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Exploring equivalence frames:

Metaphorical lexical items as means of determining equivalence frames*

Abstract

This paper explores lexical items as possible units with which to detect equivalence-based framing, which shows *how* a given piece of information is framed. In line with frame semantics and figurative framing, individual words used metaphorically are discussed as tools to determine equivalence frames. The study applies conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) to determine the metaphors evoked by words referring to the demonstrators and their movement used in 81 news articles about the Women's March in the USA published on the websites of the most widely circulated American newspapers between 2017 and 2019. The analysis reveals that lexical items (e.g., *flood*, *sea*, *wave*) evoking the WATER domain were used to frame the protest; this finding is in contrast to the use of words from other source domains, such as WAR, which are commonly used to frame demonstrations.
Keywords: equivalence-based framing; frame semantics; metaphorical framing; conceptual metaphor theory

1 Introduction

Several fields of research have exploited the term "frame", including artificial intelligence (Minsky 1975), psychology (Kahneman and Tversky 1984), cognitive linguistics (Lakoff 1986) and communication theory (Entman 1993). However, the interdisciplinary application of framing also means that the term has become rather impractical due to its constant definition and redefinition (Cacciatore et al. 2016; Entman 1993; Scheufele & Iyengar 2017). By way of illustration, Druckman (2001: 226–227) listed seven different framing definitions. In this study, a frame is understood as defined by Fillmore (2006: 373), namely as "any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits; when one of the things in such a structure is introduced into a text, or into a conversation, all of the others are automatically made available". In other words, to understand a specific word or a set of words, there is a need for a knowledge structure (Evans 2007: 192). By way of illustration, when we talk about an *examination*, we can only make sense of the word *examination* if certain elements are given, such as an examiner, an examinee, knowledge of an area that is tested and a qualification granted to those who complete the exam.[1]

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1 https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/frameIndex

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However, what is at stake from a communicative perspective when it comes to the choice of specific words and, in parallel, the evocation of different knowledge structures?

Frames can manipulate human perception, as exemplified by Pan and Kosicki's (1993: 65–69) analysis of a news article about the Wichita Protest (an anti-abortion rally held in the USA). In this study, the authors argued that it is possible to identify "signifying devices", namely "structurally located lexical choices of codes" (Pan & Kosicki 1993: 59), which contribute to the establishment of frames. In the case of the article concerning the Wichita Protest, the "conflict-and-confrontation" frame appeared (Pan & Kosicki 1993). On the one hand, the "conflict and confrontation" frame was built up of anti-abortion advocates, depicted as religious fanatics by means of quoting people of a religious background (for example, a bishop) in the text; on the other hand, anti-abortion supporters were framed as "militant" and "radical" since the text used these terms to refer to the main actors involved in the protest. Additionally, the strong relationship between framing and thought was demonstrated by Fausey and Boroditsky (2010), who showed that the way we describe an event influences the way we think about it. Their experiments revealed that the agentive descriptions of a specific incident lead people to hold the agent as the person responsible for it. For example, in the case of "She had ignited the napkin!" and "The napkin had ignited!", the former formulation ("She had ignited the napkin!") assigns the responsibility to the agent ("she"; Fausey & Boroditsky 2010: 645). In summary, Pan and Kosicki's (1993) and Fausey and Boroditsky's (2010) accounts pointed to the relevance of language in relation to discussions of framing.[2]

The examples above demonstrate that the way an utterance is formulated has consequences concerning the way we think about that utterance. This phenomenon, namely the way humans' framing of an issue or event can be influenced, was referred to as the "framing effect" by Druckman (2001: 228). The way an issue or an event is framed is not constant; in other words, it is possible to not only frame but also "reframe" issues (Lakoff 2004: xv-xvi). Reframing entails that there is a change in "the way the public sees the world" (Lakoff 2004: xv), as in this case a specific issue is framed in a different manner than it was earlier. WAR[3], a frequently used metaphor for politics in the USA, is a case in point. An oft-cited precedent of the use of the WAR domain[4] is related to the presidency of George W. Bush, who declared a "War on Terror" in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks against the USA on 11 September 2001. The Bush administration used the interpretation of terror in terms of war as a means of legitimising the invasion of Iraq (Lewis & Reece 2009). However, it was not only terror against which the USA waged a "war", as, the "War on Drugs" was an intensive campaign conducted through the 1980s and 1990s[5] (Steuter & Wills 2008: 7–8). Later, the Obama administration adopted a

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[2] The alternative formulation of sentences (e.g., "She had ignited the napkin!" and "The napkin had ignited!") studied empirically by Fausey and Boroditsky (2010) constitutes an element of cognitive grammatical theories. Under cognitive grammar, the "same perceived occurrence" is represented by "alternate construals*"* (Langacker 2008: 366). Goldberg's (1995) construction of grammar interprets the phenomenon as the alternation of "transitive*"* and "intransitive constructions". Finally, Halliday's (1994) systemic functional grammar defined "congruent" and "incongruent/metaphorical expressions", which were exemplified by "a large number of protests" (congruent) and "a flood of protests" (incongruent/metaphorical) expressions (Halliday 1994: 342).

[3] In line with cognitive linguistic conventions, conceptual elements are marked with small capitals (Kövecses 2010).

[4] A domain is "any coherent organization of experience" (Kövecses 2010: 4).

[5] The use of WAR as a source domain is prevalent in U.S. politics with reference to the tackling of complex social phenomena, such as drug use, because it enables politicians to explain complex issues in simpler terms

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new perspective on substance use disorder (SUD), with the focus being on "public health and the treatment of addiction" (Sandvik & Hoelscher 2016: 169). The novel view – and allegedly, a desire to change the public's perception of SUD – was manifest in Obama's remarks: "we're providing treatment and thinking about this as a public health problem, and not just a criminal problem" or "my drug czar[6] is somebody who came [...] from the treatment side".[7] The quotes indicate that Obama's administration aimed to interpret SUD in terms of "public health" rather than through the domain of WAR.[8]

However, how can the framing (and possible reframing) of an issue be grasped? Changing the framing of a specific issue – in this case, the War on Drugs – constitutes one possible way of studying framing effects, which is referred to as "equivalence framing" (Druckman 2001; cf. Cacciatore et al. 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar 2014; 2017). In what follows, a typology of framing effects is presented.

Framing effects can be divided into two categories: "emphasis framing" and "equivalence framing" (Cacciatore et al. 2016; Druckman 2001; Scheufele & Iyengar 2014; 2017). Equivalence framing focuses on the way a given piece of information is described: logically equivalent (but distinct) words or phrases can influence the way we see an issue (e.g., whether we talk about "95% employment" or "5% unemployment"; Druckman 2001: 228; see also Cacciatore et al. 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar 2014, 2017). Equivalence framing is distinct from emphasis framing, which encapsulates the "selection of one set of facts or arguments over another" (Cacciatore et al. 2016: 10). Emphasis framing is exemplified with reference to political campaigns: if a campaign is framed in terms of the economy, citizens are likely to vote for the candidate whose economic policies are deemed more successful (Druckman 2001: 230). However, campaigns can also focus on other issues, such as foreign policy; in this case, another aspect of politics is emphasised (rather than economic policy). In this sense, there is no equivalence between the frames, but one set of issues (e.g., the economy) is emphasised over another (e.g., foreign policy) (Druckman 2001: 230).

Despite its relative prevalence in academic research (Brugman & Burgers 2018),[9] emphasis framing can be considered problematic because it allows for loose interpretations in the sense that it refers to differing opinions which are not based on the mode of presentation (Scheufele & Iyengar 2017: 622; cf. Cacciatore et al. 2016). Emphasis framing was exemplified in the work undertaken by Entman (2004: 5),[10] who revealed that the communication of the Bush administration regarding the events of 9/11 characterised the loss of innocent lives as the

(Steuter & Wills 2008: 7–8). A key factor of exploiting a frame which is based on war is that it evokes a common ideal of Western thought, i.e., "the fairy tale of the just war" (Lakoff 1991: 4; 2004: 71). Therefore, framing drug use in terms of WAR can mean the use of military strategies and depicting people who use substances as enemies, who need to be defeated.

6 A *drug czar* is an official whose task is to stop drug trafficking.

7 https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/29/remarks-president-panel-discussion-national-prescription-drug-abuse-and. Accessed: 20 December 2017.

8 For a detailed discussion of the "War on Drugs," see Valenzuela (2013), who claims that the "New Strategy" proposed by the Obama was connected to the "War on Drugs" on certain levels.

9 Brugman and Burgers (2018) conducted a review on the types of frames authors researched in connection with frames used in politics in the 21st century. They found that one out of ten frames was interpreted as equivalence frames as opposed to emphasis frames.

10 Entman (2004) distinguished "substantive" from "procedural" frames. In Entman's (2004) terminology, substantive frames define problems, make judgements and offer solutions, whereas procedural frames are used to evaluate politicians' legitimacy.

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problematic effect of the attacks against the USA. Furthermore, condemning the attackers as "evil" corresponded to the moral judgement of the events, and the initial solution proposed by President Bush and his government was the war against Afghanistan (Entman 2004: 6). Thus, as this analysis suggests, studies based on emphasis framing do not focus on how a given piece of information is presented. Instead, an emphasis frame is seen as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Gamson & Modigliani 1987: 143), as demonstrated by Entman's (2004) analysis of the communication concerning 9/11.

On the other hand, equivalence framing means the presentation of logically equivalent information in different ways (Brugman & Burgers 2018: 1; cf. Cacciatore et al. 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar 2017). In other words, the way we interpret information depends on *how* the given piece of information is presented (Scheufele & Iyengar 2017: 621).[11] An example of equivalence-based framing (i.e., how a piece of information is presented) is the framing of Arnold Schwarzenegger's election as Governor of California (Lakoff 2004). Lakoff (2004) identified two main frames among the representations of Arnold Schwarzenegger which emerged at the time of the election: 1) "just a celebrity" and 2) "up by his bootstraps". Lakoff (2004: 35) explained that the former frame refers to the assumption that voters do not understand politics and voted for a layperson. The word "celebrity" in this case already implies that Schwarzenegger was not regarded as competent. The second frame, however, referred to the elected governor's striking work ethic, which enabled him to leave the big screen for politics. A quick Google search demonstrated the way the "just a celebrity" and "up by his bootstraps" frames identified by Lakoff (2004) appeared in the media. One article that exemplified the "just a celebrity" frame already determined its perspective in the choice of title: "'The Terminator' wins California governorship".[12] This title refers to the famous 'Terminator' franchise, in which Arnold Schwarzenegger was the protagonist. The frame focusing on the former governor's achievements was illustrated by an article entitled "Schwarzenegger's American dream", which detailed the way he developed his career and alludes to the national ethos of the USA.[13] Therefore, the 38th Governor of California was framed as a celebrity who was not an expert in politics in one set of sources and as a hard-working person who had realized his dreams in other media sources. Although these two modes of presenting Schwarzenegger exemplify equivalence frames, there is no uniform methodology with which to identify this type of framing.

A shift concerning the focus on framing effects entails that the units which need to be measured to identify frames should be (re)defined. Hence, in the present paper, I argue for the operationalisation of a tool that is essential in the description of equivalence frames: language use. It is assumed that "frame semantics" can act as a means of understanding the mechanisms underlying framing. In line with the formulation of Fillmore (1976, 2006, cf. Fillmore & Baker

[11] Note that in the communication literature, numerous concepts can be found which are similar to, or overlap with, frames. For example, Scheufele (2000) reported that the literature does not always make a distinction between framing, agenda-setting (defined as "the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain issues [e.g., based on relative placement or amount of coverage] and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences" by Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007: 11) and priming ("changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations" (Iyengar & Kinder 1987: 63)).

[12] http://www.mtv.com/news/1479631/the-terminator-wins-california-governorship/. Accessed: 18 December 2017.

[13] https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/politicselections/state/2003-09-24-schwarzenegger-american-dream_x.htm. Accessed: 18 December 2017.

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2009), I propose that the basic unit of the analysis of framing effects should overlap with the one defined by frame semantics: the word.[14]

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses frame semantics and the possibility of applying this concept in research on equivalence-based frame effects. Section 3 presents conceptual metaphors as framing devices and describes their applicability to equivalence framing. A small-scale study of metaphorical framing is presented in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 concludes this paper.

2 Framing effects and frame semantics

As the previous section demonstrated, framing effects in communication theory need to be redefined to create a more reliable approach to researching them. Equivalence framing, which interprets how logically equivalent pieces of information are presented, offers a more rigid approach than emphasis framing (Cacciatore et al. 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar 2017).[15] "Frame semantics", an theory which focuses on the way lexical items evoke frames, is presented below.

2.1 Equivalence frames, frame semantics, and Gestalt psychology

Linguistic semantics based on cognitive tenets borrowed several notions from cognitive science and cognitive psychology (Andor 1985: 212) which resonate with the origin of equivalence-based frames. Equivalence framing stemmed from psychology; more specifically, its roots can be found in Gestalt psychology (Cacciatore et al. 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar 2017). The notions of Gestalt psychology – although not explicitly stated by Fillmore (1976) – can be identified in his linguistic interpretation of frames, that is, "semantic frames".[16] According to Strickland (2001: 278), the principles of organisation in terms of Gestalt theory mean that the components which comprise a whole are influenced by the whole. An example is the tendency to group items with similar characteristics together. Gestalt psychologists advocated "that mental experience was dependent not on a simple combination of elements but on the organization and patterning of experience and of one's perceptions" (Strickland 2001: 278–279). The elements of this definition can also be found in one of the early descriptions of framing provided by Fillmore (1976). He defined frame as "a kind of outline figure with not necessarily all of the details filled in" and noted that comprehension is an active process, whereby we "fill in the details" (Fillmore 1976: 29). To be able to "fill in the details", speakers need to have access to experience which is organised and patterned. Fillmore (1976: 25) demonstrated this

[14] Fillmore and Baker (2009) used a relatively broad definition of "word" as they included expressions as *Thank God it's Friday* under the term in their description of frame semantics. The present paper also relies on the broader definition of the unit of frame semantics.

[15] Scheufele and Iyengar (2017) stated that equivalence framing opens the horizon to study frames not only in textual terms, but nonverbal frames can also be effectively interpreted with the help of equivalence frames (cf. Cacciatore et al. 2016).

[16] The notion of framing has been used interchangeably with other (similar) concepts not only within communication and media studies, but in linguistics as well. Andor (1985) listed the notions of "scene", "schema" and "script", which are often confused with frames. Scenes can be considered as knowledge structures that help us understand the world around us; on the other hand, schemas and scripts "describe global patterns of events and states and actions in particular contexts" (Andor 1985: 214–215). For a detailed description, see Andor (1985).

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idea with what he termed the "commercial event" frame. He noted that the notions of "buy", "sell" and "pay", among others, are activated in speakers' mind upon encountering a "commercial" situation (Fillmore 1976, cf. Fillmore 2006 and Fillmore & Baker 2009).

The formulation of frames also drew on Minsky's (1975) research on artificial intelligence. Minsky (1975) considered a frame as a data structure which contains information about a stereotypical situation, such as a child's birthday party. Under this view, frames contain information about the current situation, what to expect from it and what to do if it does not progress as expected (Minsky 1975). This interpretation of framing is in line with "commercial event" frame, which includes information about the components of the frame (e.g., "buy", "sell", "pay", etc.).

In summary, the main underlying principles of equivalence-based framing and frame semantics appear to overlap. Therefore, it is assumed that frame semantics can serve as a tool for identifying equivalence frames.

2.2 Fillmore's frame semantics

The main principles of frame semantics based on Fillmore (2006) and Fillmore and Baker (2009) are summarised below. As already explained in Section 1, a "frame" itself, as defined by Fillmore (2006: 373), is a "system of concepts", which entails that in order to understand one concept, we also have to understand the system in which it is embedded. In turn, as one concept becomes available in a usage event, the entire system becomes available (Fillmore 2006: 373). Thus, under Fillmore's theory, activating frame-based knowledge is an integral part of understanding. To employ frame semantics as a tool, it is essential to make a distinction between "cognitive frames" and "frame semantics" (Fillmore & Baker 2009: 314–316). Cognitive frames stand for the "packages of knowledge, beliefs, and patterns of practice" (Fillmore & Baker 2009: 324) which each human being possesses; these frames are roughly based on a) bodily experiences, b) culture and c) being part of a given speech community (Fillmore & Baker 2009). This can be illustrated briefly by one of the advertisements of the cosmetics brand *L'Oréal.* The company created a campaign to sell products for men with the slogan "You're worth it too", which is clearly based on the famous "Because you're worth it" campaign (Coupland 2007). Assuming that a person comes from a cultural background in which they have real-life knowledge of the *L'Oréal* brand, it is very likely that they can comprehend the "You're worth it too" slogan (on the basis of the "Because you're worth it" one). The current paper does not focus on this aspect of framing, that is, the broad interpretation of framing, but on frame semantics. Frame semantics is the study of "how linguistic forms *evoke* or activate frame knowledge"[17] (Fillmore & Baker 2009: 317; emphasis as in original). Hence, the present study highlights the way lexical items evoke equivalence frames, as demonstrated in more detail in the next section.

[17] Frame evocation is compared to frame invocation; the former refers to the speakers' response – the activation of a frame – triggered by a linguistic sign (Fillmore & Baker 2009: 316). Frame invocation refers to speakers' effort to understand incoming information (Fillmore & Baker 2009: 316).

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2.3 Words in frame semantics

This section argues that one level of interpreting framing effects – in line with frame semantics – should be based on lexical items. The influence of the lexical level was demonstrated by Andor (1985), who observed the evocation of frames via lexical associations. In his experiment, Andor presented 14 sentence pairs to 160 participants, who had to decide if one member of the pairs had a possible interpretation that made it problematic to place in a given frame. Examples included the following sentence pair (Andor 1985: 220):

a) Don was afraid of the bear.
b) Don was afraid of the dog.

The results showed that participants found sentence b) problematic, unless the subject was a child or the *dog* had some type of illness. Andor (1985) assumed that the reason for this was that in the context of the culture to which the participants belonged, one was normally not afraid of dogs, whereas bears were perceived to pose a threat. Furthermore, the experiment showed how frame-based knowledge dominates in sentences which are grammatically correct.

This finding is in line with frame semantics, which is concerned with the interpretation of word meaning and the characterisation of the creation of new words (including the extension of the meaning of words [Fillmore 2006]).

Thus, under frame semantics, words are understood to have the capability of providing a means of accessing frames (Fillmore 2006). An example of the framing potential of lexical items is the way in which *shore* and *coast* are differentiated in the English language: the former refers to the water's point of view and the latter to the land's (Fillmore 2006: 383). Thus, *reaching the shore* and *reaching the coast* in a wider context evoke different frames (Fillmore 2006). Another instantiation is the way George W. Bush's administration framed its plan of a tax cut by referring to it as *tax relief* (Lakoff 2004). Using the term *tax relief* enabled the government to conceptualise taxation as a burden from which it could relieve citizens (Lakoff 2004).

3 Metaphorical framing and equivalence framing

The abovementioned example of *tax relief* – which depicts taxation as a burden – functions not only in terms of its literal meaning but also on a different level; namely, it is an example of the conceptual metaphor TAXATION IS AN AFFLICTION (Lakoff 2004). In this section, I discuss conceptual metaphors which can be viewed as primary initiators of framing (Krippendorff 2017: 97).

Lexical items evoking conceptual metaphors do not only exist individually. There are cases that constitute a wide network of expressions and have been present in (the English) language for a relatively long time. One such example is the ELECTION IS A RACE metaphor (cf. Brugman et al. 2017), which can be found in conventional expressions such as *to run for office* (Kövecses 2016b: 10). Furthermore, the ELECTION IS A RACE metaphor has been featured in newspaper headlines, such as those collected by Broh (1980), among which were headlines that appeared in the New York Times' coverage of the 1976 presidential elections: "First Time Ford Is Ahead

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Of Carter", "Poll Calls Race Tied" and "Survey Shows Carter Holds Lead".[18] In fact, the ELECTION IS A RACE, or, more specifically, the PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS A HORSE RACE,[19] metaphor has become so conventional that journalism covering the presidential election is referred to as "horserace journalism" (Benczes 2006: 121). The TAXATION IS A BURDEN and ELECTION IS A (HORSE)RACE metaphors also indicate that lexical items used metaphorically have a high framing potential (Krippendorff 2017), as proved by the experiments described below.

Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) explored the way metaphors in language evoke "frame-consistent knowledge structures" (Thibodeau & Boroditsky 2011: 1). The context of the experiments was the participants' perceptions of the impact of social policy on crime via articles reporting on crime in the fictional city of "Addison". The participants were divided into two groups, each of which received an article which framed the increasing crime rates in the city with the help of a different metaphor. One version of the article presented the increasing crime rates via the CRIME IS A VIRUS metaphor (e.g., "Crime is a virus infecting the city of Addison"), while another formulation of the article featured the CRIME IS A BEAST metaphor (e.g., "Crime is a wild beast preying on the city of Addison"). After reading the assigned article, members of each group were asked to propose a solution to the increasing crime rates. Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) reported that metaphors influenced the reasoning of participants in their proposals as to how crime could be eliminated. Those who received the article conceptualising CRIME IS A BEAST regarded imprisonment as a solution, while those who read the article in which the CRIME IS A VIRUS metaphor was used suggested treating crime as a disease, that is, determining the causes of crime and implementing social reforms. The significance of a single lexical item is highlighted by the second experiment conducted by Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011), which yielded similar results to the first test. In this experiment, participants were not presented with a whole paragraph which contained the CRIME IS A BEAST or CRIME IS A VIRUS metaphor; instead, metaphorical framing was evoked by the use of a single metaphorical word: "Crime is a beast/virus ravaging the city of Addison" (Thibodeau & Boroditsky 2011: 3). The two experiments not only demonstrated the influence of metaphorical language on framing (as the participants were influenced by the metaphorical frames evoked by the article with which they were presented) but also showed that a single word can yield metaphorical frames.

In summary, both experiments (Thibodeau & Boroditsky 2011) and analyses of authentic texts (Broh 1980; Lakoff 2014) suggested that metaphors have a strong framing potential (cf. Krippendorff 2017). Burgers et al. (2016) went a step further and proposed that figurative language (metaphor, irony and hyperbole) should be regarded as a separate type of framing – "figurative framing". The framing potential of one type of figurative language, namely metaphorical framing occurring in compounds, was demonstrated by Benczes and Ságvári (2021), who analysed three Hungarian compound words referring to "fled people" (*menekült* 'refugee', *bevándorló* 'immigrant' and *migráns* 'migrant'). Their analysis of a media corpus containing more than 15 million words revealed the prevalence of FLOOD metaphors in the metaphorical framing of fled people, manifested in the combinations of words such as *áramlat* 'flow' or *hullám* 'wave.'

[18] The first ELECTION IS A RACE metaphor Broh (1980) could identify in American journalism dates to 1888 and appeared in the *Boston Journal*. The newspaper article claimed that there would be no *dark horse* – an unexpected candidate who eventually wins – as a result of the presidential campaign.

[19] For a detailed account on the prevalence of the HORSE RACE domain in news reports, see Iyengar et al. (2004).

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3.1 Frame semantics and metaphors

This section discusses the relationship between metaphorical domains and frame semantics, as formulated by Sullivan (2013, 2016), who aimed to integrate conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson 2003)[20] and frame semantics. CMT addressed conceptual (and not linguistic) structures; however, in Sullivan's (2016) view, frame semantics is a plausible means of explanations with regard to how words and phrases evoke the source or target domains of metaphors in metaphoric language. Accordingly, a domain – in Sullivan's (2013, 2016) terminology, a "metaphor input domain" – is defined as the "cognitive structure comprising all schematic information potentially available for mapping via a given metaphor" (Sullivan 2013: 22). According to this definition, metaphor input domains comprise both source and target domains. The definitions of domains and frames do not overlap in this view, as frames are evoked by metaphoric and non-metaphoric language as well (Sullivan 2013, 2016).

How are metaphorical domains related to frames? According to Sullivan (2013: 24), metaphorical domains "can combine structure from multiple frames". This characteristic was exemplified in the MENTAL FITNESS IS PHYSICAL FITNESS metaphor (found in expressions such as *to exercise mentally*), which maps its structure from the "exercising" frame, or the IDEAS ARE FOOD metaphor, the structure of which is mapped from the "ingestion" frame (Sullivan 2013: 14). As both these metaphors are connected to the BODY domain, they are potentially connected to multiple frames. Nevertheless, specific metaphorical language use might evoke certain frames more readily. For example, in the case of *mental exercising*, the "exercising" frame is more essential than other frames connected to the BODY domain, such as "ingestion" (Sullivan 2013, 2016).

A detailed explanation of the relation between metaphorical language use, domains and frames can be found in Sullivan (2013, 2016). However, for the purposes of this paper, the main points of Sullivan's (2013, 2016) theory are that a) metaphorical (source and target) domains map structure from frames and b) specific instances of metaphorical language directly evoke frames more closely attached to them.

4 Figuring frames out – a pilot study

This section conducts a small-scale analysis to explore the way lexical items used metaphorically contribute to equivalence framing. The study relies on the media reporting of the Women's March[21] protests between 2017 and 2019. The metaphorical analysis focuses on the way the March, as a physical movement of people, was represented in articles. Applying a "top-down"[22] approach of metaphor identification (Krenmayr 2013; cf. Benczes & Ságvári 2021), it was expected that the source domains of WAR[23] (Fridolfsson 2008; Castelló &

[20] CMT (Lakoff & Johnson 2003) is based on the observation of conceptual metaphors, which consist "of two conceptual domains, in which one domain is understood in terms of another" (Kövecses 2010: 4).

[21] The main protest was called the "Women's March on Washington". In what follows, "Women's March" is used about the whole movement, including all related organised protests.

[22] The top-down approach identifies predetermined conceptual metaphors while the "bottom-up" approach does not rely on previously set mappings (Krenmayr 2013). For the application of the top-down approach to a larger corpus, see Benczes and Ságvári (2021).

[23] For example, "An army took over Barcelona's streets" (Castelló & Capdevila 2016: 621).

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Capdevila 2015), ANIMAL and NATURAL PHENOMENON[24] (Fridolfsson 2008) and WATER[25] (Porto & Romano 2019; cf. Fridolfsson 2008) would appear. Relying on the top-down method is justified by the aim of the analysis, namely the exploration of the metaphorical framing power of lexical items, rather than the identification of metaphors underlying the discourse surrounding the Women's March.

4.1 Women's March – context and corpus

The Women's March on Washington – which was a catalyst for several marches across the USA and numerous other countries – took place on 21 January 2017, the day after the inauguration of the 45th President of the USA, Donald Trump. Initially an event organized on Facebook, the movement grew to be the largest single-day protest in the history of the USA (Easley 2017). The protests were organised in support of numerous issues, including the protection of women's reproductive rights, and drew attention to the problem of sexual misconduct.[26] Women's March protests were also held in 2018 and 2019; however, none of the subsequent events could repeat the turnout of the first event.

This analysis is based on the news reporting of the Women's March protests in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The analysed news articles were retrieved from the websites of the most widely read newspapers in the USA in 2017. The data regarding the circulation of the newspapers were provided by the Alliance of Audited Media (AAM),[27] a non-profit organisation and a leading actor advocating media transparency in North America. Based on the data obtained from the AAM database, those newspapers were selected that had the highest circulation in 2017 (the first year of the Women's March) and published stories on general topics (e.g., the economy- and finance-focused *The Wall Street Journal* was not included in the analysis). The news sources under the scope of the present study were *USA Today* (https://eu.usatoday.com/), *The New York Times* (https://www.nytimes.com/) and *Los Angeles Times* (https://www.latimes.com/).[28] The corpus was comprised of articles which were published on the days on which the Women's March was held in 2017, 2018 and 2019; articles posted on the day before and after the Women's March in each year were also included. Therefore, articles produced between 20 and 22 January 2017, between 19 and 21 January 2018 and between 18 and 20 January 2019 were collected. Three types of publications were excluded from the investigation: 1) video reports, 2) photo galleries without a corresponding article and 3) pages which listed previously posted articles. Table 1, below, summarises the distribution of the collected publications:

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[24] For example, "[t]here is a tail, for which politics becomes a means to go berserk", in which the TAIL metonymically stands for DEVIANT ACTIVISTS and constitutes a part of the non-explicitly stated PROTEST AS AN ANIMAL metaphor (Fridolfsson 2008: 136). The NATURAL PHENOMENON domain is exemplified in "There are always waves like this" (Fridolfsson 2008: 136).

[25] WATER could be grouped under Fridolfsson's (2008) NATURAL PHENOMENON domain; nevertheless, WATER is a well-known source domain of protests (Porto & Romano 2019: 328). Thus, it will be considered as a separate category. The WATER domain is exemplified by "Human tide of refugees diverted to Croatia" (Porto & Romano 2019: 329).

[26] Weber et al. (2018) analysed the topics that appeared on the protest-sign messages in the course of the first Women's March on 21 January 2017 and found that these centred on unity, criticism of Donald Trump and the (re)definition of feminism.

[27] https://auditedmedia.com/

[28] The articles were accessed in the European Union; therefore, only those contents could be analysed which are available in the region.

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Publication title / Year of publication	2017	2018	2019	Σ
USA Today	19	13	8	40
The New York Times	12	6	4	22
Los Angeles Times	7	10	2	19

Table 1. The distribution of articles about the Women's March between 2017 and 2019

Direct quotations from the speakers at the events, organisers and other participants in the March did not fall under the analysis. Thus, the title, the lead, the body of the article (with the exception of direct quotes) and the captions of pictures and videos provided the corpus of the study. Altogether, the corpus consisted of 108,021 words (*USA Today*: 39,092 words; *The New York Times*: 49,295 words; *Los Angeles Times*: 19,634 words).

4.2 Methodology and results

The conceptual metaphors referring to the crowd and its movement[29] were identified by means of the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz 2007) and in line with Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) CMT, which posits that metaphors are pervasive in language use (Kövecses 2016a: 14).

In line with the MIP, "Fifth Avenue became a river of pink hats",[30] the lexical item *river*, referring to the crowd, was marked as an instantiation of the PROTEST IS WATER conceptual metaphor. The movement of the crowd was exemplified by *stream into* in "A seemingly never-ending crowd of marchers continued to stream into the parks near City Hall".[31] Once the metaphorically used lexical items were identified in the corpus, I collected those which belonged to the predetermined source domains (ANIMAL, NATURAL PHENOMENON, WAR and WATER).

The analysis identified lexical items referring to the domains of WATER (44 occurrences; e.g., "They *trickled* in slowly by the dozens and swelled to a few hundred", my emphasis, LPSz) and WAR (four occurrences, e.g., "People used the moment to *fight* for women, to *defend* the environment," my emphasis, LPSz); however, there was no example of the ANIMAL and NATURAL PHENOMENON domains. The distribution of the domains could be attributed to the nature of the marches, as there was no physical violence during the gatherings. The Women's March demonstrations were newsworthy owing to the vast number of people attending them, especially in 2017 (Easley 2017). Thus, the domains of WAR, ANIMAL and NATURAL PHENOMENON do not represent the nature of the Women's March protests to the same extent as WATER. Figure 1, below, shows the lexical items which instantiated the identified domains.[32]

[29] The sampling was restricted to lexical elements which referred to the Women's March event in the observed year; for example, instances published in 2018 referring to the March in 2017 were not included.

[30] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/21/us/womens-march.html. Accessed: 19 December 2017.

[31] https://eu.vcstar.com/story/news/local/2017/01/21/los-angeles-women-march-send-message/96563778/. Accessed: 03 December 2019.

[32] The part of speech the lexical item belongs to is indicated in brackets.

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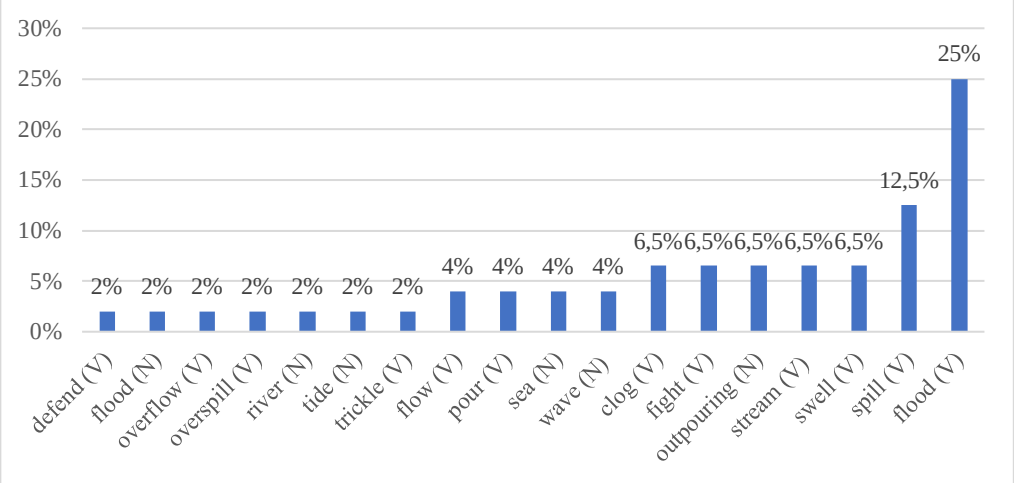

Figure 1. Lexical items evoking the WAR and WATER source domains.

The results indicate that WATER was the prevalent domain in the news articles concerning the crowd participating in the Women's March. The prevalence of the WATER domain manifested in each news source (*USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*) and in each year (2017, 2018 and 2019). Accordingly, the lexical items in Figure 1 have the potential to evoke figurative framing via the PROTEST IS WATER and PROTEST IS WAR conceptual metaphors. The results reflect the notion of the "pressure of coherence" (Kövecses 2005: 237), which states that the "communicative situation" (Kövecses 2005: 237) influences metaphor choice. The communicative situation refers to "the audience, the medium, the topic, and the setting" (Kövecses 2005: 237). In this case, the setting is a viable influence: the results show that the WAR domain occurred less frequently than WATER, which can possibly be attributed to the non-violent nature and large size of the protests.

In summary, the analysis of the articles published by *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* concerning the Women's March in 2017, 2018 and 2019 shows a largely uniform metaphorical framing of the protests, which can be observed via lexical items evoking conceptual metaphors.

5 Conclusion

The objective of the paper was to explore a linguistic means of identifying equivalence-based frames with a focus on how a given piece of information is presented rather than what is presented (Druckman 2001; Cacciatore et al. 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar 2017). It was presumed that frame semantics (Fillmore 1976, 2006; Fillmore & Baker 2009) could serve as a means of identification. Frame semantics focuses on frames activated by linguistic forms (Fillmore 1976, 2006; Fillmore & Baker 2009), meaning that the selection of one lexical item over another can influence how information is framed. The importance of lexical items was exemplified by the choice of *tax relief* over *tax cut*, as the former evokes the framing of taxation as something taxpayers should be relieved of (Lakoff 2004). *Tax relief*, evoking the TAXATION IS A BURDEN conceptual metaphor (Lakoff 2004), also demonstrated that metaphors are interpreted as powerful framing devices (Krippendorff 2017).

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To illustrate the way metaphorical language use can determine how a specific event is framed, news coverage of the first three years (2017, 2018 and 2019) of the Women's March protests was analysed. Relying on CMT, the study showed that protesters and the movement of protesters at the Women's March demonstrations were metaphorically framed on the basis of the source domain of WATER rather than WAR, ANIMAL or (other) NATURAL PHENOMENON. The WATER domain was detected in numerous lexical items, including *overflow*, *stream* and *trickle*. The prevalence of the WATER domain has been attributed to the peaceful nature of the protests. Thus, the present paper has shown the way lexical items used metaphorically can frame a specific event. Additionally, it has highlighted that in the case of the Women's March demonstrations, the choice of lexical items which belong to the domain of WATER reflected the relatively peaceful nature of the protests.

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