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'Anchor baby': A conceptual explanation for pejoration

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Abstract

In this paper, I offer a detailed account of the pejorative nature of the term 'anchor baby', an increasingly common phrase used to frame the children of undocumented immigrants within the United States. Using cognitive linguistic methodology within the Critical Discourse Analysis paradigm [Chilton, Missing links in mainstream CDA: Modules, blends and the critical instinct. In Wodak, R. and Chilton, P. (Eds.) A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Methodology and Interdisciplinarity. John Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 19–53, 2005], I explore language from both sides of the immigration debate to show, step by step, how a seemingly simple compound can subconsciously introduce or affirm deep value-laden judgments about both authorized and unauthorized immigrants. As such, my explanation rests on the theory of Conceptual Blending [G. Fauconnier, M. Turner, The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities. Basic Books, New York, 2002] in which multiple domains of knowledge including those of seafaring, immigration, and family structure blend together giving rise to a new (and offensive) concept of procreation as a tool to gain legal status, resources, and permanent ties to the U.S. I show that hidden meaning and reasoning, instinctively labeled as offensive by many, but often characterized in vague terms, can in fact be systematically described given the right conceptual framework. I propose the theory of Conceptual Blending can be utilized as a uniquely effective tool to dissect associative processes in the study of pragmatics.
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Keywords: Conceptual Blending Theory; Critical Discourse Analysis; Associative processes; Anchor baby; Immigration

1. Introduction

Thrust into the media spotlight by Arizona's recent immigration law, *Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act* (Arizona Senate Bill 1070),[1] the phrase *anchor baby* was coined to denote purposeful procreation by foreign-born residents within the borders of the United States. The term and the concept behind it have sparked heated emotion on both sides of the immigration debate within the U.S. For those Americans who want to keep undocumented immigrants out of the country the ''anchor baby problem'' is a call to arms, as articulated in the blog post in (1):

(1) *. . .we must eliminate the* ***anchor baby*** *incentive. The 14th Amendment's intention was to provide for citizenship for newly freed slaves, not to provide a loop hole for legitimizing illegal entrants in gaining a permanent foothold in the country. . . Unfortunately, it is now being abused by illegal immigrants who enter the US and 'drop' an anchor baby, which can later grow up and bring in the rest of the family legally through regular visa application processes.* (Bradley Farless 2010 http://www.bradleyfarless.com/a-sad-anchor-baby-story-in-the-philippines/)

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[1] The bill was passed and signed into law in 2010. ''The Arizona Act directs law enforcement officers who possess ''reasonable suspicion'' that an individual is unlawfully present to make reasonable attempts to determine the immigration status of that person and makes the unlawful presence of a foreign national a criminal offense'' (Legal Information Institute http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/support_our_law_enforcement_and_safe_neighborhoods_act_of_2010).

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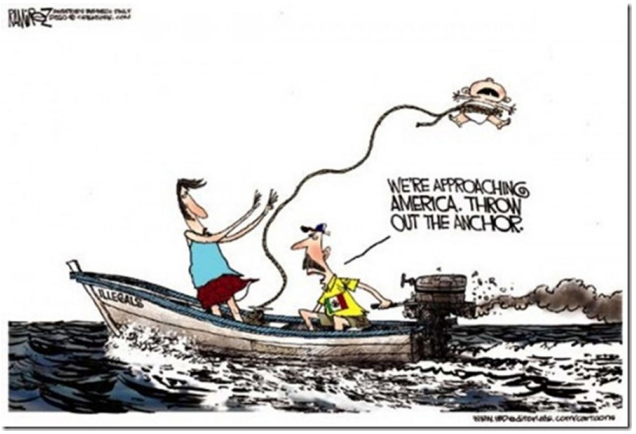
But for another constituency, namely immigrant supporters and Latino immigrants themselves, *anchor baby* is beyond offensive – a purposefully pejorative label attached to the children of immigrants, created by those seeking to demonize outsiders:

(2) *They don't want us here, period and will twist and turn their rhetoric any which way to justify their actions. . . When I first heard the term "**anchor baby**" I cried . . . For those of us who are American citizens, we need to very vocally reject this term as the racial slur that it is.* (Jenny Patiño 2010 http://latina-voices.com/wp04/2010/07/29/weighing-down-immigration-movement/)

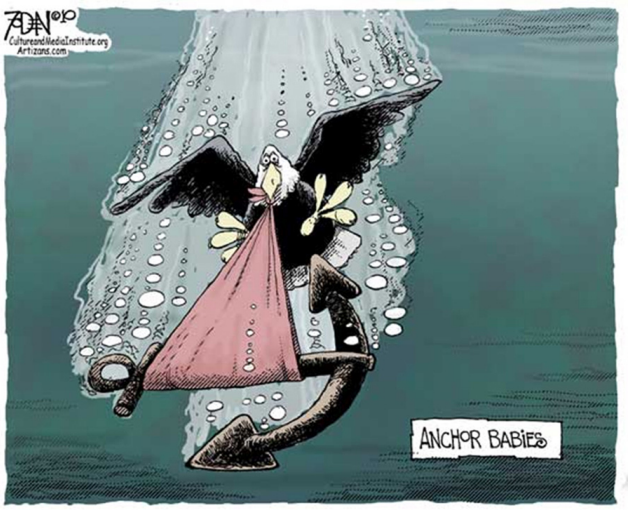
Most coined terms lack the impact of *anchor baby*, which should prompt the questions: Where does all this power come from? How do we get from anchor + baby to an utterance that is so potent and provocative? After all, neither word, *anchor* nor *baby*, is offensive on its own.

Exocentric compounds like *anchor baby* are not just simple pairings of concepts – their meaning is not compositional in the traditional notional of 'compositionality' (e.g. a result of overlapping sets (cf. Vendler, 1967)). As Sweetser (1999, p. 135) shows for other noun-noun compounds, the meaning of *anchor baby* does not come about by merely combining the meaning of *anchor* with the meaning of *baby*; as a result, we find great parody of what it is not.[2] The politically informed American audience laughs about what *anchor baby* does *not* mean. It does not mean a baby thrown overboard like an anchor as suggested in (3), a cartoon by Michael Ramirez from *Investor's Business Daily*:



(3) Michael Ramirez, *Investor's Business Daily*, Editorials, August 6, 2010.[3] By permission of Michael Ramirez and Creators Syndicate, Inc.

And it is not a baby anchor brought down by the proverbial stork – the American political satirists joke about this too as in (4):



[2] See Fauconnier and Turner (1998) for a discussion of noun–noun compounds, such as *land yacht* (meaning luxurious car), in which the referent is not part of the category indicated by the head noun.

[3] Reprint permission granted in writing to author of this article.

(4) Glenn Foden: 'Anchor Baby' Cartoon[4]

If *anchor baby* is not the sum of its parts, how do speakers understand it exactly, and how do listeners' minds create the intended meaning? To answer these questions, to understand this process, we need to closely examine how simple words can activate extraordinarily complex associations. Through the theory of Conceptual Blending (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2002), I attempt to systematically explain the complex reasoning process that yields the juxtaposition of differing pragmatic associations found in language surrounding the political debate over illegal immigration. Seemingly simple language is never actually processed context-free; thus, any explanation of how speakers understand this compound inevitably relies on a series of cognitive primitives such as prototype-based reasoning, including the activation of stereotypes, ideal cases, and radial categories (Lakoff, 1987).

Within the study of pragmatics, there is ongoing debate regarding how to capture and model the contextual associations necessary for speakers and listeners to form appropriate inferences (Mazzone, 2011). A detailed pragmatic analysis of discourse must be able to model how speakers construct and access common ground or common knowledge (Allan, 2012). This is no easy task given that each individual is working with a different conceptual system; that is, every speaker has varying life experiences, understands the world differently, and comes to the conversation with diverse assumptions on all kinds of issues. As the following computer-mediated conversation about *anchor babies* shows, speakers can hold differing beliefs within the topic of immigration and still fluently participate in a conversation about it. This conversation can occur because speakers in a discourse community share conceptual structure and reasoning patterns. Likewise, semantic knowledge "feeds fairly directly" into pragmatics; semantic *and* contextual, encyclopedic understanding of words like *anchor baby* are part of an integrated system (Fillmore, 1984, p. 122).

We see this integration at work in the flow from one utterance to the next in running discourse. In (5), four participants on a political website debate the topic of illegal immigration and link the *anchor baby* concept to presupposed activities of undocumented immigrants; two of the four participants reason that the parents of so-called *anchor babies* burden the economy, take advantage of the political system, and should be deported from the country:

(5) A:. . .*All illegals and anchor babies. BUH BYE! And we wonder why this country is going to pot with millions of people using resources and not paying taxes! BUH BYE!!*
B: *no the kids can stay as i believe them to be citizens. but the parents that are illegals see ya.....*
C: *those "anchor babies" are American citizens per the constitution. Do you really want to start deporting American citizens?*
D: *He obviously doesn't think they're real Amerikuns [sic]*.
(Huffingtonpost.com June 15 2010)

In order to fluently contribute to the online thread above, speakers A, B, C, and D rely on complex contextual information which includes not only detailed knowledge about immigration to the U.S., but also complex belief systems about what it means to be American – who should have that privilege and who should not. Each addition to the thread requires the subsequent participant to take several inferential steps. For example participant B must know that *anchor babies* are the children of undocumented immigrants; participant C must know that any person born on U.S. soil is automatically granted U.S. citizenship, participant D can only qualify participant A's commentary because D not only has access to complex notions about who should be considered "American", but also understands the ideology of those who display anti-immigrant sentiment.

Revealing the cognitive framework beneath this simple phrase illuminates several processes: how speakers like those above are able to seamlessly partake in this type of discourse, which inferential patterns are likely to be at work, and from where those patterns emerge. Furthermore, this same conceptual analysis sheds light on the pejoration process. In this case, one short label yields factually inaccurate, yet cognitively real, negative reasoning patterns about immigrants to the United States, perpetuating societal inequalities.

2. The history of the phrase and political context

2.1. Unauthorized Latino immigration to the U.S.

Since the 1970s the United States has experienced a steady growth of unauthorized migrants (Passel and Suro, 2005). The U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates a vast majority (over 95%) of those unauthorized workers

[4] Reprint permission granted in writing to author of this article.

are from North, Central, and South America. In 2011, 59% of unauthorized persons living in the U.S. were from Mexico (Hoefer et al., 2011, p. 4). The next three largest undocumented populations were also of Latino origin (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, respectively) (Hoefer et al., 2011, p. 4). Unauthorized entry peeked between the years 2000–2004 (roughly 3.3 million) and has slowly declined since (roughly 1.6 million between 2005 and 2010) (Hoefer et al., 2011, p. 3). According to the Pew Research Hispanic Center, in 2010, there were 4.5 million U.S.-born children (citizens under age 18) whose parents were unauthorized.[5] According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, in 2012, self-identified Latinos made up 16.9% of the total U.S. population (estimated to be roughly 314 million).[6] Residents of Latino origin, both documented and undocumented, make up an increasingly larger segment of the total U.S. population.

2.2. Origin and diffusion of the phrase

It is important to note that the term anchor baby did not originate as a pejorative for the children of Latino immigrants. It is arguably related to the term *anchor child*, originally used in reference to Vietnamese in the early 1980s and again in the early 1990s (Ignatow and Williams, 2011, p. 60).[7] Its current use began in 2003 and has rapidly accelerated to over 400,000 tokens on the internet in 2010 (and a simple search in Google turned up almost 700,000 hits in 2013), making it a prime example of exponential diffusion and the 'epidemiological model' of information spread through the interplay between new (online) and old (television, radio, and print) media (Ignatow and Williams, 2011, p. 61). This dispersion can be explained through both a bottom up and top down convergence of new and old media where language of the blogosphere converges with the language of traditional media outlets through new practices in which print and television news mingles with online content (Ignatow and Williams, 2011, p. 63).

Anchor baby fits within a constellation of oppositional, sometimes consciously framed progressive and conservative buzzwords used in the discussion of 'immigration'.[8] Conservatives favor terms like *illegal immigrant*, *illegal alien*, and *illegals*; whereas progressives tend toward *undocumented worker*, *unauthorized*, and *unaccounted for*. In (6), conservative messaging consultant Frank Luntz summarizes the framing strategy on the right:

(6) *If you call them illegal aliens, that's the most strong, it's the most direct term, and it frightens Hispanics in this community, Latinos who live here already. If you call them undocumented workers or unaccounted for aliens, that's the most gentle terminology. It sounds like they just lost their papers, and if you give their papers back, everything's fine. What I tend to recommend is illegal immigrants because it defines what they are. They are immigrants and they are here illegally. But let's face it, what you call them determines how people react to the whole issue.*

(Frank Luntz, April 6, 2006, *Speaking the Language of Immigration Debate*, Interview NPR Radio, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5328573)

(See Lakoff and Fergusson, 2006 for an account and analysis of the immigration framing strategy on the left.) Even before the modern, conscious framing of immigrants crossing borders into U.S. territory, there exists a long history of tapping into various (mostly undesirable) metaphorical domains to shape the concept of immigration and the role of the immigrant. Researchers using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) have demonstrated that complex metaphorical models are employed to understand the migration patterns of people across the world. Cataloged source domains include: food for a growing country, diseased organisms, organic material, hostile invaders, and wild animals (O'Brien, 2003), pollutants (Cisneros, 2008), parasites, and weeds (Santa Ana, 1999, 2002). At various times in history, all these source domains have been unconsciously exploited in the description of immigrants.

2.3. Methodology, use, and meaning

Data, including the exact term ''anchor baby'' or ''anchor babies'', was collected through both corpus searches in The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008) and basic search engine retrieval in the World Wide Web. Over 500 instances of the term were collected from American television broadcast transcripts, print journalism,

[5] http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/02/01/unauthorized-immigrant-population-brnational-and-state-trends-2010/.

[6] Statistics cited from U.S. Census Bureau (http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html).

[7] *Anchor baby* can be compared to other framings of the same basic phenomenon of foreign-born visitors giving birth on U.S. soil. 'Maternity Tourism' or 'Birth Tourism' as brought up in Arnold (2011) refers to an industry of hotels, agents, and individuals advertising the idea that pregnant foreign-born visitors purposely come to the U.S. to give birth. Clearly, these phrases represent a very different conception of the same basic notion.

[8] Interestingly *immigration* now codes illegal immigration, not just legal immigration.

including American magazine and newspaper articles, and various forms of online content: political websites, blog posts, and online chat rooms. (Because the context of use is not primarily of interest for this type of study, data was not coded through any type of tagging procedure other than recording the source of each data point.)

Within popular broadcast news media, usage of 'anchor baby' come largely from right-wing talk shows such as *The O'Reilly Factor* and *Glen Beck* which air on the Fox News channel. According to Ignatow and Williams (2011, p. 60), *anchor baby* originated almost exclusively on right-wing websites such as vdare.com in the early 2000s, but by 2010 Twitter users were posting dozens of tweets that included the term on a daily basis. Within sensationalist American news media, participants, generally hostile to illegal immigration, discuss the 'hot' political topic of the day. In (7) host Bill O'Reilly probes his guest on the question of birthright citizenship. His guest introduces the term *anchor babies* to assert that immigrants purposefully give birth within U.S. borders in order for their children to claim citizenship:

(7) *O'REILLY: OK. We only have – we have less than a minute left. We're working on a story, Michelle – and we'll probably have you on – about babies brought here illegally because, once you're born here, if you're a baby, even if your parents are illegal, you're an American citizen, right, and that's a big business, too.*
MALKIN: That's right. Oh, it's a huge scam. I mean they call them ***anchor babies****, and it's not just from Mexico where a large number of these illegal alien babies are coming from. People are flying in...*
O'REILLY: Yes.
MALKIN:... pregnant women from South Korea, from Europe, from Africa. Everybody knows that, hey, automatic birthright citizenship, it's your ticket into this country.

("FACTOR Follow-Up", The O'Reilly Factor, Fox News, July 11, 2003)

As Malkin's response indicates, multiple presuppositions are attached to the anchor baby concept. Parents of anchor babies are primarily Latino: "*and it's not just from Mexico where a large number of these illegal alien babies are coming from . . .*" Having a baby on U.S. soil automatically qualifies him or her to U.S. citizenship: "*hey, automatic birthright citizenship*". The parents of anchors babies are gaming the U.S. political system: "*. . . it's your ticket into this country*"; "*Oh, it's a huge scam*".

In (8), conservative talk-show host Glenn Beck introduces the term as part of a list of issues he thinks are being ignored by mainstream media outlets:

(8) *These are the stories that the mainstream media is covering. President Obama says the economy is recovering, but warns that more pain lies ahead. Oh, goody. He says that the stimulus and the plans to help the automakers are succeeding. Really? Is that why G.M. is about to go bankrupt? And the banks are now freeing up credit for small businesses, so everything is A-OK. Also, the number of children born to illegal immigrant parents has grown rapidly over the past five years. I mean, why not,* ***anchor babies****. The new study saw the numbers jump from 2.7 million in 2003 to 4 million in 2008. And, more good news. There has been a threefold increase in people who have had tax problems who've never had any trouble before. Yes, yes. Don't worry, the IRS has vowed to treat struggling taxpayers fairly and compassionately.*

("Glenn Beck," Fox News, April 14, 2009)

Additional assumptions are evidenced in Beck's statement. The so-called problem is getting worse, not better: "Also, the number of children born to illegal immigrant parents has grown rapidly over the past five years"; "The new study saw the numbers jump from 2.7 million in 2003 to 4 million in 2008".

The phrase is not just prominent in right-wing media and the blogosphere, it also emerges in non-partisan, so-called objective media discourse. Here in (9) the writer uses the term not only absent right wing rhetoric, but, remarkably, in a refutation of anti-immigrant values:

(9) *Regarding "Arizona now after 'anchor babies' "June 17:*

"Arizona" is not after ***anchor babies****. Please don't paint us all with the same brush. Many of us in Arizona are appalled that the flaming lunatics that we call our legislators have made Arizona the laughing stock of the nation. I live in Tucson. Many of us work with immigrants, support Humane Borders and offer education and assistance to those seeking a better life in our nation.*

(Op-Ed, Letters to the Editor, Pg. A9, San Francisco Chronicle, June 28, 2010)

Presented between quotations marks in (10), the phrase is used in this journalistic exposé about how the question of illegal immigration manifests itself in the debate over healthcare:

(10) *But it was ''not even a down payment'' on the total cost, Mr. Dauner said. With more than 1.4 million of California's residents uninsured and more than half of California's hospitals operating in the red, Mr. Dauner warned that care for illegal immigrants could tip some hospitals into bankruptcy.*
Even so, the surging numbers of illegal immigrants in the health care system have fed some misconceptions, hospital administrators said.
*While Texas border hospitals often get ''**anchor babies**'' – children of Mexican women who dart across the border to give birth to an American citizen – most illegal immigrants who go to major hospitals in Texas can show that they have been living here for years, said Ernie Schmid, policy director at the Texas Hospital Association. Many immigrant families have mixed status; often a patient with no documents has a spouse or children who are legal.*

(''Texas Hospitals' Separate Paths Reflect the Debate on Immigration,'' Julia Preston, New York Times, June 7, 2006)

The latter instances in (9) and (10) suggest a normalization of the term, once perhaps associated with purely right-wing politicians and talking heads (as Ignatow and Williams (2011) argue), now used within a much broader national speech community. Speakers may or may not be aware that others find the term offensive. Clearly its frequent appearance within quotation marks or hedged (i.e. *so-called anchor baby*) indicates many do recognize the distasteful nature of the label; nevertheless, its use has only increased. This proliferation raises several significant questions critical to the intersection of language and thought: How do labels like *anchor baby* affect the way Americans reason about categories of people, in this case immigrants, in society? And is there a systematic way to show how the mere process of comprehending this type of compound can negatively affect the way Americans view a large constituent of the population?

3. Conceptual integration as a methodology within pragmatics and a critical theoretical approach

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a research paradigm in which theorists study the way social inequality and power dominance are enacted and reinforced through social and political discourse (Van Dijk, 2001; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). One goal of the analyst who ascribes to a critical theoretical approach is to expose how language builds and/or affirms negative social stereotypes, among other avenues of repression, with an eye toward raising awareness of such discourse patterns in order to ''expose and ultimately resist social inequality (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352).'' Rather than offering just a description of discourse structures, those associated with the CDA school aim to explain these patterns as reflections of social structure. For example, in a monumental study of covert racism in British media, Teun Van Dijk (1991) links social inequality to the perpetuation of racism by the British press. He uses evidence from journalistic data to show how minority races are surreptitiously framed through disproportionately negative language in media discourse. Van Dijk (1991, p. 43) calls this phenomenon 'elite racism' – elites in the press do not have a special set of racist values but their position allows them to perpetuate racist views of the society at large. Xenophobic and racist attitudes toward foreigners and immigrants in Europe have long been a central focus of the critical discourse analyst. Ruth Wodak and collaborators, who take the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009), have published numerous studies detailing and explaining negative stances taken toward immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and foreigners in various European political contexts (see Wodak and Matouschek, 1993; Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999; Baker et al., 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009, 2010 for this detailed analysis).

3.1. Critical Discourse Analysis and cognition

Researchers within the CDA school have for several decades focused on cognition and discourse. Beginning in the 1980s, Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) explored the role schema-based knowledge, such as frames (Fillmore, 1982), scripts (Bower et al., 1979), and metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), play in the comprehension of discourse. However, until more recently, CDA has remained largely separate from Cognitive Linguistic approaches (Fillmore, 1975; Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1987, 1991; Talmy, 2011) to semantic and pragmatic analysis. Nevertheless, there are a few analysts within the CDA paradigm who have begun to include cognitive linguistic methodologies within a critical perspective on discourse analysis. Chilton (2005, p. 22) makes this case explicitly, ''CDA, despite some interest in mental representation, has by and large not paid attention to the human mind,'' and Chilton argues cognitive theories should be incorporated into the CDA approach. Following Chilton's lead, Hart (2007, 2010) explores in which ways conceptual blending, specifically, couched within the larger framework of Cognitive Linguistics, provides the tools to carry out a critical analysis of language data. His study on the language of immigration in Britain demonstrates how negative reasoning patterns can be explained through conceptual blending vis-à-vis the language ordinary speakers use to address the subject. Also working within the CDA paradigm, Musolff (2010) proposes Germans of the Nazi era metaphorically understood the German state as a potentially poisoned human body. He argues this metaphorical model served as the basis and rationale for genocidal thinking during the Holocaust. Following in the same vein, I argue that it is not enough to simply identify racially coded language. In order to

explain social inequality implicit within and perpetuated by basic language use, we need to examine not just what is said, what is not said, and the implications of specific instances of talk, but also the mental reasoning process that leads to and is evoked by words, phrases, and larger units of discourse. By mapping out the specifics of how we reason through language, we can ascribe racist thought patterns to linguistic data without simply inferring the connection.

3.2. Inference and association

Within right-wing discourse, utterances containing *anchor baby* are often paired with language implicating the immigrant as taking advantage of the American political system and the American people (a category that excludes the immigrant). This common sentiment is expressed by an online commentator in (11):

(11) *Now* "***anchor baby***" *is a slur? Since when? He is simply describing the common practice, especially in the Valley and in our southwestern borders, where a pregnant illegal tries to have a baby so that the baby will be a legal citizen and in hopes that she will be able to stay in the USA. And also get better, free healthcare for the delivery of her child. It happens all the time and since American's are friendly and honest it often results in how the illegal wanted it.* ***Both are allowed to stay and milk the system****.*

(Comment posted on Huffingpost.com, May 3, 2013)

The same inferential process is at work in the following constructed discourse, representative of this reasoning pattern:

(12) A: *The neighbors just gave birth to one more anchor baby.*
B: *I don't understand how they can keep abusing the system?*

Given the right interpretation of *anchor baby*, speaker B's response is a logical extension of speaker A's proposition. Clearly, in order to formulate this response, speaker B needs to draw on complex knowledge of what *anchor babies* are, who gives birth to them, how the American welfare system functions, etc. Likewise, to judge B's response as felicitous, Speaker A must draw on the same conceptual structure and inferential process. Any explanation of the pragmatics of this exchange must explain why it is felicitous to refer to the neighbors as system abusers.

Part of this story must link context (both linguistic and situational), world knowledge, and linguistic form. Within the study of pragmatics, there is a debate about how implicational processes can be explained through inferential reasoning of the type described by Grice and/or associative processing outlined in Recanati (2004) and Mazzone (2011). Within the pragmatics literature, associative processing maintains that encyclopedic knowledge of concepts encoded in the utterance must be active during the listener's inferential process. The proposed mechanism is through associative schemata:

"Conceptually, we may say that schemata narrow the logical space of interpretation, by discarding properties (reference assignments, etc.) which might suggest alternative lines of interpretation, and by preserving only the conceptual pieces which can be made sense of, insofar as they are subsumed under a rule – so to speak. In a word: schemata contribute to filter out unwanted associations (Mazzone, 2011, p. 2153)."

Offered as a conceptual mechanism, schemata are activated in order to disambiguate lexical polysemy and facilitate the appropriate inferential process. Consider the exchange in (13):

(13) A: *Did you pay the gardener?*
B: *I already told you I went to the bank.*

Speaker A can infer that yes, the gardener was paid, in part, because the word *bank* activates associated concepts of money, cash, payment, etc. favoring the interpretation that *bank* refers to the place where money is stored and not the shoreline of a river.

The exact conceptual mechanism that accomplishes this narrowing process will differ depending on research approach, linguistic sub-discipline, theoretical persuasion, and even perhaps individual researcher. The disambiguation of lexical polysemy is complex, and a good model of inferential processing should be able to capture not just which possible meanings are selected, but where those meanings originate, and how each interpretation arises in a given utterance context. This picture becomes potentially even more complex when confronted with an obviously metaphorical phrase, as the conceptual structure of figurative language is by no means uncomplicated. Although quickly recognized as metaphorical by Americans fluent in the political debate on immigration (hence the humor in the caricature of the literal interpretation in (3) and (4)), *anchor baby* is ultimately an extremely complex concept which requires multiple associations to many disparate domains of knowledge. Part, but not all, of this meaning is constructed through a common metaphorical understanding of immigration highlighted by both cognitive linguistic researchers and researchers of the CDA school.

WATER MOVEMENT		IMMIGRATION
Container	→	United States (as geographic boundary)
Sides of Container	→	National Borders
Liquid (outside container)	→	Future Immigrants to U.S.
Liquid (inside container)	→	Current Immigrants and Populace Living in U.S.
Volume of liquid	→	Number of Immigrants
Velocity of movement	→	Rate of Immigration

Fig. 1. IMMIGRATION IS THE MOVEMENT OF WATER.

3.3. Metaphor and immigration

Anchor baby is partially understood through a very common conceptual metaphor used to structure immigration: IMMIGRATION IS THE MOVEMENT OF WATER (Santa Ana, 1999; Charteris-Black, 2006; Baker et al., 2008; El Refaie, 2001). Conceptual metaphors are regular and conventional ways of understanding one domain (the target domain) in terms of another (the source domain) (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Like most abstract, complex concepts, immigration is structured through multiple source domains, including the flow of water. The migration of peoples across national boundaries is talked about and thought about as the movement of water; English speakers qualify and quantify immigration as *influxes*, *waves*, *flow*, *flood*, *tides* of immigrants. As Baker et al. (2008, p. 297) note, ''A common strategy [is] to quantify RAS [refugees and asylum seekers] in terms of water metaphors (POUR, FLOOD, STREAM), which tend to dehumanize RAS, constructing them as an out-of-control, agentless, unwanted natural disaster.'' Fig. 1 outlines the conceptual mappings which structure the metaphor. The country (the United States in the case of American discourse) is understood as a container, and the movement of migrants in and out is conceived of as the movement of water.

Within this metaphor, an anchor is understood as a tool to secure immigrant families so as not to be swept away by the ever-retreating waters of migrant movement. A simple entailment transfer accounts for this inference. In the source domain of WATER MOVEMENT, an anchor will prevent its boat from washing out to sea. Transferred over to the target domain, this entailment allows us to understand that immigrants have tools at their disposal to secure themselves to their place of current residency. Thus, *anchor baby* is certainly conceptually compatible with the above metaphor (as are many blends compatible with related conceptual metaphors). (See Grady et al., 1999 for more discussion of the relationship between Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Blending.) Nevertheless, this compatibility does not explain the complex inferential process exhibited in its use and the reaction to its use. Securing the immigrant's residency, or creating a sense of security for the immigrant, does not capture the complex semantics and pragmatic reasoning patterns of the phrase as shown in (12) and data to follow. As the data presented thus far indicate, an *anchor baby* is neither a positive, nor even neutral, concept in the minds of speakers. There is hidden, complex reasoning that lies under the exchange in (12), reasoning that goes beyond both the identification of what an *anchor baby* is and the entailments transferred from source to target domain in speakers' metaphorical understanding of immigration. As mentioned, Baker et al. (2008, p. 297) state that immigrants are ''dehumanize[d]'' through the figurative language used to talk about immigration. But how do we account for this negative sentiment? What specific semantic and pragmatic processes can explain this conclusion?

It is my view that Conceptual Blending offers a unique tool through which the researcher can explain inferential and associative processes at work in (12) and similar examples. The associative narrowing process discussed in Mazzone (2011) can be fleshed out in extreme detail given the repertoire of cognitive tools afforded within the theory. In contrast to some other theories of discourse processing, a model that employs Conceptual Blending illuminates the implicit reasoning patterns which underlie the primary interest of researchers working in pragmatics, especially those who seek to explain offensive presuppositions embedded in the language of discrimination.

3.4. Outline of the theory

Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2002), also known as Blending or Conceptual Integration, is a theory of online meaning construction in which cognitive processing is modeled through the integration of pre-existing knowledge, activated by real-time linguistic (and visual) input. Blending is based on Mental Space Theory (Fauconnier, 1994, 1997), in which referential items and relations among them are tracked in the mind through the introduction of spaces, or mental packets (Fauconnier and Turner, 1997, p. 113). These cognitive spaces are constructed and interconnected as discourse unfolds. The theory of Mental Spaces is used to model not only the content of the discourse stream, but also the representation of tense, modality, and speaker attitudes that contextualize referenced events. Blending Theory developed out of this space-based representation of discourse content. Linguistic symbols: words, phrases, and sentences, are processed in speakers' minds and trigger pre-existing knowledge, organized by domain. For

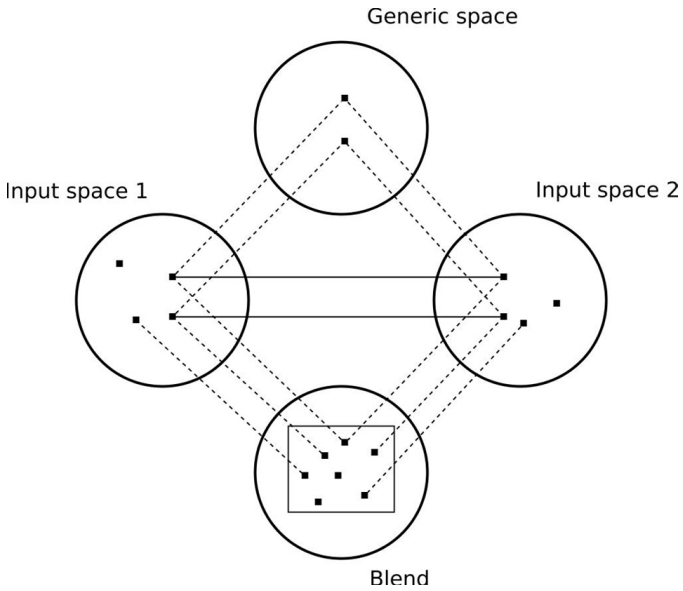


Fig. 2. Generic diagram of a Conceptual Integration Network (adapted from Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 46). If more than two input spaces structure a given blend, one should expect a more complex diagram with circles representing each input space. Multiple input spaces will be utilized in the analysis below (see Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, page 292 and surrounding text for additional examples of such structures).

example, when a listener hears the word *highchair* she must activate her knowledge of babies, meals, sitting, etc. in order to understand what *highchair* means. Thus, Blending Theory demonstrates in detail which conceptual domains should be active (and what parts of each domain of knowledge are relevant) when specific referential items are processed. In this way, Blending Theory serves as a Cognitive Linguistic mechanism to carry out the associative processes argued to be integral in pragmatic processing.

Meaning in Blending Theory is constructed through a dynamic relationship between mental spaces. These ''input spaces'' include partial representations of the relevant frames needed to process the discourse (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 41). The cognitive structure of each input space blends together to give rise to new, emergent meaning. As such, Blending Theory is a tool to explain, with relative precision, how novel meaning can arise from pre-existing, embedded mental representations.

The dynamic integration process in Blending Theory is formalized through a schematized network represented in simplified static diagrams. Fig. 2 illustrates the central components of the process. Circles in the diagram represent the mental spaces themselves: two (or more) Input Spaces, a Generic Space, and a blended space.

It is common for the organizational attributes across the frames in the network (which structure the content of each input space) to be similar (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 40).[9] This shared structure, captured in the generic space, facilitates an integration process in which speakers' minds compare and contrast knowledge from disparate domains in order to make sense of novel concepts. These shared frame elements are signified in the diagram with solid lines, which connect similar elements across input spaces. Conceptual projections made between spaces are represented by dotted lines, and the conceptual structure that emerges from the integration process is captured in the rectangle in the blended space. The Generic Space exists to catalog abstract structure that is shared by both input spaces.

Blending Theory not only allows the researcher to show how similarly structured frames are integrated together, but more importantly, allows one to explain the inferential process active in how we reason about people through language. This reasoning process is clearly illustrated in the oft-cited example from Grady et al. (1999), ''That surgeon is a butcher''. The blending diagram in Fig. 2, developed by Grady et al., explains how the listener is quickly able to infer that said surgeon is incompetent. Input Space 1 includes frame-based information about surgery: Surgeons perform surgery on patients with scalpels in operating rooms. Input Space 2 catalogs the relevant information one needs to know about butchery: A butcher slices up dead animals with a cleaver in an abattoir. These two frames share abstract structure in the Generic Space: Both endeavors involve agents, undergoers, sharp instruments in a workspace. It is, in fact, this shared structure represented in the Generic Space that allows our minds to easily integrate the two input spaces in the blending process (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 47). The blended space contains selective elements imported from each input space. In the case of this blend, crucially, the identity of the surgeon is imported and mapped to the role of the butcher; that

[9] Here I use 'frame' in the sense of Fillmore, 1982: a collection of roles and relations that characterize the associated concept. For example a COMMERCIAL EVENT frame is structured by roles like buyer, seller, goods, currency, and the relations among those roles.

is, after running the blend, we understand the surgeon to still *be* a surgeon, however, we think of the manner in which he cuts his patients akin to the more reckless hacking of a butcher. The inference of incompetence emerges from this mismatch: How can a surgeon fulfill his goal of healing if he is performing his duties imprecisely, in the style of a butcher? (Fig. 3)

From a pragmatic perspective, the blending process illuminates which components of the associated concepts of each referential item will be activated in the inferential process. That is, what part of our schemata (Mazzone's term) associated with surgery is important in the above example? Likewise, what aspects of our schemata for butchery are necessary to

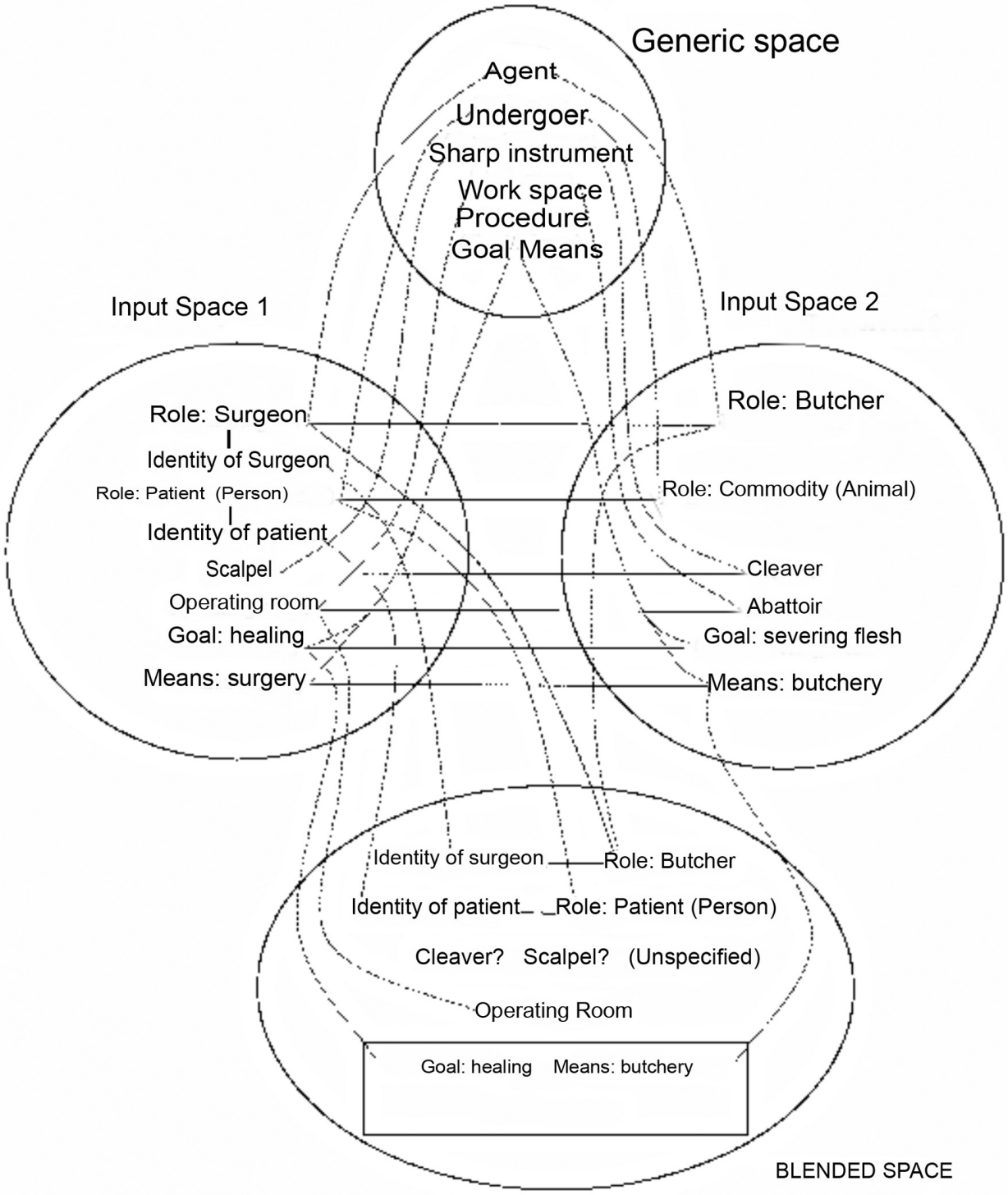


Fig. 3. Blend example: "That surgeon is a butcher" from Grady et al. (1999, p. 106).

draw the correct inferences in the statement? There is significant detail in both the frames for surgery and for butchery. For example, speakers know that surgeons wear scrubs and butchers wear aprons, but for most people, the meaning of ''That surgeon is a butcher'' is not that that said surgeon is wearing an apron. Any model of the associative processes involved in language interpretation needs to include a mechanism in which only the relevant schematic or frame-based characteristics of a given concept are accessed during the comprehension process. In the case of blending, inferences are limited by the Relevance Principle (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 333), which guides the construction and interpretation of the network. The set of possible inferences, a direct result the construction of the blended space (what gets projected in and the relationship among those roles), is constrained by the discourse context which, in this case, presumably includes some previous reference to a botched surgical procedure – thus, many of the frame elements potentially accessed in each input space are not projected into the blended space and do not play a role in meaning construction. As such, the attire of the butcher, although accessible in the mental representation of the butchery frame, is not imported into the blended space. In the inferential model of 'incompetence' diagramed above, the surgeon is understood to still be wearing scrubs, performing his craft in an operating room, and probably still using a scalpel, not a cleaver. Relevance allows us to not take a frame wholesale and apply it to the situation, but only take the relevant pieces (which again, are determined by social, environmental, and linguistic context.)

4. Conceptual processes give rise to meaning and select inferences

4.1. The blend

Like the incompetent surgeon example, the phrase *anchor baby* also relies on a complex blend; in this case, a tripartite blend, consisting of three input spaces (in this way similar to the famous Grim Reaper example (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 292), which relies on the multiple input spaces of reaping, killing, and death). In order to truly understand what an *anchor baby* is, speakers need to draw on knowledge from three separate robust frames.

4.1.1. Family

Babies are born into families. In the prototypical Western narrative structure, adults meet, fall in love, marry, have at least one child, becoming parents and forming a nuclear family, and later becoming grandparents, as the cyclical structure repeats to form our conception of a multigenerational, genealogically related cohort. Importantly, in the 'ideal case' prototype (Lakoff, 1987, p. 87) of a family, children are a natural result of the loving bond between parents – not planned, not unplanned, but born out of a sexual relationship sanctified after a commitment made before God. The basic roles of the FAMILY frame are listed in Fig. 4.

4.1.2. Seafaring

Another component of the integration of the *anchor baby* blend rests on a familiarity of boats, ships, water, currents, ports, and harbors since part of that structure, that frame we might call 'boating' or 'seafaring', includes speakers' knowledge of anchors. In this frame, speakers access basic knowledge about seafaring: how ships and boats move from port to port or inlet to inlet, dropping anchor to moor about in the water in order to prevent drift back to sea. This input structure is represented in Fig. 5.

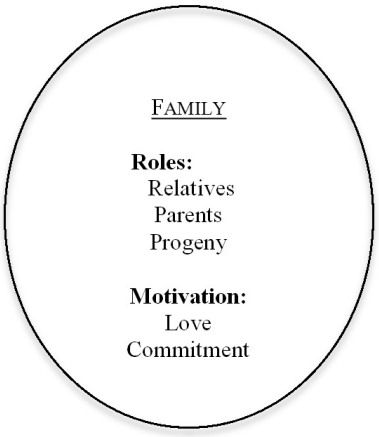


Fig. 4. Input 1 – FAMILY.

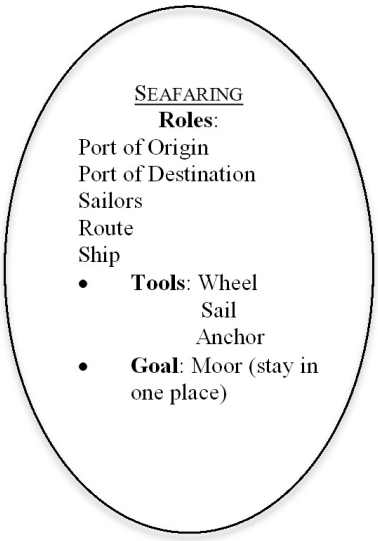


Fig. 5. Input 2 – SEAFARING.

4.1.3. Immigration

The final frame that contributes to the blend contains speakers' knowledge of immigration, specifically information about how foreigners come to the U.S. So-called *anchor babies* are not just anyone's children, they are the children of foreigners and immigrants. From this domain, speakers access pieces of knowledge about how people cross borders to take up residence in the U.S., how countries to the south have weaker economies, and why U.S. citizenship is desirable. Immigrants move from native homelands, cross borders, and settle temporarily or permanently in their new, adopted country. IMMIGRATION is a complex frame involving much knowledge and many roles. A selection of the core structure is represented in Fig. 6.

4.1.4. The blended space

Once speakers ''turn on'' these three frames in their minds, they begin the process of synthesizing them. Speakers scan each input space, looking for common structure and pull out the pieces that match. Ships move from one place to another. Immigrants move from one place to another. Sea currents push boats in particular directions. Legal and economic forces move people from one country to another. Boats have anchors and women have children.

The blend arises through the importation of certain roles, relations, and actions from each of the three input spaces. From the IMMIGRATION space speakers import the role of immigrant, specifically unauthorized immigrant. From the FAMILY

Fig. 6. Input 3 – IMMIGRATION.

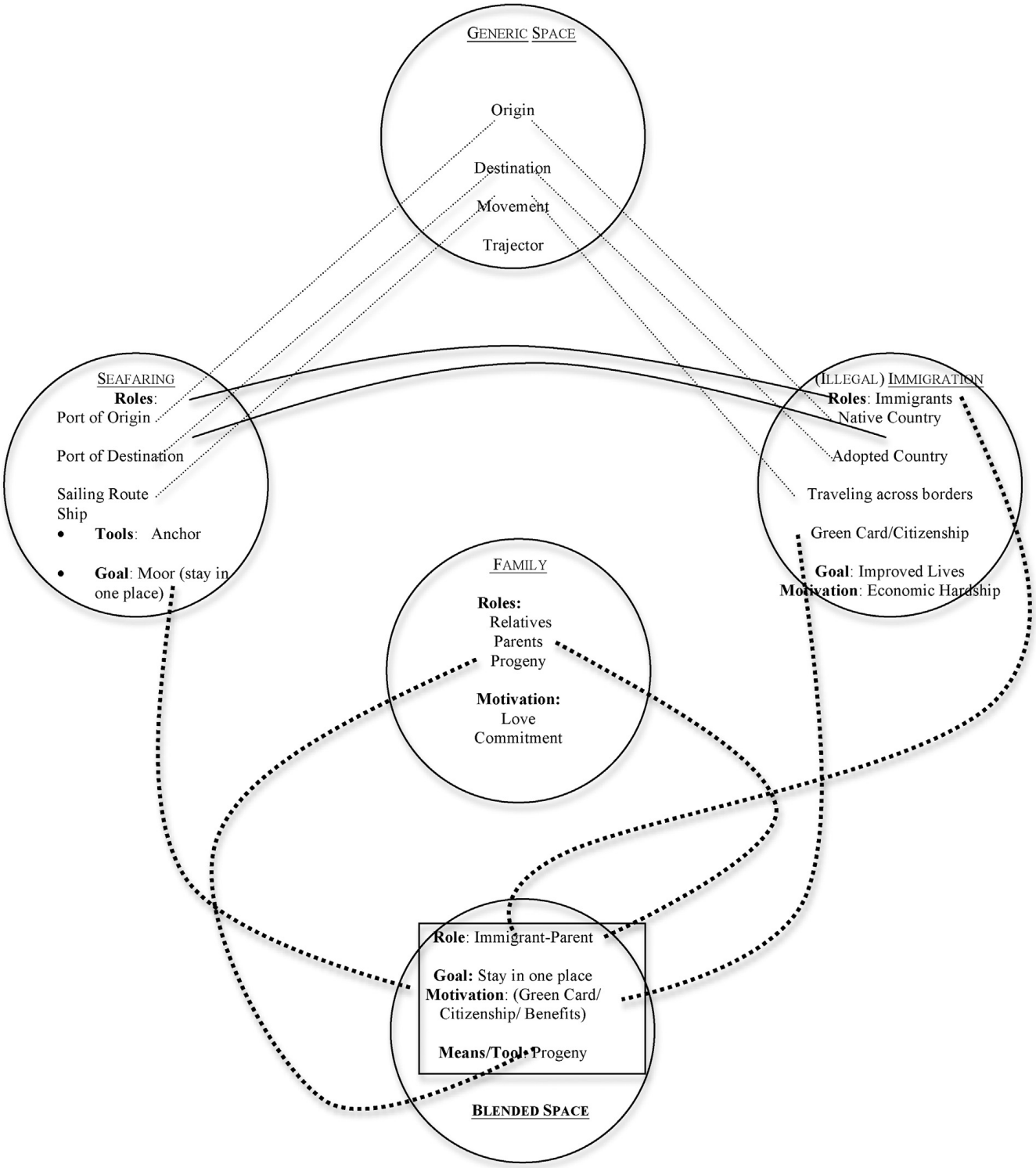


Fig. 7. The *Anchor Baby* blend.

input speakers import the roles of parent and progeny with their very basic relationship – a parent is the person responsible for the existence of a child.[10] The goal of the anchor itself, to maintain permanence or semi-permanence in a specified location, is projected into the blended space from the SEAFARINGinput. These projections are represented in the full blend diagram in Fig. 7.

[10] See Lakoff's discussion of the Birth Model of motherhood in *Women Fire and Dangerous Things* (1987, p. 83) for a detailed representation of the complexities involved in just this one aspect of the family frame.

4.1.5. New inferences

The blend in Fig. 7 accounts for many of the common inferential patterns evident in the discourse surrounding the phrase. In Blending Theory, 'running the blend' or 'composition' (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 48) is an automatic process of transferring inferences. Speakers subconsciously access what they know about boating. For instance, dropping an anchor is easy and fast; it is not a long process with much work; sometimes anchors can be hard to displace; chains are strong and do not break easily. And they take this knowledge and apply it to create new understandings of immigrants. Commentary from example (7) exemplifies these presupposed assumptions: Undocumented immigrants and their children are taking advantage of the political system (''*. . . it's your ticket into this country*''; ''*Oh, it's a huge scam*'') and not earning their place in American society, but rather subverting the process (''*hey, automatic birthright citizenship*''). These particular assumptions about immigrants are in fact partially coming from knowledge and reasoning about boating and the mechanics therein. This pattern is not inherent in the immigration frame – it is a result of the blend.

Interpretations of what *anchor baby* means, and the resulting embedded presuppositions about immigrants, are constrained by the Relevance Principle (as noted in the ''incompetent surgeon'' blend above). Only the relevant pieces of a frame (determined by social, environmental, and linguistic context) are recruited into the input space and thus potentially projected into the blended space. For example, ships might be associated with exploration or colonization or piracy; however, no data was found indicating that speakers think of immigrants as exploring the U.S. as if it were an undiscovered territory, nor data characterizing them as colonists. Because *anchor baby* is used in the context of migrant residency within U.S. borders, its potential meaning profile is restricted. Of all the possible roles in each input space, only some are recruited in the construction of the blend. Throughout the data several inferential patterns are clear. In the first instance discussed above, speakers come to understand IMMIGRANT-PARENTS, not as caretakers, but rather as seeking advantage, using their children as tools. In the blended space, the PROGENY role, originally tied to the conceptual structure of the FAMILY, is now conceptually linked to the *means* or *tool* to achieve the goal of PERMANENCE. This inference is presupposed in the following online commentary where an 'anchor baby' is defined by the presupposition of intentionality on the part of the immigrant mother:

(14) *If a woman is **intentionally using her baby** as a tool to gain citizenship, to bypass the proper procedures, then its [sic] and [sic] **anchor baby**. Our laws were never intended to allow instant citizenship for any woman who pops out a kid on our shores, and these prove how asinine this all has become.*

(Forum Posting, City-Data.com, November 10, 2012)

Outside of the *anchor baby* blend, I would argue that many Americans' frames of IMMIGRATION include the goal of economic betterment. The 'bootstraps' narrative of the struggling immigrant turned successful businessman still survives in the U.S. What is so significant (and damaging) about the *anchor baby* blend is the shift or replacement of this positive goal in the IMMIGRATION frame to a goal with negative connotations. That is, the general positive goal of immigration, to better one's life and move out of extreme poverty (represented in the IMMIGRATION space), is *not* projected into the blend. Not only is this positive goal absent in the blend, but it is also replaced, allowing a new inference: procreation by the immigrant is purposeful – a means to get something. Hence, as exemplified in the analogy constructed in (15), the procreation of the immigrant can be equated with disingenuous behavior:

(15) *Using the logic of the **anchor baby** system, if someone breaks into my home and let's say, cooks dinner before I get there, then they get to move in. I don't think so.*

(Commentator Posting, ijreview.com, December 11, 2012)

Likewise, the typical motivations for creating a family: love, commitment, etc. are *not* imported into the blended space. The parents of 'anchor babies' do not have them because they want to express their loving bond through reproduction; they give birth in order to take advantage of immigration laws. Procreation, when understood as divorced from the FAMILY frame, is almost always viewed as suspect in American culture.

4.1.6. Permanence vs. transience

Not all speakers will arrive at the exact same set of inferences in the online process of running the blend. Incidentally, this fact alone makes the theory of Conceptual Blending a particularly useful mechanism for modeling inferential processes. Importantly, there seems to be a split between speakers who assume that the parents of the 'anchor baby' will remain in the U.S. after the birth and speakers who assume that the mother will come to the U.S. to have the baby and then return to her country of origin. We can explain these different conclusions uniquely with Conceptual Blending. The quote in (16) exemplifies the former inferential pattern:

(16) *. . .As long as citizenship is bequeathed automatically upon a child born in the United States, the birth function will become a priceless reward for the putative guest worker. An* ‘‘***anchor baby***’’ *permits the mother to stay and extend the privilege to her significant other and extended family. Once they’re here, don’t expect them to return.*

(Rosalind Ellis, Letters to the Editor, The Washington Times, March 02, 2001)

Presumably the speaker in (16) and those like her, conclude that once immigrants have ‘dropped the anchor’, they are impossible to remove. The goal of an anchor is to secure a boat’s location; however, in the boating frame, anchors are dropped and usually easily removed once the crew is ready to sail. Thus, this inference of permanence is not a direct product of the goal of an anchor, but rather a product of the whole blend. In the blended space the anchor is deployed, but not retrieved. The retrieval of the anchor is overridden by the goal of immigration – to move to and acquire residency in a new country – to stay. Thus, in this version of the blend, once anchored, the immigrant family will not leave.

The data shows however, that other speakers assume the immigrant parent will return to her country of origin after ‘dropping the anchor’. This conclusion rests on an altered understanding of immigrants as transients. One of the most salient characteristics of ships is their transitory nature. In fact, the job of a boat is to transport goods and people. In Conceptual Blending, ‘modification’ (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 49) happens when speakers create a new understanding of roles in one input based on their counterpart roles in the other input. Take the following statement by Lindsey Graham where he discusses immigrant mothers as ‘‘dropping children’’ much like one would drop an anchor[11]:

(17) *People come here to have babies. They come here to drop a child. It’s called ‘drop and leave.’ To have a child in America, they cross the border, they go to the emergency room, have a child, and that child’s automatically an American citizen.*

(Lindsey Graham, Fox News, July 28, 2010)

When speakers like Lindsay Graham in (17) conceptually back-project the role of immigrant-parent to the role of ship, modification can take place in the immigration space. As a result, the movement of immigrants is highlighted. This particular version of the blend, thus, profiles their transience, perhaps to the point of masking how little undocumented workers can and do in fact move around (considering both the low wages undocumented workers earn and the fact that only two states (Illinois and Washington) allow undocumented residents to obtain actual driver’s licenses).

Graham’s line of reasoning is evidence that given the same roles in the input space, the blending process can be carried out differently by various speakers, thus accounting for differential sets of assumptions across the discourse community. For the most part, Graham’s statement indicates many of the same inferences as the statement in (16), i.e. procreation is a tool, immigrants take advantage of the American political system, etc.; however, Graham, and others like him, see undocumented migrants as mobile, and do not infer that the parents of the ‘anchor baby’ will stay in the U.S. Graham is running the *anchor baby* blend in a slightly different way from the speaker in (16), prompting different presuppositions about the immigrant parent and leading to an alternative set of conclusions about her actions.

Conceptual Blending helps us explain these seeming contradictions in the inferential process. Speakers can interpret the referential item *anchor baby* in different ways. We can say that the frame structure in the input spaces elicits a particular set of meanings, constrained by the relevance principle, but does not predict one and only one specific understanding. Moreover, given the same basic meaning, conceptual blending allows us to model slightly varied, nuanced supposition patterns which inform speaker attitudes and show up in the form of presupposition in their language use.

4.2. Entrenchment

Anchor baby is a novel blend to those who have never heard the term, but for many it is now ‘entrenched’ (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 49), through ‘‘repeated use and social institutionalization’’ (Coulson and Oakley, 2005, p. 1530). Few are immune to the power of language and blending is self-propagating in nature. As the blend is further processed, new conclusions and extensions emerge in language, often leading to offensive and belittling views that penetrate our public discourse. As we see repeatedly, whole narratives can take form around what often begins as a ‘‘simple’’ phrase. Along these lines, Coulson and Oakley (2005, p. 1528) discuss the phrase, *Zoo Parent*, a label used in zoo marketing to describe

[11] Graham is a United States senator from South Carolina.

patrons who donate money to the zoo. *Zoo Parent* involves the integration of projections from the two separate frames of ADOPTION and ZOO. The blended output yields the concept of an adult who is a patron of the zoo and the adoptive ''parent'' of an animal on display at the zoo. Coulson and Oakley explain that, once established as a metaphorical blend, zoo marketers can play on terms and concepts related to both input domains. Animals can be listed in ''honor roles'' in zoo marketing brochures; new donors can be called ''proud parents''. Blends like *Zoo Parent* ''evoke the same conceptual integration network regardless of whether [they are] novel or entrenched. The difference that comes with entrenchment is that the mappings between spaces in the network are retrieved from memory rather than being effortfully calculated (Coulson and Oakley, 2005, p. 1530).''

Entrenchment has clearly taken place with the establishment of the term *anchor baby*. For many speakers the term itself is not new and they are fluent in its use, in fact they may not consciously think of it as figurative at all, as Coulson and Oakley (2005, p. 1534) suggest: ''The speaker's familiarity with a particular blended model determines its perceived figurativity. Familiarity with a blended model can be driven by experience with a particular expression (as in ''On the one hand...''), or with the relevant domain mapping as in the mapping between parenthood and care-giving in zoo parent. . .'' Nevertheless, as Coulson and Oakley (2005) remind us, we should expect all input spaces to be active each time *anchor baby* is used in discourse. Likewise, we should expect the blend to spur novel elaborations of the general concept. And, in fact, there are plenty of examples in political discourse that exemplify reasoning patterns clearly stemming from this new understanding of immigrant women.

As discussed above, Lindsey Graham (in (17)) takes the notion of transience, an inference in the blended space, to the extreme. Reasoning and language from the SEAFARING space allows him to pull out additional language and conceptual structure located therein. Presumably, *drop* comes from further back projection of the immigrant mother into the seafaring space; just as a sailor drops an anchor, the immigrant-mother drops a child. Additionally, in Graham's elaboration, the mother gives birth and immediately returns to her country of origin with her U.S. citizen child thereafter, although this is rarely the case in reality. Very few pregnant women cross the border just to give birth and then return to their home country. The narrative in Graham's quote communicates a cognitive reality of the *anchor baby* blend even if not representative of actual immigration patterns in the real world.

Through time, as the *anchor baby* blend becomes increasingly entrenched, we find whole narratives in traditional and online media about the parents of *anchor babies*. These narratives indicate that speakers are further reasoning through the blend and extending the conceptual structure by filling in missing pieces themselves. As the statement in (18) from the conservative Cato Institute exemplifies, many view immigrants as incentivized or ''attracted'' to come to the U.S. because of ''birthright citizenship.'' The U.S. is ''rewarding lawbreakers'' by allowing them to have automatic citizenship for their children, who are not just '''anchor babies''' but are ''border-spanning bridges'' over which their ''relatives may trod'':

(18) *There's ample reason to believe a change in policy could make America a more immigrant-friendly place while simultaneously restricting the costly benefits of citizenship. Though undocumented immigrants are ineligible for most forms of government assistance, their America-born kids do qualify, which is no doubt an attraction to some prospective immigrant parents. The hard-right Arizona State Sen. Russell Pearce speaks for many Americans when he says birthright citizenship ''rewards lawbreakers.'' What's more, because these children, once grown, can sponsor family members for authorized migration, they function as border-spanning bridges over which a retinue of relatives may trod. These relatives, once naturalized, can in turn sponsor aunts and uncles and cousins without end. Hence the fear of the ''anchor baby,'' a gurgling demographic landmine set to explode into a multi-headed invasion of Telemundo fans.*

(Will Wilkinson, The Week, *July 2, 2010*, http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/arizonas-latest-immigration-idea-makes-sense)

Here we see the blend itself serving as input for additional, and extremely complex, blending processes at work in ''a gurgling landmine set to explode''. This language is evidence of a phenomenon called 'recursion' (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 334): One blend creates a new category which serves as an input for additional blends. In the excerpt above, the ''anchor baby'' is re-conceptualized as a grown adult. In this narrative the entrenched blend serves to reconfigure a particular understanding of immigration. *Gurgling* is a clear extension of the baby role in the *anchor baby* blended space; however, the ''babies'' referenced in this narrative are projected into adulthood with one sole purpose – to perform the duty for which they were created, to sponsor their relatives to come to the U.S. Thus, the newest first generation immigrants are not being conceptualized through positive frames such as inquisitive children, or future workers, or valuable resources; the *anchor baby* blend categorically traps them into one and only one role: a tool for extended familial migration.

Yet another unfortunate consequence of *anchor baby* is that the more the blend is extended and elaborated, the more dehumanized is the child immigrant. Data such as the sample in (18) suggest that the *anchor baby* blend is furthering the transformation of views about immigrant children in general. As Orellana and Johnson (2011, p. 4) point out: ''Children are

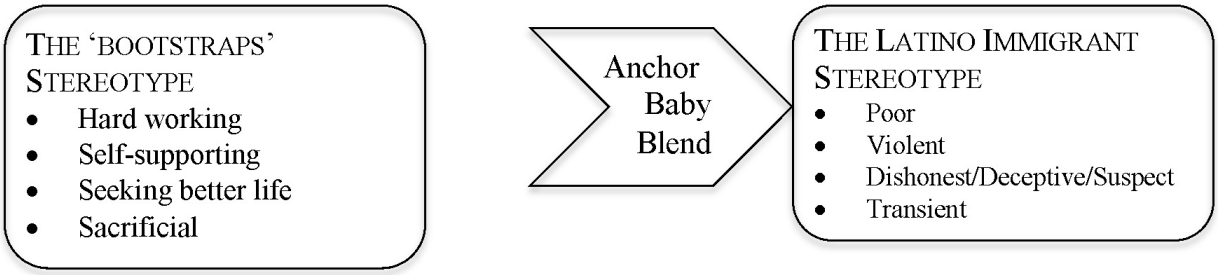


Fig. 8. Competing stereotypes – *Anchor baby* only reinforces one.

being used and positioned in ideological warfare around immigration reform.'' It's not just 'anchor baby' that frames immigrant youth, but also well-intended legislation such as the ''Dream Act''.[12]

5. Implications: the immigrant category

Social stereotypes can be used to stand in for a whole category of people (Lakoff, 1987, p. 85). Stereotypes are conscious, publically discussed representations of categories, and as such they are heavily influenced by discourse in the national media, both broadcast and online content. Stereotypes define cultural expectation and often two or more stereotypes exist for the same category. For example, Lakoff (1987, p. 79) shows how the HOUSEWIFE stereotype, a mother who stays at home to raise her children, influences the way we understand working mothers; that is, we can only understand the WORKING MOTHER subcategory of the larger MOTHER category vis-à-vis its contrast to the HOUSEWIFE stereotype.

In the case of the IMMIGRANT category, reasoning patterns have been shown to significantly differ by race/region of origin. Timberlake and Williams (2012, p. 881) reveal that Ohioans reliably rate Latin American immigrants as significantly poorer, more violent, less able to support themselves, less intelligent, and, overall, ''fit in'' less than their European, Middle Eastern, and Asian counterparts. Timberlake and Williams (2012, p. 881) explain, ''[The] findings for assessments of the problem of unauthorized immigration are particularly strong for Latin American immigrants. More specifically, compared to Ohioans who do not think unauthorized immigration is a problem, those who think it is a ''big problem'' rate Latin American immigrants about two-thirds of a standard deviation lower on the five-item index... suggesting a particularly strong link between assessments of the problem of unauthorized immigration and stereotypes of Latin Americans in particular.'' Evidence from Timberlake and Williams (2012) and studies like theirs (Simon, 1985; Simon and Alexander, 1993; Higham, 1998; Zolberg, 2008) suggest two competing stereotypes relied on by non-immigrant Americans. That is, Americans in general do not think about all immigrants alike. The first stereotype we might call the 'bootstraps' model: Immigrants sacrifice cultural ties to their homeland to come to the U.S. to work hard, better their lives, support themselves and their families, learn English, assimilate to American culture, and eventually, through hard work, become successful. Undoubtedly, the Latino immigrant stereotype is different: in this model, Latino immigrants cross the border illegally, live in poverty, lead criminal lives, and do not try to assimilate. Language in the public domain reinforces this division, and clearly *anchor baby* is compatible with only one stereotype: the negative characterization of Latino immigrants (Fig. 8).

The way we talk about people unquestionably influences the way we think about them and vice versa. The insidious nature of unconscious inferences made through blending only perpetuates stereotypical reasoning. This constant conceptual feedback loop lies at the heart of the pejoration process. Words themselves are not inherently negative or inherently anything, it is the adverse inferential patterns they activate in speakers' minds that ultimately carry damaging stigma.

6. Conclusion

The case study of *anchor baby* serves multiple goals. An analysis of the term through Conceptual Blending Theory (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2002) systematically lays out how two simple words activate complex structure in speakers' minds. The conceptual frames of IMMIGRATION, FAMILIES, and SEAFARING blend together methodically to produce a series of inferences that negatively characterize Latino immigrants. Data in public discourse shows this blend has become entrenched for many speakers, and as such, new elaborations and extensions of it appear throughout the debate on

[12] The Dream Act is proposed legislation in the US Senate (introduced by Sen. Orin Hatch [R-UT] and Sen. Richard Durbin [D-IL]) designed to give certain undocumented youth (those who pursue post secondary education or military service) a path to U.S. citizenship (http://dreamact.info/).

immigration. These additions to the public conversation about Latino immigrants emerge out of the blended space and are explained through a re-characterization of the immigrant parent.

The reinforcement of negative cultural and conceptual stereotypes is of primary concern in Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 2001). The detailed analysis of *anchor baby* provided here is offered as an implicit argument for more inclusion of cognitive linguistic theory into the Critical framework. As Coulson and Oakley (2005, p. 1535) argue, ''The space structuring that occurs in meaning construction requires the application and integration of coded meaning, background knowledge, and contextual information. A complete theory of meaning construction must explore the interplay of these factors.'' Examining the details of all these aforementioned components of meaning can guide the critical analyst to more and more explanatory investigations of how racism and inequality is embedded in language structure and use. The dissection of associative processes is of central importance in any pragmatic analysis of pejorative language. The Conceptual Blending analysis provided in this study offers one roadmap to explain how surface language is tied to embedded reasoning patterns responsible for the offensive presuppositions embedded in the language of discrimination.

Anchor baby is just one example of hundreds if not thousands of blends which structure the American debate on immigration. Language changes the structure of our minds and once connections are made, they can be hard to break. Two ordinary words can lead to dozens of new assumptions. Unlike a *miracle baby* or a *Gerber baby*, an *anchor baby* is not a 'bundle of joy,' soft and cuddly or full of giggles and dimples. This term leads speakers to the conclusion that, unlike most people who have babies because they love children, Latino immigrants have babies to gain a leg up. Accordingly, *anchor baby* reinforces only the negative stereotype of immigrants, further shaping and structuring a large category of people in American society.

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