juggle children and jobs*).

The metaphor PARENT IS FEAR personifies the parental fear for the lives of their children. This is explicitly conveyed in the given discourse fragments through nouns "*nightmare*", "*fear*", adjectives "*worst*", "*terrifying*", and phrases "*losing a child*":

Every parent's worst nightmare is losing a child. It's against the natural order of things and a gut-wrenching prospect too horrifying to consider. (USA Today, 2022)

For her, one of the biggest fear of being a single parent is that she doesn't have a second income to fall back on in a crisis. "If you're a single parent in this economy, it's terrifying," she says. (The Wall Street Journal, 2001)

The metaphor PARENT IS CHORES highlights all the domestic work that parents undertake, including childcare and daily household routines. For example:

I checked backpacks, did laundry, cleared voice mail, started dinner. I was picking up the phone to call the parents of my son's hockey teammates as part of my job as team manager … (The Wall Street Journal, 2001)

When Curtis Stone's son, Hudson, was born three years ago, the chef faced the same dilemma so many other enthusiastic cooks do when they become parents. "It can quickly become a chore," he told me in an interview recently … (The Washington Post, 2015)

In the first discourse fragment, the narrative is presented from the first-person singular, who is one of the parents and is performing numerous daily tasks. In the second discourse fragment it is mentioned that the parents' activities become routine and duties. Consequently, parents are depicted as individuals responsible for daily tasks and routines.

Additionally, the second group includes three more metaphors: PARENT IS RESPONSIBILITY+PARENT IS CONTROL, PARENT IS PLAN, and PARENT IS WORRY. These metaphors, also present in American newspaper discourse of the 21st century, highlight the challenges of parenting and the efforts made by parents to overcome them.

The conceptual integration model of PARENT IS DIFFICULTIES (shown in **Figure 2**) enables the explicit identification and graphic representation of specific emerging traits that arise from the process of metaphorical blending.
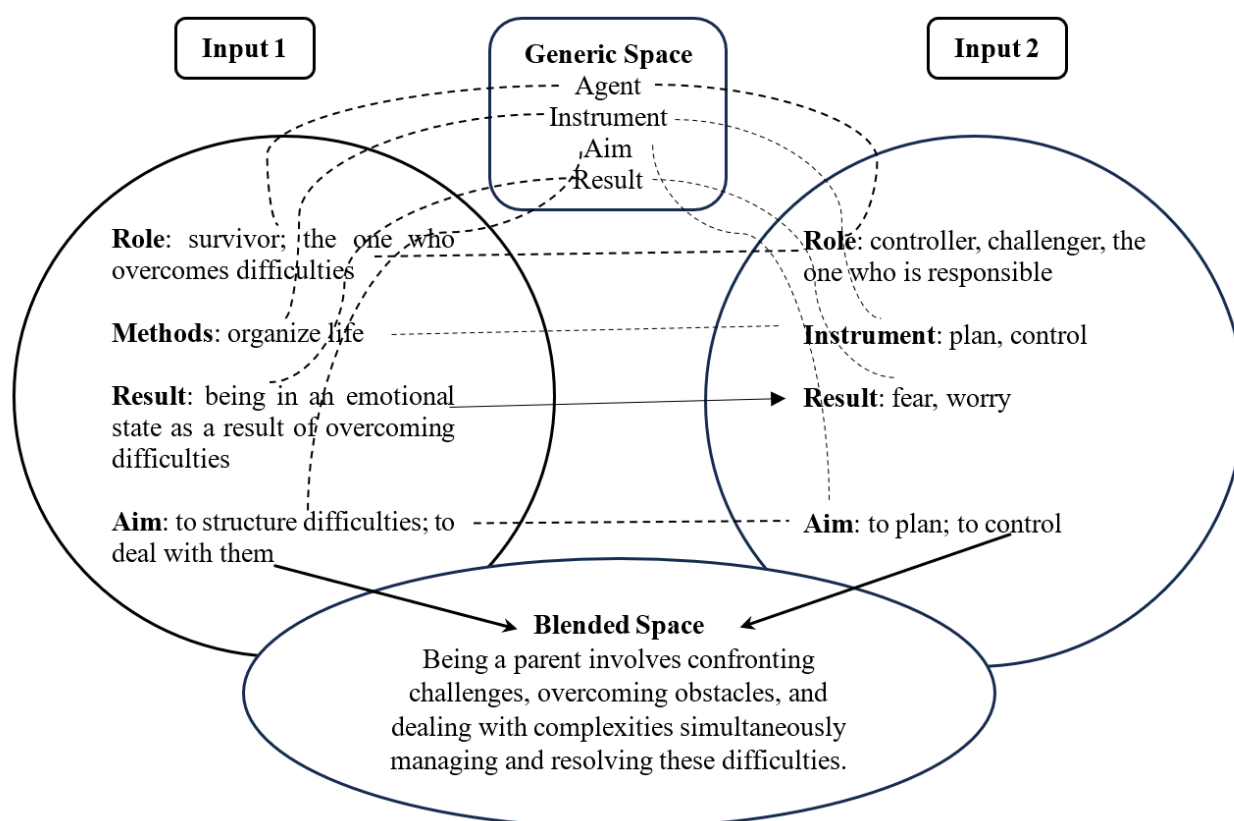

Figure 2. Conceptual integration network: PARENT IS DIFFICULTIES.

3.3. PARENT IS OWNER

The third group consists of metaphors that denote the transfer of parental functions onto other objects of reality. We believe that in all the discursive fragments of our sample, the metaphor domain PARENT IS OWNER is actualized. Since this domain is quite specific and ordinary, it does not receive

elaborations or extensions in the chosen type of discourse for analysis. For example, we will provide a few illustrations:

> *United Property & Casualty Insurance Co. will exit Florida's troubled homeowners insurance market, forcing customers to find new coverage as their policies come up for renewal, the insurer's parent company announced Thursday.* (Tampa bay Times, 2022)

> *… the streaming service was shut down less a month after launching—a decision made by the network's new corporate parent. Fox News is owned by Fox Corporation, the sister company of The Post's corporate parent, News Corp.* (New York Post, 2022)

In the provided illustrations, the word "*parent*" is used to denote the owner, the founding company, or someone who is the first in a certain field, i.e., the originator and "parent" or "ancestor".

The conceptual integration model, as illustrated in **Figure 3**, facilitates the clear identification of distinct traits that emerge from the process of metaphorical blending.
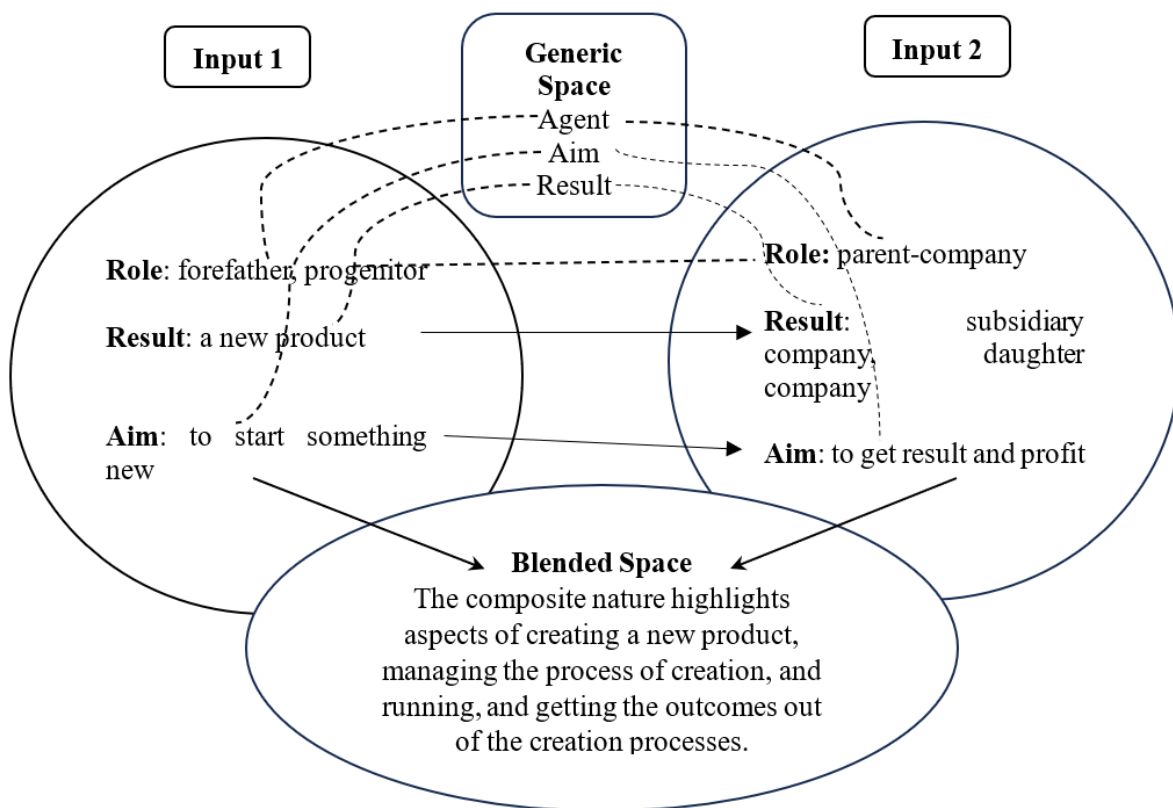

Figure 3. Conceptual integration network: PARENT IS OWNER.

3.4. PARENT IS BURDEN

Metaphors belonging to the fourth category are grounded in the source domain BURDEN, and they serve to convey a predominantly adverse perception of parental roles. A comprehensive analysis of pertinent articles underscores the observable extension of the source domain, facilitated by the introduction of novel conceptual elements such as exigency, irritant, and benightedness. These elements engender innovative and atypical facets of parenthood, which substantially deviate from the conventional paradigms traditionally associated with parental roles.

Within this conceptual framework, parents are depicted as individuals necessitating continuous care, mired in a state of detachment from contemporary realities, and constituting an encumbrance upon their

progeny. A detailed examination of these metaphorical constructs within the context of newspaper publications offers invaluable insights into the evolving perceptions and societal narratives surrounding parenthood.

PARENT IS EXIGENCY:

… They mother their parents. I have watched my friends and colleagues do it: Dropping everything to fly to be near a bedside; juggling school and pharmacy pickups; making time to sort out parental finances in that 25th hour of the day.

… There are an estimated 20 million Americans who are raising children and caring for elderly parents simultaneously. …

But that doesn't make it any easier. No one—not parent or child—wants the role reversal that becomes inexorable in the end. (The Washington Post, 2012)

… Our parents' pensions and Social Security benefits don't cover their living costs, and one already needs in-home care, which means their savings are dwindling quickly.

… Well, we're stuck in this sandwich, supporting our parents … (The New York Times, 2010)

The mentioned metaphor portrays parents as individuals who require acute care due to advanced age or health conditions. It emphasizes the potential need for our presence and caregiving for our parents, and implies that children have a moral obligation to reciprocate care and support their parents. This metaphor highlights the evolving dynamics of the parent-child relationship, with an emphasis on the increasing responsibility and role reversal as parents age. It underscores the idea that caregiving and support are integral aspects of the parent-child relationship, subject to transformation over time.

PARENT IS IRRITANT:

Teenagers: Allergic to Parents. Two weeks earlier our almost-teenage daughter left for five weeks of camp, upset that she would have to return a little early for what we planned to be a splendid vacation to northern Europe.

This is all what renowned child psychologist and author, Anthony E. Wolf, calls a teenager's "allergy to parents …" (The Wall Street Journal, 2001)

In this discursive segment, parents are delineated as entities that engender disruption, amplify discontent, provoke irritation, and incite disquiet in their offspring to such an extent that scholars allude to the phenomenon as a "*parental allergy*". It thus characterizes parents as personifications of perturbations, wielding a deleterious impact on the quality of life experienced by their progeny. This conceptualization serves as a pivotal insight into the evolving dynamics of parent-child relationships, shedding light on the adverse effects of these interactions on the psychological and emotional well-being of the younger generation.

PARENT IS BENIGHTED:

"I hear parents say things like, 'What do they think—that I'm an idiot?' " she told me. "Parents don't want to be infantilized any more than their children." Or demeaned. (The Wall Street Journal, 2009);

… They learn it from television, even on the Disney Channel, where parents are portrayed as clueless, out-of-touch or absent. (The Wall Street Journal, 2015)

The provided excerpts draw our attention to the perception of parents by their children and the intergenerational differences, as well as the external influences on these processes. In the given

illustrations, parents are depicted as unsophisticated, uninformed, and out of touch with contemporary life, thereby actualizing a metaphor that portrays parents as backward individuals.

These portrayals underscore the complexity of parent-child relationships, accentuating the generation gap and its influence on how parents are perceived by their offspring. Additionally, they shed light on the societal factors that contribute to the characterization of parents as outmoded or disconnected from current realities, thereby serving as a valuable lens through which to examine evolving family dynamics.

The conceptual integration model, depicted in **Figure 4**, shows a direct and clear identification of particular characteristics that arise from the process of metaphorical blending.
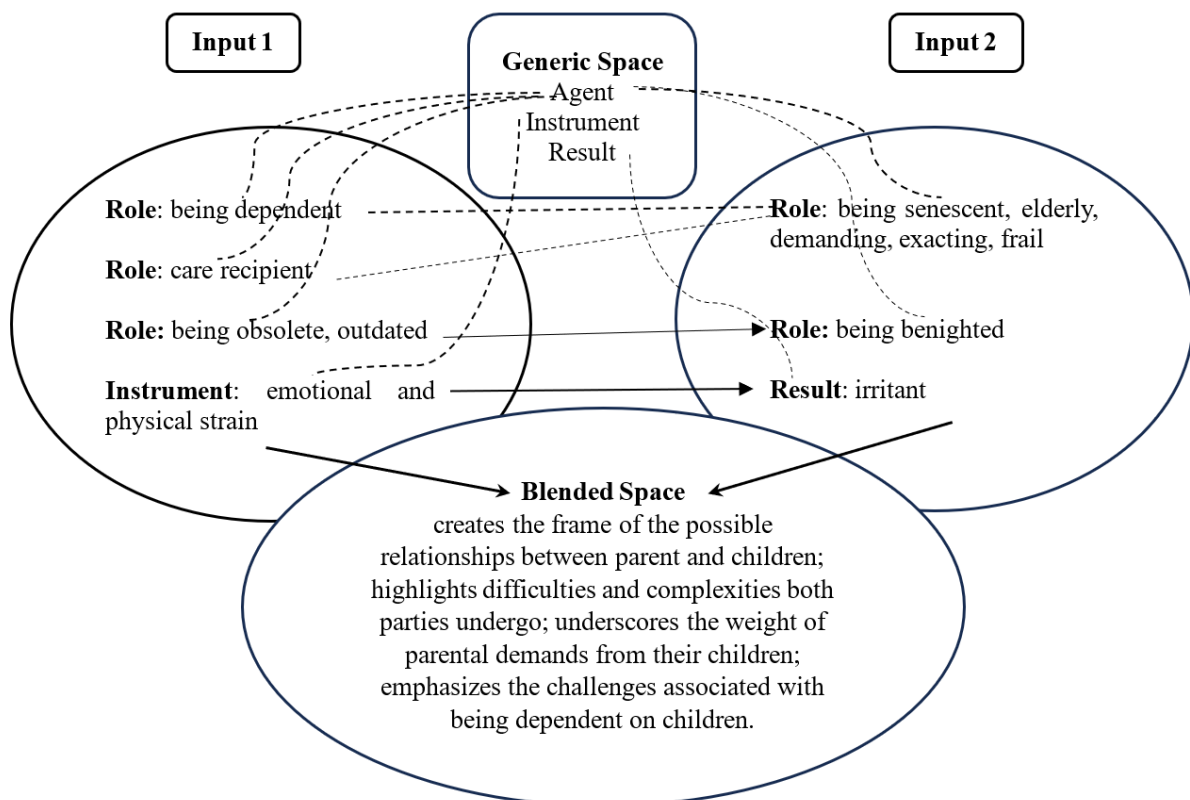

Figure 4. Conceptual integration network: PARENT IS BURDEN.

4. Discussions

This study on conceptual metaphors in newspaper discourse with a focus on the concept PARENT has yielded significant insights into the portrayal of parenthood in American media. The findings of this research open up new avenues for understanding how metaphors shape cognitive images, thereby influencing public perceptions and attitudes.

As outlined in the theoretical framework, the process of identifying traditional metaphors involves procedures of expansion, specification, and combination. Such procedures are evident in the extraction of metaphors related to the concept PARENT from newspaper discourse. However, notably absent are ontological or spatial metaphors This absence can be attributed to the specific nature of the referent of the analyzed concept, which primarily pertains to the physical entities of parents that typically hold a specific spatial position that remains relatively stable, such as a home.

Our analysis revealed the presence of several metaphorical groups, each offering distinct insights into the conceptualization of parenthood in American newspaper discourse:

1) Ethical and Social Responsibilities: The first group covers metaphors that convey ethical and societal obligations of parents, encompassing their traditional roles and responsibilities. These metaphors encapsulate daily tasks, duties, and emotional aspects inherently associated with parenthood. This group appears in 44.33% of the analyzed articles, reflecting the pervasiveness of these metaphors in portraying parental roles.

2) Challenges of Parenthood: The second group involves metaphors representing the challenges and difficulties faced by parents in fulfilling their parental duties. This group accounts for 37.11% of the articles, underscoring the acknowledgment of the complexities associated with parenting responsibilities.

3) Shifted Responsibilities: The third group includes metaphors that transfer parental functions onto other entities in reality. This metaphorical group, accounting for 11.5% of the articles, signifies the representation of certain parental functions carried out by other objects or individuals.

4) Negative Perception of Parents: The final group encompasses metaphors that convey a negative perception of parents. This group is found in 7.06% of the articles, portraying parents as burdens or sources of annoyance.

It is worth noting that these metaphorical groups are not mutually exclusive; instead, they often interweave within discourse fragments, reflecting the interconnectedness of various aspects of parenthood.

The implications of this study are twofold: cognitive and societal. By uncovering the metaphorical structures surrounding the concept PARENT, this research sheds light on how linguistic expressions contribute to the construction of cognitive models related to parenting. This enhances our understanding of how metaphors operate as cognitive tools that not only facilitate communication but also shape the way individuals conceptualize and engage with the concept of parenthood.

On a societal level, the identified metaphors provide insights into how parenthood is framed within newspaper discourse. Recognizing the prevalent metaphors and their associations with ethical responsibilities, challenges, shifted roles, decision-making, and negative perceptions can aid journalists, policymakers, and communicators in crafting more nuanced and culturally sensitive narratives about parenting. The study's findings also offer valuable resources for parenting educators and advocates seeking to understand the dynamics of public discourse surrounding parenthood.

While this study provides valuable insights, there are certain limitations that need to be acknowledged. The analysis is centered on American newspaper discourse, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings to other cultural and linguistic contexts. The methodology primarily focuses on written texts, which might not capture the full range of metaphorical expressions present in spoken or visual media. Additionally, the sample size, although extensive, might not encompass the entirety of the complex representations of parenthood in media.

The theoretical significance of this study lies in its application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Critical Metaphor Analysis to a specific concept within newspaper discourse. The findings contribute to the understanding of how metaphors operate as cognitive tools and how they reflect cultural values and perceptions. On a practical level, the study's insights can inform communication strategies, media literacy initiatives, and parenting discourse, enhancing societal understanding and fostering productive conversations about parenthood.

5. Conclusions

This study contributes to the field of linguistics and media studies by offering a comprehensive analysis of metaphors associated with the concept PARENT in American newspaper discourse. The identification of distinct metaphorical groups and their implications for public understanding of parenting enhances our understanding of how media shape cognitive images. Additionally, the methodological approach applied in this study demonstrates the efficacy of integrating linguistic theories and discourse analysis in exploring metaphors within specific contexts.

In conclusion, this study's multidimensional analysis of conceptual metaphors in newspaper discourse provides valuable insights into the portrayal of parenting in media. By exploring the implications, limitations, future directions, theoretical and practical significance, methodological considerations, and overall contribution, this research deepens our understanding of how language and metaphors play a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions and communication dynamics.

Building upon this study's foundation, several promising avenues for future research emerge. Cross-cultural analyses of metaphors related to parenting in different media contexts could offer valuable insights into cultural variations in conceptualization. Exploring how metaphors change over time, considering different historical periods, could unveil the evolving societal perspectives on parenthood. Furthermore, investigating the impact of these metaphors on public perception and decision-making processes represents a promising direction for further inquiry.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, IMH; methodology, IB; validation, IB, TS and VY; formal analysis, VY; investigation, VY and ST; resources, IB; data curation, VY; writing—original draft preparation, IMH; writing—review and editing, IMH; visualization, ST; supervision, VY; project administration, IMH. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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