

A discourse dynamic approach to metaphor-led analysis in the specialised healthcare domain of gestational diabetes (GDM)

In response to the challenge of the conference call to account for both universality and specificity in our thinking on metaphor, we draw on Cameron et al.'s (2009) discourse dynamic approach to explore the specialised healthcare context of gestational diabetes (GDM) through the accounts of those who have experienced it—(in)directly as a health condition and as healthcare providers. These were derived from more than 7 focus group discussions, of circa 90 minutes duration, in which participants discussed experiences such as (self-)management of GDM through diet control as well as medical and birth interventions. With this approach, we shift from metaphor as a cognitive to socio-cognitive device sensitive to the discourse elements of the surrounding text and socially situated event within which it occurs. In our analysis, we assume both a pre-existing conceptual and cognitive stability predicated on a shared representational system of language as well as an emergent dynamic through socio-functional use, allowing for greater universality as well as specificity to the context of GDM. While we largely align with Cameron et al.'s (2009) approach to metaphor as vehicles which assist in the bringing together of cohering patterns, our dynamic discourse framework is innovatively informed by modality as defined within Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). This marries well with concerns of prohibition and constraint of (self-)management and intervention topically emergent in the focus groups. Through it, we derive at both nuanced and contrastive understandings of the differentially inhabited discourse domain of GDM by healthcare users and providers.

References

Cameron, L., Maslen, R., Todd, Z., Maule, J., Stratton, P., & Stanley, N. (2009). The Discourse Dynamics Approach to Metaphor and Metaphor-Led Discourse Analysis. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 24(2), 63–89. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Routledge.