Metadiscursive functions of conceptual metaphor in guided meditation

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ᴱᴺᴳ **Abstract:** Metadiscourse focuses on the interactional dimension of communication, what Sinclair (1981) called the interactive 'plane', and the coherence of interpersonal resources used to organise discourse (Hyland, 2005). In this vein, we have analysed a corpus of recorded guided meditations. We have searched for explicit signals instantiating metaphors that guide meditative practice by marking successive genre stages. The Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU) (Steen *et al.*, 2010) is applied to identify this type of meta-discursive mark. Three types of guided meditation are compared for the signalled metaphors used to guide meditative practice and their functions. The results show that metaphor signalling plays an ostensive communicative function in organising the text contents and serving the purpose of both maintaining the audience's attention and facilitating their comprehension of mental processes during mediation. The conclusions suggest a view of metaphor usage as a metadiscursive mechanism conveying non-denotational meaning and a key communicative instrument in meditation discourse.

Keywords: Interactional metadiscourse, metaphor, meditation, non-denotational meaning.

1. Introduction

Contemplative practices rooted initially in Eastern traditions, like mindfulness or meditation, are commonly framed in one well-defined and recognisable social context: religious communities (mainly, but not only, from Buddhist backgrounds). In the last decades, new contexts have emerged in circles of secular spirituality, personal development, clinical psychology, and other professional and scientific areas (Cebolla *et al.*, 2014; Milton, 2011). Consequently, the spread of meditation in Western societies, usually related to mindfulness practice, has been the focus of a relatively broad body of research in sociology and other socially concerned disciplines (see Campos & Cebolla, 2016; Schedneck, 2013).

During the last few years, some studies on mindfulness and meditation discourse have described several ways in which conceptual metaphors (Lakoff, 1993) help establish common representations of meditative practice and the role of these metaphors in communication about that kind of experience (Rajandran, 2017;

Richardson & Mueller, 2019; Silvestre-López, 2016, 2020; Silvestre-López & Navarro i Ferrando, 2017). As conceptual facilitators and experience catalysts (Gibbs, 2014; Gibbs *et al.*, 2002), metaphors can boost communication and first-person practice apprehension. Consequently, their use in guided meditation (hereafter, GM) instruction is likely to benefit novel meditation practitioners in numerous ways. This potential of conceptual metaphors has sparked new interest in psychology, in which recent studies have started to analyse the effects that metaphorically enriched GM instructions can have on meditators (Silvestre-López *et al.,* 2023).

Beyond communication and conceptualisation, speakers can also use conceptual metaphors as (meta) discursive tools to organise the structure and flow of ideas of a text, discourse event or communicative exchange, thereby endowing it with internal cohesion, coherence and structure (Goatly, 2011). Hence, metaphors may highlight or reinforce idiosyncratic generic features, thereby helping genre identification and interpretation. Considering that each type of meditation has its own generic and structural characteristics, it seems worth studying the role of metaphor as a metadiscursive tool in meditation discourse and, more concretely, in GM. In this sense, metaphors might prove helpful in (i) structuring the discourse of meditators during GM, (ii) facilitating the representation of the stages and procedures of each type of meditation, and thus also (iii) helping carry out GM exercises as fully cohesive and meaningful practices (hence facilitating the practice of meditation itself). However, to the best of our knowledge, these metaphorical metadiscursive functions have not yet been an object of research. Therefore, the purpose of this work is to call attention to and provide evidence of these metadiscursive functions of metaphor usage.

The analysis proposed in this paper focuses on three types of meditation practice of Buddhist origin whose proven benefits in the reduction of stress, the promotion of well-being, and the development of positive affective factors and pro-social behaviours have paved the way for their efficient transference to other areas of lay meditative practice in our contemporary society, including general well-being and psychological programmes (García-Campayo & Demarzo, 2015; Campos & Cebolla, 2016; Neff & Germer, 2013). The purpose is to analyse the role of conceptual metaphor as a metadiscursive tool to structure and guide the flow of each kind of meditation, as meditation masters and instructors conduct it.

2. Metadiscourse, genre and guided meditation

In origin, metadiscourse analysis emerged as a reaction against a purely ideational view of language to focus on the interactional (interpersonal) dimension of communication, what Sinclair (1981) called the "interactive plane". As Hyland (2000, 2004, 2005, 2010) points out, the interactive perspective focuses on the coherence of interpersonal resources used to organise discourse. Some authors like Mauranen (1993) and Ädel (2006) proposed the "reflexive model" as a complementary approach to the previous two perspectives. This model focuses on the evolving text dimension whereby metadiscourse makes the writer's — or speaker's — intentions legible and persuasive to the reader, also providing coherence to propositional content (Toumi, 2009, p. 66). Moreover, metadiscursive functions, as understood here, cover aspects of both the interpersonal and textual dimensions (Halliday, 2009; Halliday & Hasan, 1985), going beyond lexicogrammar and formal markers into the realm of conceptual coherence signalled by metaphorical vehicles in Goatly's terms (2011, pp. 166-167).

In recent decades, metadiscourse analysis has focused on academic discourse extensively. Nevertheless, many genres, such as oral or informal genres, remain unexplored for metadiscourse strategies, in our culture (see, however, Bellés-Fortuño *et al.*, 2023; Boginskaya, 2024). GM is an oral genre in the form of a monologue in which a speaker addresses a numerous, sometimes private, audience for religious practice, well-being, health care, or even psychotherapy. Accordingly, the genre manifests oral features, like requests, direct addresses to the interlocutors, and the speaker's use of the first and second person. The style is relatively informal and appropriate for a general audience in neutral contexts. Accordingly, we approach metaphor analysis as an interactional metadiscursive device from an integrative interactional perspective (Mauranen, 2010; see also Ädel & Mauranen, 2010).

GM as a genre consists of a conventional arrangement or set of ordered stages, manifesting in various subgenres. The corpus analysed in this paper consists of a selection of recorded GMs from lay and religious (Buddhist) contexts, whose common ground is the cultivation of benevolence and humane feelings towards oneself and others. We analyse three subgenres, loving-kindness, compassion, and taking-and-giving, which are varieties of meditative practices that were practices previously classified in the literature as *ethical enhancement* practices (see Vago & Silbersweig, 2012). The three types of practice help meditators to generate positive cognitive and affective states that foster both personal well-being and healthier interpersonal relationships, as well as to strengthen their connection with other sentient beings and enhance ethical values (for more detail, see the 'constructive family' in Dahl et al., 2015, and the 'compassion cluster' of meditative practices in Matko & Sedlmeier, 2019, p. 5). These three subtypes share several characteristics but also show some differences in nature and purpose. Thus, *loving-kindness* (*mettā*), *compassion* (*karuna*), or *taking-and-giving* (*tonglen*) meditation practices help meditators cultivate desirable attitudes in diverse ways. In the first subtype, meditators send out benevolence towards themselves and others (*loving-kindness*). In the second subtype, they acknowledge their own and others' sorrow through the wish to bring it to an end by cultivating and sending out their *compassion*. Finally, in the third subtype, the meditator tries to absorb and transmute others' suffering (*tonglen*).

In ethical enhancement meditative practices, meditators go through specific experiences and picture individuals for whom they may have different kinds of feelings, ranging from affection to aversion. Continuous practising makes meditators learn to generate attitudes for their own and others' benefit. Beyond the context of religion, the personal benefits of these meditations have been attested in a wide range of scientific studies

to the extent that they have been efficiently transferred to the realm of psychology. That transfer facilitates their implementation in standardised mindfulness and compassion programmes to treat a series of clinical conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, addiction) and foster well-being (Hofmann *et al*., 2011; Neff & Germer, 2013).

For analysing metaphors, we turn to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1981, 2003) and its expanded form, as expounded in Kövecses (2020). CMT claims that human reasoning is somewhat based on mental associations between cognitive domains. Accordingly, humans regularly perform conceptualisations of abstract domains using knowledge (i.e., concepts, inference patterns and relationships) they previously have stored in their long-term memory on the grounds of perception and comprehension of directly experienced domains like the physical and social domains (interpersonal relations). Such a cognitive mechanism operates by activating analogical correspondences between an experiential domain and another domain that emerges as a novel conceptualisation. The Source Domain (hereafter, SD) elements are mapped onto the Target Domain (hereafter, TD), providing consistency and conceptual coherence. For instance, in the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, we understand and give coherence to our notion of life (the TD) — *one's life* — through the model of a journey (the SD) so that the concepts and patterns of inference, presupposition and entailment used to reason about journeys in our daily experience are projected onto the notion of life. Thus, in conceptualising the domain of *one's life*, the subject plays the role of a traveller in a journey. Furthermore, following the inference patterns and conceptual relationships from the SD, diverse participant concepts in the journey model each project a role to the model of *one's life*. Thus, living is travelling; the stages in life are locations where we stop and spend some time, difficulties in life are obstacles, purposes in life are destinations, and so on. It should be noticed that the mental mechanism we have called *metaphor* is a matter of cognition and thought rather than a mere means of linguistic expression. Even so, our reasoning about the TD is expressed via linguistic expressions depicting the SD. Therefore, a conceptual metaphor — a thought mapping, i.e., a conceptual mapping — manifests through metaphorical expressions in discourse that represent SD concepts. In this fashion, we may encounter expressions like "it's been a long bumpy road" as a linguistic manifestation of the idea of "a life with many difficulties" or "I am at a crossroads", as an expression of the conceptualisation "I need to make a decision" (see Lakoff, 1993). In other approaches to metaphor analysis in discourse, metaphoric expressions (linguistic expressions of conceptual metaphors), are also called "metaphor vehicles" or "Metaphorical Related Words" (MRWs), as in Steen *et al.* (2010). We claim that these metaphors convey a kind of non-denotational meaning (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2020a, 2020b) by fulfilling some metadiscursive functions, such as marking discourse boundaries, creating textual cohesion, providing for argument structure, making an argumentative impact, grabbing the audience's attention, and establishing common ground in discourse (establishment of reference). In addition, metaphors also convey denotational meaning by accomplishing many other functions that are not the object of this study, mainly ideational, like explanatory, evoking imagery, highlighting, filling lexical gaps, framing, etc. (Charteris-Black, 2004; Semino, 2008; Goatly, 2011; Kimmel, 2012; Silvestre-López, 2019).

This paper explores the non-denotational use of conceptual metaphor fulfilling metadiscursive functions in a corpus of three subgenres of lay and religious loving-kindness, compassion, and taking-and-giving GMs. Concretely, we aim to unveil the role of conceptual metaphor as a metadiscursive tool to structure and guide the flow of each kind of meditation in a corpus of GMs.

3. Corpus and procedure

The analysis is based on a corpus compiled ad hoc consisting of 24 transcripts of oral GM discourse. From these, 17 correspond to Loving-kindness, 5 to Compassion, and 2 to Taking-and-giving subtypes. Speakers are spiritual masters and instructors, respectively. All speakers are native English language users. The corpus (29,281 words) is intentionally small to allow for a smooth bottom-up analysis, allowing metaphorical topics and vehicles to be revealed inductively without the influence of prior preconceptions by the researchers.

The transcripts are analysed following an inductive qualitative analytical procedure and corpus-driven manual tagging. The general procedure begins by reading the texts to be analysed, identifying general moves (Swales, 1990) and describing the textual structure of each GM subgenre. Then, we establish general topics of interest in the corpus, such as the figure of the meditator, thought, emotion, mind, love, or suffering. These topics configure the analysis field for metaphorical language, i.e., the TDs. Each piece of text that manifests a particular topic generates a quotation associated with the code "TOPIC_X". Each topic may develop metaphorically or literally. In the next step, we search for and identify explicit metaphor vehicles that guide the meditation practice and refer to any topics of interest. At that point, the MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit) (Steen *et al*., 2010) is applied to identify this type of metadiscursive marker and particular realisations of metaphor in discourse. The quotation counts for analysis if an expression is metaphorical (MRW). In the next step, we identify and describe the TD and SD of the MRW (see Coll-Florit & Climent, 2019). Finally, we carry out the identification and description of metadiscursive and cognitive functions. To qualify as metadiscourse, MRWs must function text-internally, i.e., signal transitions in the world of discourse (Ädel, 2006; Ädel & Mauranen, 2010; Mauranen, 1993, 2010).

The subgenres are compared for the functions of the signalled metaphors used to guide the meditative practice. For that purpose, we describe the progression of the textual structure in each subgenre. Then, we identify and analyse metaphorical expressions. The discussion issues are at the level of the conceptual metaphors used, how they occur in discourse, and their purposes or functions. Thus, the analysis focuses not solely on metaphor vehicles (MRWs) but also on conceptual metaphors (TD IS SD).

4. Results and discussion

Our analysis of transcripts has shown that the verbal guidance provided by instructors follows a conventional structure consisting of successive textual stages. A priori, this textual structure was not predicted or expected to follow a predetermined set of phases. Differences between subgenres were not a presumed fact. However, even though similarities between the three subgenres are apparent, our analysis has also revealed divergences. We have focused on stage shifting marked by metaphorical expressions.

Firstly, the *loving-kindness* subgenre aims to generate feelings of love towards other people and oneself through the subsequent activation of textual stages. Our analysis suggests that this textual structure consists of a phase of physical and mental attitudinal disposition, followed by focussing attention on an object or lovable target, triggering a feeling of love for that object, adding other love objects/targets, adding and widening love targets cyclically, enhancing love intensity, and eventually ending in a final stage of relaxation (this being understood mainly as regaining awareness of the meditator's bodily and mental states resulting from the practice). Secondly, *compassion* meditation aims to acknowledge suffering in others and oneself and generate a wish for that sorrow to cease. Our data show an initial stage, followed by the focus of attention on a suffering being, triggering a feeling of compassion, triggering a wish to end suffering, and finally, relaxation leading to the end of practice. Thirdly, *taking-and-giving* (tonglen) often entails focussing on the visualisation of sorrow and its transmutation into joy and happiness. This practice consists of a stage of initiation, followed by concentrating attention on a suffering being, triggering an imaginative process of taking on the suffering of others, transmutation of suffering into happiness, starting an imaginative process of emanating joy, and finalisation or ending.

Table 1. Textual stages of the three GM subgenres

Subgenre	Textual stages					
Loving-kindness	initiation	attention on a lovable target	triggering a feeling of Love	adding Love targets cyclically	enhancing Love intensity	ending
Compassion	initiation	attention on a suffering being	triggering a feeling of compassion	wish to cease suffering	adding compassion targets	ending
Taking and giving	initiation	attention on a suffering being	triggering the process of taking on others' suffering	transmutation of suffering into happiness	emanating happiness	ending

As for similarities, Table 1 shows that the three subgenres evince an introductory initiation stage and a final closing stage. Again, the three subgenres mark a move to a second stage whose purpose is to guide and focus the audience's attention on external beings. Here, loving-kindness differs from the other two since the meditator sends love and benevolence to the searched object. In contrast, compassion and taking-and-giving GMs lead to a search for suffering beings. Stages three to five are distinctive for the loving-kindness subgenre, leading to enhanced love intensity that, in spiritual contexts, could be likened to some kind of spiritual love ecstasy. Both taking-and-giving and compassion GMs focus on suffering beings, but their treatment leads to divergent paths. On the one hand, compassion GM prompts good wishes about the end of suffering; on the other hand, taking-and-giving engages the audience in an imaginative process of generosity by conceiving healing and comforting grief by transmuting that sorrow into happiness.

Our analysis suggests that these textual stages are, in most cases, ostensibly signalled through metaphors, fulfilling a metadiscursive function that leads textual progression and guides the audience's mental processes. In the following, we present the metadiscursive metaphors that mark the textual structure in the three GM subgenres.

4.1. *Loving-kindness* GM metadiscursive metaphors

4.1.1. *Metaphors for initiating the practice*

In the initial stage of the GM, the instructor tries to generate an emotional state of sensitisation by prompting a particular physical and mental attitude towards the practice. The expression of that guidance comes about using three metaphors. First, the MEDITATION IS A SPACE metaphor that takes the participants to reify the practice as a place so that a sense of openness emerges in the meditators' minds and pragmatically grabs their attention. The metaphor announces the beginning of a process, an opening, which, in terms of metadiscourse, amounts to marking the beginning of a textual structure. In the interpersonal plane, it provides a semantic device to attract the audience's attention and make them concentrate on concrete aspects of their perception, as in (1) and (2).

(1) *If you 'don't know about practices, that's fine because I want to <u>lead</u> you <u>in</u> it* (London Buddhist Centre, 2020a)

(2) We could just <u>jump</u> right <u>in</u> and begin the practice (Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation, 2017)

The second metaphor is MEDITATION IS A JOURNEY, expressed in (3). At this textual stage, the speaker announces a journey where s/he will be the guide, using the future tense or an inchoative aspect. The metaphorical vehicles of this metaphor are verbs like *lead* or *guide,* which reveal an underlying path image schema (Johnson, 1987). It is interesting to note that, as a mental and discursive space builder, the MEDITATION IS A SPACE metaphor is still active during the practice, as evidenced by *through* in (3) below, and facilitates the use of other metaphors grounded on the spatial domain set by this metaphor, also during the remaining GM stages.

(3) ' *'I'm going to* <u>lead</u> *us* <u>through</u> *some body awareness* (London Buddhist Centre, 2020b)

The third metaphor signalling an initial textual stage is FEELINGS ARE OBJECTS, expressed through vehicles like "let go", as an indication of the beginning of release. Again, the MEDITATION IS A SPACE metaphor affords the use of "let go" of striving or effort as if these were objects moving away from the meditator in physical space.

(4) … <u>letting go</u> *of any sense of striving or effort to feel otherwise* (Bertin, 2019)

4.1.2. Metaphors initiating the focus of attention on a meditation object (a loving-kindness target)

The metaphor MIND IS HOME contributes to the metadiscursive function of initiating the second textual stage using transitive verbs like "bring", in a request form like the imperative, indicating that the person experiencing the process enters a space characterised as "home". Using HOME as an SD space serves the speaker's purpose of creating internal coherence with the instructions in the previous stage by providing a more concrete and defined view of the space introduced in the MEDITATION IS SPACE metaphor. Additionally, our home is generally one of the environments where we feel most secure and comfortable; consequently, this choice of SD seems to reflect the speaker's intention to make the meditator feel good and at ease in that place. The expression of this metaphor also includes a thing or person that the subject introduces in that "home". Thus, *bringing something* or *someone home* means paying attention to that entity, and it also allows the subject to perceive it more closely, which prepares the ground for the next stage, as in (5).

(5) <u>bringing</u> *right* <u>into</u> *your mind's eye in your heart the person […]* <u>bring</u> *that being* <u>into</u> *the room with you* (Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation, 2017)

4.1.3. Metaphors for triggering a feeling of loving-kindness for a target

At this stage, once the meditator has attuned to the feeling of loving-kindness in the previous stage, the meditation focuses on the object or target of the loving-kindness feeling. This phase is triggered by verbs like "connect" that express the beginning of a durative contact state. Thus, the metaphor is THINKING OF SOMETHING IS TOUCHING IT, but only the inchoation of that state is expressed, as in (6).

(6) *a smile upon your face as you* <u>connect with</u> *the other beings of your world* (Sealey, 2015)

4.1.4. Metaphors for adding and widening loving-kindness targets cyclically

At this point, the purpose of the meditation is to carry out an imaginative process whereby the meditators feel their love expanding or spreading to many targets. For that purpose, the metaphor LOVE IS A SUBSTANCE is expressed by vehicles like "extend", "send", and "spread", as in (7) and (8). In this metaphor, the feeling of loving-kindness is understood as a substance that the subject distributes.

(7) <u>extending</u> *that well-wishing out to those people* (London Buddhist Centre, 2020b)
(8) *you* <u>send</u> *this incredible powerful loving-kindness to everybody* (Ajahn Brahm, 2015)

The feeling of loving-kindness may be conceptualised metaphorically as something that can be spread, like in the metaphor LOVE IS LIGHT, expressed through verbs like "spread" or "split," as illustrated in (9) and (10).

(9)   … <u>split</u> *this beautiful* <u>golden light</u> *of loving kindness to everybody in this room* (Ajahn Brahm, 2015)
(10)   … <u>spread</u> *this loving kindness, this beautiful* <u>golden light</u> *over the whole world* (Ajahn Brahm, 2015)

The idea that the subject of the meditation distributes the feeling of love to many targets can also be expressed by conceiving love as a liquid or fluid infiltrating the body, through the metaphor LOVE IS A FLUID, as illustrated in (11) and (12).

(11)   … *that feeling of love for all the sentient beings. Let that feeling* <u>permeate</u> *you, as it* <u>extends</u> <u>out</u> *and* <u>encompasses</u> *everybody* (Chodron, 2019a)
(12)   …*we* <u>expand</u> *slowly to include more and more people* (London Buddhist Centre, 2020c)

4.1.5. Metaphors marking enhancing loving-kindness intensity

The next stage in the meditation takes the audience to enhance the intensity of the emotion triggered and addressed to many targets in the two previous phases. The metaphor LOVE IS LIGHT helps express the idea of the increase in intensity by using light as an entity that can be seen as more or less intense. Verbs like "radiating" (13) express this mapping.

(13)   *'I'll take this happy feeling and* <u>radiate</u> *it to yourself* (Johnson, 2018)

4.1.6. Metaphors for ending the meditation

The last part of the meditation protocol takes the subjects to relaxation and regaining awareness of the mental and physical states of the meditator after the meditative practice. For that purpose, various metaphors are used. Some of them are the same as those used in the previous stages, but this time, they activate different frames of the structural conceptual domain, which brings about textual cohesion. Thus, the metaphor LOVE IS A SUBSTANCE is resumed here, imagining the substance that was sent out is now gathered back, as in (14).

(14)   *... we gotta <u>gather</u> all that loving-kindness [...] <u>drawing it back in</u>* (Ajahn Brahm, 2015)

With a similar cohesive function, the metaphor MEDITATION IS A JOURNEY helps express the final stages of the meditation protocol by using expressions depicting the coming back home in a journey, such as "come back," "move back," "bring yourself back," or the like, as seen in (15) and (16).

(15)   *... you gradually <u>bring</u> yourself <u>back</u>* (Sealey, 2015)
(16)   *... when you are ready you can <u>come back</u> to yourself completely* (Sealey, 2015)

At this stage, the guide also treats the meditation metaphorically as a physical space where the meditators move, being now at home again (AWARENESS IS HOME) by using expressions like "bring to a close", as in (17).

(17)   *... <u>bring</u> the meditation to a <u>close</u>* (London Buddhist Centre, 2020a)

The meditation process is conceived as a space opened in stage one and now closed. All this process recalls the metaphor MIND/HEART IS A CONTAINER, as the space opened to receive the Love targets and closed at the end of the process. This is a complex metaphor in which IDEAS ARE OBJECTS that come into the mind. There is a metaphorically created similarity between ideas and both physical objects and human beings. The metaphor THE MIND IS A CONTAINER projects an entity status with in-out orientation onto our cognitive faculty. As Lakoff and Johnson suggest, spatial properties are neither inherent nor objective properties of the mind. Conversely, they are interactional and reflect how we conceive of mental phenomena by means of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 214).

4.2. Compassion GM metadiscursive metaphors

Both loving-kindness and compassion meditation help develop positive emotional states related to unconditional love in the individual so that they can also be transferred to others (Hofmann *et al*., 2011). Accordingly, the *initiation* stage in both types of GM engages the meditator in an exercise of physical and mental awareness that facilitates the emergence of the appropriate psycho-emotional states desirable for meditation practice. In loving-kindness meditation, awareness is directed towards the meditator's experience and feeling of selfless, unconditional, kind love. The same feeling of love is present in compassion meditation, but the awareness is directed towards suffering. Compassion thus involves awareness of suffering (a facet developed discursively in textual stage 2 of this GM subgenre) but also the benevolent and caring desire to alleviate it (a quality set discursively in textual stage 4); this entails the previously deep understanding that we are all suffering beings and, consequently, the activation of a kind and caring (compassionate) attitude towards others (deployed discursively in textual stage 3).

Our analysis revealed textual instantiations relating to the first (initiation) and second (attention to a suffering being) stages of the compassion meditation subgenre described in Table 1, but neither are realised metaphorically. Due to space constraints, and as set in this study's objectives, in this paper, we only focus on metaphorical language marking textual stage transitions, which in the case of compassion meditation are stages 3, 4, 5, and 6.

4.2.1. Metaphors for triggering a feeling of compassion

Once the meditators are in an appropriate state and have connected with suffering, the GM prompts meditators to tune in with a feeling of compassion. During stages 1 and 2, meditators are led to feel the heart area to be more sensitive to the physical sensations related to compassionate love. The metaphors found in the corpus evoke conceptualisations of containers and fluids so that triggering the feeling of compassion is conceptualised as opening a container. Concretely, metaphors like COMPASSION IS A SUBSTANCE, or THE HEART IS A CONTAINER (OF COMPASSION) (see 18) are pervasive in this GM subgenre. Alternatively, the notion of heart-container also materialises, perhaps motivated by a relationship of contiguity in metaphors picturing compassion as a container itself (COMPASSION IS A BUILDING), as in (19), in which the very act of triggering the feeling of compassion is conceptualised as doors opening.

(18)   *And as you think of what that must be like for them, let your heart <u>open</u> in compassion* (Chodron, 2019b)
(19)   *Understanding this deeply, it may assist in <u>opening</u> up the <u>doors</u> of forgiveness and compassion* (Stahl *et al.*, 2014b).

4.2.2. Metaphors for triggering a wish to cease suffering

The image of releasing and opening in the previous examples contrasts with the metaphorical depiction of suffering in the corpus, which in this case is characterised by a relatively common metaphor in everyday discourse (SUFFERING IS AN OPPRESSIVE STRUCTURE). Examples (20) and (21) are prototypical textual realisations of the metaphor through MRWs like "free" or "freedom" which, in the fourth textual stage, helps to introduce

the cessation of suffering as an act of liberation from oppression. The meditator performs this by wishing the suffering person to be released from sorrow.

(20) *And when you think of them, generate compassion - wanting them to be <u>free</u>* (Chodron, 2019b)
(21) *... wishing this person to be <u>free from</u> suffering* (Daizan Skinner, 2019)

The expressions "wanting ... to be free" and "wishing ... to be free" guide the audience to shift discursively to the present stage in the meditation process. These appear in our corpus at the beginning of stage four.

4.2.3. Metaphors for adding compassion targets

The speaker announces this textual stage through verbs like "extend", "expand", "spread", and the like, which resumes the use of metaphors like COMPASSION IS A FLUID or COMPASSION IS LIGHT, as in (22), which contributes to discursive coherence.

(22) *If you wish<u> extending</u> this to the nearby town or city may all beings within this town or within this city we all be be free from suffering* (Daizan Skinner, 2019)

These metaphors manifest by the use of "compassion" as the subject of verbs like "permeate" and "pervade" at this textual stage.

4.2.4. Metaphors for turning to the end of the practice

As in the loving-kindness subgenre, the compassion type also uses the MEDITATION IS A JOURNEY metaphor by activating the final frame in the script through verbs like "come back". In addition, a characteristic metaphor makes this subgenre different. The instructor prompts the audience to enjoy the result of their endeavours in the previous stages of the meditation when they imaginatively liberate sentient beings from sorrow. The verb used in this case is "bask", which connotes relaxation after an effort and a sense of joy and satisfaction after a well-done job (see 23).

(23) *Now, <u>bask</u> in the joy of this <u>open-</u>hearted wish to ease the suffering of all people.* (Weng, n.d.)

This use constitutes a creative expression of the metaphor MEDITATION IS A SPACE signalled by the word "open".

4.3. Taking-and-giving GM metadiscursive metaphors

The taking-and-giving (tonglen) GM subgenre consists of six stages. Like in the other subgenres analysed, the first stage is an introductory phase to attain physical and mental sensitisation as an initiation to the practice. The second stage broadly coincides in form and purpose with the other subgenres as well, since it pursues focusing attention on external targets, in this case, suffering beings. The stages that make this subgenre different, both in form and content, are the third, fourth and fifth ones, where there is an imaginative process of taking on the suffering of others, followed by transmutation of that sorrow into bliss, and finally, emanating happiness. The final stage, which consists of bringing the meditation to an end, is again similar to the previous subgenres, both in form and content. Those stages that are idiosyncratic in this genre show the use of particular metaphors, which can also be characterised by some metadiscursive functions. In the following subsections, we illustrate a sequence of mutually coherent metaphors building an allegory that provides overall coherence to a discourse that guides the audience's mental processes as intended by the instructors. This type of allegory contributes to both textual coherence and an interactional integrative communicative process, the metaphors being engagement markers, in Hyland's (2005) terminology.

4.3.1. Metaphors for triggering an imaginative process of taking on the suffering of others

The idea of taking sorrow off a suffering person is undoubtedly an abstract thought that may benefit from metaphorical reasoning. Furthermore, in this case, the meditator incorporates the sorrow taken away from other sentient beings. Thus, the image used is that of a visible gas substance like a kind of polluted smoke, and the verb that triggers this imaginative process is "inhale". The metaphor SORROW IS A NOXIOUS GAS manifests through words like "polluted", "smoke", "inhale", "breathe", "leave", "come", "heavy", or "thick", some of them illustrated in (24).

(24) *with a real sense of compassion, you <u>inhale that smoke;</u> ... their suffering <u>leaves</u> them and <u>comes</u> into you* (Chodron, 2019c)

Another way of expressing that transference metaphorically is performed by characterising sorrow in visual terms as the absence of light, as in (25).

(25) *The <u>dark</u> coming in* (Chödrön, 2016)

4.3.2. Metaphors for the transmutation of suffering into happiness

Stage four in the taking-and-giving subgenre may be marked metaphorically by the metaphor TRANSMUTATION IS A CRASH, expressed through words like "lightning bolt", "crash", "blow up", or "destroy". Example (26) illustrates some of these expressions.

(26) *... it turns into <u>a lightning bolt</u> that then <u>crashes</u> into <u>the lamp</u> at your heart.* (Chodron, 2019c)

4.3.3. *Metaphors for triggering an imaginative process of emanating and transferring happiness*

Taking-and-giving meditation intends that the meditators actively feel they absorb the sorrow of other sentient beings, transmute it into happiness, and then return that happiness to replace the original sorrow. Following the allegory of metaphors expressing that process, in this stage, the result of the crash produces an intense light that emanates from the meditator. Thus, the metaphor LOVE IS LIGHT, which is frequent in meditation to express love and happiness, is used here to mark the final episode in the allegory, as in (27).

(27) *Then imagine a <u>brilliant white light radiating</u> from your heart* (Chodron, 2019c)

In addition to "brilliant", "light", "white", and the verb "radiate", which recur in our corpus, another expression (MRW) found that expresses this metaphor at this stage in taking-and-giving GM is "flash".

To conclude, we see along the tonglen GM subgenre structure that it progresses thematically from sorrow, conceptualised as a noxious substance like polluted dark smoke, through a transmutation process performed by the meditators, onto happiness, conceptualised as light emanating from the meditators and permeating other beings. This allegory is recurrent in taking-and-giving GMs, and the sequence of metaphors that conform it serve textual coherence functions and act as engagement markers in an integrative interactional metadiscursive process.

4.4. Other metadiscursive functions of metaphor: showing the rhythm of discourse

In previous sections, we have illustrated the use of metaphors associated with textual progression, as markers for the sequence of genre stages, which in turn help perform an integrative interactional communication process between instructors and their audiences. Moreover, we have observed additional metaphor uses contributing to speaker-hearer interaction in a different dimension. Thus, a metaphor evoking an SD in which particular sensations are experienced may serve to recall and activate those sensations in the audience's minds so that those sensations are associated with discourse progression and tempo. Example (28) shows a reiteration of the conceptual metaphor MIND IS A WELL, enriched by a complex mapping expressing how the mind receives cognitive stimuli. In that mapping, a phrase pronounced by the instructor is referred to as a pebble (a piece of content) that drops (is listened to by the hearer), produces a sound (is understood), and its effect on the bottom of the well (the mind) produces a splash on the bottom (is noticed and sensed by the audience), a physical effect literally, and metaphorically a cognitive one. The metaphorical expressions (MRWs, vehicles) are intentionally scattered by the instructor throughout his speech so that they produce an effect of a calm and slowly scheduled guideline that regulates the mental process. We have included the time count by each instance of the metaphor occurring in a speech lasting for 18 minutes to show the regulating effect intended by the speaker.

(28) *... we <u>drop</u> these phrases into our experience like <u>dropping a pebble into a deep well</u>, and just like <u>dropping a pebble into a deep well</u> we <u>leave a bit of space</u> after each phrase to notice it as it <u>drops into the waters at the very bottom</u>*, (08:00)
[...] *<u>dropping</u> these phrases into your experience and noticing the effect* (08:44)
[...] *<u>dropping in</u> these phrases ...* (10:37)
[...] *like <u>dropping a pebble into a deep well</u> and noticing <u>the splash at the bottom</u> ...*(14:06) (London Buddhist Centre, 2020c)

In this example, we see that a metaphor used along a discourse recurrently may play a metadiscursive function as far as it works as a regulator of the rhythm employed by the speaker to interact with the audience. The metaphor accordingly marks the triggering of sensations in the audience.

In sections 4.1 to 4.3, we have illustrated how metaphors are used as metadiscursive markers, signalling textual progression by marking the transitions between textual stages in conventional oral genres like the three meditation subtypes analysed.

In considering metaphor as a metadiscursive resource in GM, we claim that speakers use metaphorical expressions as ostensive markers of shifts (moves) from one textual stage to the next, thus manifesting contrasts of textual structure between the three meditation subgenres. That marking function becomes pragmatically relevant in the communicative community due to a process of conventionalisation of recurrent metaphors through continuous practice over time, which amounts to the conventionalisation of certain types of non-denotational meaning (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2020a, 2020b). At the same time, these recurrent SDs activate metaphorical domains in the audience's minds that provide coherence to the contents represented through the meditative practice in each subgenre. Particularly, metaphors instantiating the path schema, such as MEDITATION IS A JOURNEY, facilitate the conceptualisation of discourse as a path, including a starting point, several transition regions, and a final arriving point. The path schema, thus, helps signalling the different phases of a process in time, as these genres show. On the other hand, the container schema, as instantiated by metaphors like MIND/HEART IS A CONTAINER, helps perceiving the experience as a successive set of cognitive actions like opening, letting in, letting out, and finally, closing. The metaphor MIND IS HOME combines both schemas allowing for opening, bringing in, letting out, going away, coming back and, finally, closing. These mappings can be described from the cognitive perspective as explanatory of the conceptualisation of the abstract TDs (see Silvestre-López 2016, 2020, 2022; Silvestre-López & Navarro i Ferrando, 2017, to appear). Even so, our focus in this work is to pinpoint their textual and interpersonal functions rather than their cognitive representational functions.

The data show that metaphors convey a kind of non-denotational meaning by fulfilling some metadiscursive functions, such as marking discourse boundaries, creating textual cohesion, providing for argument

structure, making an argumentative impact, grabbing the audience's attention, and establishing common ground in discourse (establishment of reference), as integrative markers. In section 4.4, we have illustrated a different metadiscursive function of metaphor by showing how a metaphorical script is recurrently employed along a discourse, so manifesting non-denotational meaning related to maintaining the rhythm of speech, keeping attention and fulfilling integrative interpersonal discursive functions.

5. Conclusions

This study suggests that the reflexive model, together with the text-internal criterion (Ädel, 2006; Ädel & Mauranen, 2010; Mauranen, 1993, 2010), facilitates identifying and selecting metaphorical vehicles as metadiscursive markers. Our study opens a new perspective on metadiscursive research by revealing a fundamental aspect of figurative language in relation with interpersonal-interactive and textual functions. We show that these discursive functions may be performed not only through conjunctive formal or lexico-grammatical resources but also through the systematic use of metaphorical frames and scripts. These are shown here to be helpful in the interactive and textual dimensions of language interaction as far as a genre's topic deals with abstract reasoning.

In sum, we have shown that metaphors (i) structure the discourse of meditators during GM, (ii) facilitate the representation of the stages and procedures of each type of meditation, and thus also (iii) help carry out GM exercises as fully cohesive and meaningful practices.

Additionally, this study shows that metaphors display metadiscursive functions in genres whose coherence depends on the metaphorical conceptualisation of their contents. The presence of a single conceptual metaphor manifested through diverse frames at various textual stages also provides textual cohesion helping the audience to identify the various phases of the meditation protocol. Thus, metaphors help mark textual progression, since the genre seems to present a stable textual structure.

In sum, the metadiscursive metaphorical markers (vehicles, alias MRWs) evinced in GM respond to speaker-hearer communicative interaction (Sinclair, 1981), serve to provide textual coherence and guide the progression and organisation of the textual structure of the genre analysed (Hyland, 2000, 2004, 2010). Consequently, the results suggest that metaphor plays a metadiscursive communicative function in maintaining the audience's attention on those mental processes required over their meditation. These conclusions point to a view of metadiscursive functions of metaphor as a key tool in meditation discourse.

This study is constrained by the limitation of a relatively small corpus that does not facilitate statistical processing and consequently eschews broad generalisations. However, this thick approach analysis (Bondi, 2010) allows for inductive corpus-driven manual tagging, so leading to the discovery of new or non-predefined metadiscursive strategies, such as metaphor, in addition to formal or lexico-grammatical markers.

Further research points to the study of the deliberate communicative function of metaphor (Steen, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2023) in helping to make the audience aware of the mental processes activated and their shifting. Additionally, the exploration of discursive and pragmatic functions of metaphor leads to pathways of non-denotational meanings of figurative language like illocution, inference, and the regulation of participants' attitudes as suggested by Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera (2020).

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CREDIT Authorship Contribution

Equal contribution in Conceptualisation, Data curation, Fundraising, Methodology, Management of the project, Supervision, Visualisation, Writing.

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