



يا صاحب القُبَّة البيضاء

يا صاحب القُبَّة البيضاء في النَّجَفِ

مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَكَ وَاسْتَشْفَى لَدَيْكَ شُفِي

زوروا أبا الحَسَنِ الهادي لَعَلَّكُمْ

تُحْظُونَ بِالْأَجْرِ وَالْإِقْبَالِ وَالزُّلْفِ

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اشارة الى كتابكم المرقم ١٣٧٥ بتاريخ ٢٠٢٥/٧/٩، والحاقاً بكتابنا المرقم ب ت ٤ / ٣٠٠٨ في ٢٠٢٤/٣/١٩، والمتضمن استحداث مجلتكم التي تصدر عن دائرتكم المذكورة اعلاه، وبعد الحصول على الرقم المعياري الدولي المطبوع وانشاء موقع الكتروني للمجلة تعتبر الموافقة الواردة في كتابنا اعلاه موافقة نهائية على استحداث المجلة.

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ابراهيم
تموز

فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (٨)

السنة الثالثة صفر الخير ١٤٤٦ هـ آب ٢٠٢٥ م

تصدر عن دائرة البحوث والدراسات في ديوان الوقف الشيعي

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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد(٨)

السنة الثالثة صفر الخير ١٤٤٦ هـ آب ٢٠٢٥ م

تصدر عن دائرة البحوث والدراسات في ديوان الوقف الشيعي

العنوان الموقعي

مجلة القبة البيضاء

جمهورية العراق

بغداد / باب المعظم

مقابل وزارة الصحة

دائرة البحوث والدراسات

الاتصالات

مدير التحرير

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دليل المؤلف.....

- ١- إن يتسم البحث بالأصالة والجدة والقيمة العلمية والمعرفية الكبيرة وسلامة اللغة ودقة التوثيق.
- ٢- إن تحتوي الصفحة الأولى من البحث على:
 - أ. عنوان البحث باللغة العربية .
 - ب . اسم الباحث باللغة العربية . ودرجته العلمية وشهادته.
 - ت . بريد الباحث الإلكتروني.
 - ث . ملخصان أحدهما باللغة العربية والآخر باللغة الإنكليزية.
 - ج . تدرج مفاتيح الكلمات باللغة العربية بعد الملخص العربي.
- ٣- أن يكون مطبوعاً على الحاسوب بنظام (office Word) (٢٠٠٧ أو ٢٠١٠) وعلى قرص ليزري مدمج (CD) على شكل ملف واحد فقط (أي لا يُجزأ البحث بأكثر من ملف على القرص) وتُرَوَّد حياة التحرير بثلاث نسخ ورقية وتوضع الرسوم أو الأشكال، إن وُجدت، في مكانها من البحث، على أن تكون صالحة من الناحية الفنية للطباعة.
- ٤- أن لا يزيد عدد صفحات البحث على (٢٥) خمس وعشرين صفحة من الحجم (A4) .
 - ٥ . يلتزم الباحث في ترتيب وتنسيق المصادر على الصيغة APA
 - ٦- أن يلتزم الباحث بدفع أجور النشر المحددة البالغة (٧٥,٠٠٠) خمسة وسبعين ألف دينار عراقي، أو ما يعادلها بالعملة الأجنبية.
 - ٧- أن يكون البحث خالياً من الأخطاء اللغوية والنحوية والإملائية.
 - ٨- أن يلتزم الباحث بالخطوط وأحجامها على النحو الآتي:
 - أ. اللغة العربية: نوع الخط (Arabic Simplified) وحجم الخط (١٤) للمتن.
 - ب . اللغة الإنكليزية: نوع الخط (Times New Roman) عناوين البحث (١٦) . والملخصات (١٢) . أما فقرات البحث الأخرى؛ فبحجم (١٤) .
 - ٩- أن تكون هوامش البحث بالنظام التلقائي (تعليقات ختامية) في نهاية البحث. بحجم ١٢ .
 - ١٠- تكون مسافة الحواشي الجانبية (٢,٥٤) سم والمسافة بين الأسطر (١) .
 - ١١- في حال استعمال برنامج مصحف المدينة للآيات القرآنية يتحمل الباحث ظهور هذه الآيات المباركة بالشكل الصحيح من عدمه، لذا يفضل النسخ من المصحف الإلكتروني المتوافر على شبكة الانترنت.
 - ١٢- يبلغ الباحث بقرار صلاحية النشر أو عدمها في مدة لا تتجاوز شهرين من تاريخ وصوله إلى هيئة التحرير .
 - ١٣- يلتزم الباحث بإجراء تعديلات المحكمين على بحثه وفق التقارير المرسلة إليه وموافاة المجلة بنسخة معدلة في مدة لا تتجاوز (١٥) خمسة عشر يوماً.
 - ١٤- لا يحق للباحث المطالبة بمتطلبات البحث كافة بعد مرور سنة من تاريخ النشر .
 - ١٥- لا تعاد البحوث الى أصحابها سواء قبلت أم لم تقبل.
 - ١٦- دمج مصادر البحث وهوامشه في عنوان واحد يكون في نهاية البحث، مع كتابة معلومات المصدر عندما يرد لأول مرة.
 - ١٧- يخضع البحث للتقويم السري من ثلاثة خبراء لبيان صلاحيته للنشر .
 - ١٨- يشترط على طلبة الدراسات العليا فضلاً عن الشروط السابقة جلب ما يثبت موافقة الاستاذ المشرف على البحث وفق النموذج المعتمد في المجلة.
 - ١٩- يحصل الباحث على مستل واحد لبحثه، ونسخة من المجلة، وإذا رغب في الحصول على نسخة أخرى فعليه شراؤها بسعر (١٥) ألف دينار.
 - ٢٠- تعبر الأبحاث المنشورة في المجلة عن آراء أصحابها لا عن رأي المجلة.
 - ٢١- ترسل البحوث على العنوان الآتي: (بغداد - شارع فلسطين المركز الوطني لعلوم القرآن)
 - أو البريد الإلكتروني: (off_research@sed.gov.iq) بعد دفع الأجور في الحساب المصرفي العائد إلى الدائرة.
 - ٢٢- لا تلتزم المجلة بنشر البحوث التي تُخلُّ بشروط من هذه الشروط .



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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (٨)
السنة الثالثة صفر الخير ١٤٤٦ هـ آب ٢٠٢٥ م

Exploring the semantic systems in Psychiatrists' interviews on addiction in English: a cognitive semantic study

Raghad Hakeem Mudheher
(Prof. Sundus Muhsin Ali Al Ubaidy (PhD





Abstract:

Addiction is a socially and medically constructed phenomenon that continues to raise interdisciplinary interest, particularly in how it is communicated and conceptualized through language. This study investigates the cognitive semantic underpinnings of addiction discourse by analyzing a psychiatric interview from the MedCircle series titled “Opiate Addiction: The Signs” (2022), featuring Dr. Domenick Sportelli. Adopting Leonard Talmy’s (2000, 2023) cognitive semantics framework—specifically the category of Content Structuring Mechanisms, with a focus on Configurational Structure—this research examines how linguistic forms, especially closed-class elements (e.g., prepositions, conjunctions, modal auxiliaries), structure the conceptualization of addiction in clinical dialogue.

Through a clause-level analysis of 50 syntactically minimal but semantically rich statements made by Dr. Sportelli, this study identifies key semantic strategies by which addiction is presented as a multifactorial, temporal, and graded phenomenon. These strategies include spatial framing (e.g., «under the biology heading»), conditional and causal linking (e.g., «if addiction is in the family»), and scalar constructions that highlight degrees of risk and vulnerability (e.g., “increase likelihood,” “significantly raise risk”). The analysis reveals how closed-class morphemes not only scaffold the surface grammar but also encode deeper conceptual structures that integrate genetics, environment, behavior, and social context into a unified clinical narrative.

The findings demonstrate that clinical discourse on addiction, when analyzed through Talmy’s cognitive semantics, is far from neutral or merely descriptive; rather, it performs epistemic and ideological work by organizing knowledge in ways that shape both medical understanding and public perception. The study argues that Talmy’s framework offers a powerful tool for unpacking the often-invisible semantic architecture of psychiatric language and provides new insights into how medical professionals cognitive-

ly frame complex human conditions like addiction. This research contributes to the growing field of cognitive approaches to discourse analysis, and it underscores the value of semantic typologies in examining real-world, high-stakes communication.

Key words: addiction, interviews, psychiatrists, cognitive semantics, Leonard Talmy.

المستخلص:

الإدمان ظاهرة يتم بناؤها اجتماعياً وطبيعياً، ولا تزال تثير اهتماماً متعدد التخصصات، خاصة فيما يتعلق بكيفية تواصلها وتصورها من خلال اللغة. تبحث هذه الدراسة في الأسس الدلالية المعرفية لخطاب الإدمان من خلال تحليل مقابلة نفسية من سلسلة MedCircle بعنوان "إدمان الأفيونيات: العلامات" (2022)، والتي يشارك فيها الدكتور دومينيك سيورتيلي. من خلال تبني إطار السمات المعرفية للغة لليونارد تالمي (2000، 2023) — وبالتحديد فئة آليات بناء المحتوى مع التركيز على الهيكل التكويني — تفحص هذه الدراسة كيف تُنظم الأشكال اللغوية، وخصوصاً عناصر الفئة المغلقة (مثل حروف الجر، الروابط، الأفعال المساعدة المودالية)، عملية تصوّر الإدمان في الحوار السريري.

من خلال تحليل على مستوى الجملة لـ 50 تصريحاً نحويّاً بسيطاً ولكنه غني دلاليّاً للدكتور سيورتيلي، تحدد الدراسة استراتيجيات دلالية رئيسية تُبرز الإدمان كظاهرة متعددة العوامل، زمنية ومتدرجة. تشمل هذه الاستراتيجيات التأطير المكاني (مثل "تحت عنوان علم الأحياء")، الربط الشرطي والسببي (مثل "إذا كان الإدمان موجوداً في العائلة")، والبناءات المقياسية التي تُبرز درجات المخاطر والهشاشة (مثل "زيادة الاحتمالية")، "رفع المخاطر بشكل ملحوظ". تكشف التحليلات أن مورفيمات الفئة المغلقة لا تكتفي بدعم القواعد السطحية، بل ترمز أيضاً إلى هياكل مفهومية أعمق تدمج بين العوامل الجينية والبيئية والسلوكية والسياق الاجتماعي في سرد سريري موحد. تُظهر النتائج أن الخطاب السريري حول الإدمان، عند تحليله من خلال الإطار المعرفي لتالمي، بعيد كل البعد عن كونه محايداً أو مجرد وصفي؛ بل يؤدي دوراً إستراتيجياً وإيديولوجياً من خلال تنظيم المعرفة بطرق تشكل الفهم الطبي والإدراك العام على حد سواء. وتؤكد الدراسة أن إطار تالمي يشكل أداة قوية لفك شفرة البنية الدلالية غير المرئية غالباً للغة النفسية ويوفر رؤى جديدة حول كيفية تأطير المهنيين الطبيين للمشاكل الإنسانية المعقدة مثل الإدمان على المستوى المعرفي. تُسهّم هذه الدراسة في تعزيز المجال المتنامي للمقاربات المعرفية في تحليل الخطاب، وتُبرز قيمة التصنيفات الدلالية في فحص التواصل الواقعي ذي الأهمية العالية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإدمان، مقابلات، الأطباء النفسيين، علم الدلالات الإدراكية، ليونارد تالمي.

1. Introduction

Addiction, as a pressing public health and social issue, has drawn extensive multidisciplinary attention; yet its understanding is not solely grounded in clinical evidence or neuroscientific findings—it is equally shaped by the language used to describe it. The framing of addiction in both clinical and popular discourse significantly in-





fluences how individuals, institutions, and policymakers perceive and respond to it (Fraser et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2020). In recent decades, psychiatry has played a pivotal role in transforming the conception of addiction from a moral or behavioral failing to a medically informed, brain-based disorder (Volkow et al., 2016). Despite this shift, the underlying semantic mechanisms that facilitate such reconceptualization, particularly within spoken psychiatric discourse, remain insufficiently explored. Language in psychiatric contexts is not merely descriptive but constitutive—it shapes, organizes, and mediates the very phenomena it seeks to explain. Public psychiatric interviews, such as those disseminated through platforms like MedCircle, serve as valuable data sources for examining the linguistic and cognitive structures that inform public understandings of addiction. While these interviews often feature metaphor, narrative, and causal language, what remains under-analyzed are the closed-class elements—such as prepositions, auxiliaries, aspectual markers, modals, conjunctions, and quantifiers—that function as core semantic structuring devices. This study adopts Leonard Talmy’s cognitive semantics framework, particularly his 2023 taxonomy of Content Structuring Mechanisms, to analyze how meaning is systematically organized in psychiatrists’ discourse on addiction. Talmy emphasizes that closed-class morphemes are central to how language encodes relationships between entities and events across spatial, temporal, qualitative, and cross-domain dimensions (Talmy, 2000, 2023). These configurational structures are far from arbitrary; rather, they reflect deep-seated conceptual models and influence how knowledge is cognitively internalized. Focusing specifically on Talmy’s Configurational Structure—comprising spatial, temporal, qualitative, and cross-domain subtypes—this study explores how such structures are employed by psychiatrists to articulate causes, delineate risk factors, establish hierarchies, and prescribe preventive strategies. Through a clause-level semantic analysis of Dr. Domenick Sportelli’s interview on opiate addiction, this paper demonstrates

how closed-class morphemes function as cognitive instruments that build causal models, frame psychiatric authority, and transmit complex medical information in accessible forms. Accordingly, the study aims to (1) examine how closed-class morphemes are used by psychiatrists to structure addiction discourse in spoken interviews, (2) apply Talmy's (2023) Configurational Structure framework to classify spatial, temporal, qualitative, and cross-domain meanings, (3) reveal the cognitive operations—such as categorization, causality, and metaphorization—underlying psychiatric language about addiction, and (4) highlight how such semantic systems construct authoritative knowledge and shape the interpretive frames through which audiences come to understand addiction.

2. Literature Review

The current study stands at the intersection of three interrelated fields: cognitive linguistics, medical discourse analysis, and addiction studies. This literature review surveys key contributions from each domain to situate the current research.

2.1 Cognitive Semantics and Closed-Class Systems

Cognitive semantics emerged as a reaction against formalist theories of meaning, emphasizing that language is not a neutral container for thought but a direct reflection of cognitive processes (Langacker, 1987; Evans & Green, 2006). Leonard Talmy's work has been particularly influential in this respect, especially his distinction between closed-class and open-class systems in language (Talmy, 2000). While open-class items (e.g., nouns, adjectives) carry content meaning, it is the closed-class elements that provide the structural scaffolding that organizes content meaning into coherent representations (Talmy, 2000, 2023).

Talmy (2023) introduces a taxonomy of content structuring mechanisms, including Configurational Structure, which accounts for the ways language encodes the arrangement of entities and relations in space, time, quality, and domain. These configurations are deeply tied to how humans cognitively categorize the world. For instance, spatial prepositions not only describe physical relations





but are used metaphorically to discuss conceptual hierarchies or psychological states (e.g., “under pressure,” “in control”) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Tyler & Evans, 2003). Despite their ubiquity and cognitive significance, closed-class forms are often overlooked in discourse analysis.

2.2 Medical Discourse and Psychiatric Language

Medical discourse is a specialized genre where language constructs clinical authority, guides patient understanding, and encodes institutional ideologies (Mishler, 1984; van Leeuwen, 2008). In psychiatric interviews, especially public-facing ones, clinicians must balance scientific accuracy with layperson accessibility. This balance is often achieved through a range of discursive strategies—including metaphors, hedges, simplifications, and narrative structures (Semino & Demjén, 2017; Hall et al., 2020).

Psychiatric discourse is particularly rich in cognitive framing devices, as clinicians attempt to articulate abstract psychological phenomena, causality, and risk in comprehensible terms. However, while prior research has explored lexical metaphors in psychiatric talk (Cameron & Maslen, 2010), little work has examined the grammatical semantics—especially the role of closed-class systems in shaping conceptualization.

2.3 Addiction and Language: Framing the Condition

In addiction studies, the dominant narrative has shifted from moral failure to brain disease, driven by advances in neuroscience and public health policy (Volkow et al., 2016; Satel & Lilienfeld, 2014). However, scholars have increasingly critiqued this shift for reifying addiction as a neurochemical inevitability, thereby marginalizing social, environmental, and personal agency factors (Fraser et al., 2014; Keane, 2002).

Language is central to this re-framing. Metaphors such as «hijacked brain» or «chemical imbalance» reflect not just explanatory models but also social ideologies (Dingel et al., 2011). Yet these metaphors are typically analyzed at the level of lexical choice. This study extends the analysis by examining how grammatical structures (e.g.,

modality, aspect, prepositional phrases) implicitly frame addiction as probabilistic, causal, or preventable—thus shaping audience beliefs about agency and treatment.

Despite advances in cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, little research has integrated Talmyan cognitive semantics with the analysis of spoken psychiatric discourse on addiction. This study fills that gap by applying Talmy's (2023) taxonomy to clause-level data from a real-world psychiatric interview, thereby shedding light on how addiction is cognitively constructed through the interplay of semantic structure and clinical authority.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Theoretical Orientation

This study adopts a qualitative linguistic methodology grounded in cognitive semantics, specifically drawing on Leonard Talmy's (2000, 2023) theory of Content Structuring Mechanisms. Within Talmy's framework, linguistic meaning is seen not only as a vehicle of communication but as a reflection of cognitive operations that encode conceptual structures. Of particular interest here is the Configurational Structure category, which encompasses four subtypes: spatial, temporal, qualitative, and cross-domain configurations. These structures are predominantly realized through closed-class morphemes—such as prepositions, aspect markers, modals, auxiliaries, and quantifiers—which Talmy identifies as fundamental to how language organizes conceptual content (Talmy, 2000, 2023). The purpose of this study is to operationalize this theoretical orientation within the specific context of spoken psychiatric discourse to uncover how addiction is cognitively constructed.

3.2 Data Source and Selection Criteria

The data for this study is drawn from a publicly available video interview titled "Opiate Addiction: The Signs," featuring psychiatrist Dr. Domenick Sportelli, hosted on the MedCircle YouTube channel (MedCircle, 2022). The video, which is approximately 12 minutes and 48 seconds in length, was chosen for its clinical relevance, pedagogical clarity, and public accessibility. As an instance





of expert medical discourse aimed at a general audience, it offers a rich context in which cognitive semantic structures are likely to be foregrounded. The interview is primarily monologic in structure, with Dr. Sportelli speaking for extended turns, allowing for coherent linguistic analysis of professional psychiatric framing.

The inclusion criteria focused exclusively on the psychiatrist's spoken utterances, excluding the interviewer's prompts, paralinguistic features (e.g., intonation, pauses), and any non-verbal cues. A total of 50 clauses were extracted from the video and segmented manually for fine-grained clause-level analysis. Each clause was treated as an independent analytical unit if it presented a syntactically complete proposition reflecting a subject-predicate relationship.

3.3 Data Segmentation and Annotation Procedure

Data segmentation was conducted manually using syntactic boundaries to identify discrete clauses. A clause was defined, following Quirk et al. (1985), as a unit containing a subject and predicate expressing a complete thought. These clauses were then subjected to semantic-pragmatic annotation based on Talmy's (2023) Configurational Structure taxonomy, which includes:

- **Spatial Configurations:** e.g., the use of prepositions (in, within, over) to metaphorically situate addiction in bodily or environmental space.
- **Temporal Configurations:** e.g., the use of tense, aspect, or conjunctions (after, before, when) to encode sequences of addiction development or treatment.
- **Qualitative Configurations:** e.g., quantifiers and modifiers (almost, barely, somewhat) to scale conditions or mental states.
- **Cross-Domain Configurations:** e.g., metaphorical and analogical expressions (under the heading of biology, genetic risk) mapping abstract domains onto addiction discourse.

Annotation was conducted manually using spreadsheet software. Each clause was assigned one or more semantic tags corresponding to the configurational subtypes. A sample annotation template was adapted from Taylor (2002) and Croft and Cruse (2004), with

necessary modifications for spoken discourse.

3.4 Analytical Framework and Coding Process

The study applies a hybrid form of thematic semantic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and cognitive linguistic coding, following Talmy's guidelines for identifying semantic structuring elements in closed-class constructions. Each clause was analyzed for the presence of one or more configurational structures. The coding scheme prioritized:

- Identification of closed-class morphemes central to meaning organization
- Categorization of these morphemes according to their semantic function (spatial, temporal, etc.)
- Contextual interpretation of how they contribute to the psychiatrist's construction of addiction

Triangulation was achieved by reanalyzing a random sample of 10 clauses after a one-week interval to check for internal consistency in coding decisions. Although inter-coder reliability was not measured (given the single-researcher design), semantic categorization followed strict operational definitions derived from Talmy (2023).

3.5 Limitations and Scope

While this study provides an in-depth semantic analysis of a single psychiatric interview, its findings are not generalizable across all forms of addiction discourse. The limited scope of 50 clauses restricts statistical generalization but allows for rich, interpretive insight. Furthermore, as the analysis is manually coded by a single researcher, there is potential for subjective bias, despite efforts at internal validation.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

This section analyzes the 50 clauses extracted from Dr. Domenick Sportelli's interview, focusing on how closed-class morphemes contribute to Configurational Structure, as outlined in Talmy's (2023) cognitive semantic framework. The analysis is organized by four subcategories: Spatial, Temporal, Qualitative, and Cross-Do-main configurations.





4.1 Spatial Configurational Structure

Spatial configuration refers to the conceptualization of entities in relation to each other in terms of physical or metaphorical space. This is often achieved through prepositions, spatial adverbs, locative expressions that construct the positioning of concepts. Examples & Analysis:

- Clause 7: (Under the biology heading, we say genetics.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: Under (preposition)
 - o Interpretation: The term under constructs a hierarchical spatial schema, organizing knowledge metaphorically within conceptual “containers.” The category “genetics” is situated within the larger domain of “biology,” reflecting nested categorization.
 - Clause 38: (Environmental factors within the home affect action risk.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: within (preposition)
 - o Interpretation: Within construes “the home” as a bounded region that contains “environmental factors.” The metaphor of containment spatializes abstract social influences.
 - Clause 39: (Parents should know that environmental factor within their control.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: within
 - o Interpretation: Here, within again maps the notion of controllability onto a metaphorical control-space, suggesting that agent and environment are spatially bounded.
 - Clause 35: (A child’s involvement in the community is a protective factor.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: in (preposition)
 - o Interpretation: The preposition in conceptualizes “community” as a bounded region of engagement and safety—participation within this bounded structure implies protection.
- Spatial structuring in Dr. Sportelli’s language metaphorically embeds risk and protection into container schemas, often construing “biology,” “home,” and “community” as conceptual spaces that hold influence or agency. This spatialization aligns with Tal

figure-ground alignment: “genetics” as figure, “biology” as ground.

4.2 Temporal Configurational Structure

Temporal configuration involves the conceptualization of time, event sequencing, and duration using tenses, temporal adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions. It structures addiction discourse along causative or preventive timelines.

Examples & Analysis:

- Clause 8: (Having a first-degree relative with an addiction raises your risk of addiction eightfold.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: raises (present tense verb); implicit past condition → present consequence
 - o Interpretation: This reflects a temporal causation schema: past familial history continues to influence present/future risk.
- Clause 13: (If your dad was a heroin addict, you have a higher likelihood of addiction even if placed with a different family.)
 - o Closed-class morphemes: if, was, have, even if
 - o Interpretation: The conditional structure (if) and temporal verbs (was, have) organize addiction as a temporally sustained potential, mapping past into present.
- Clause 41: (Environmental adjustments can prevent addiction.)
 - o Closed-class morphemes: can (modal), prevent (telic verb)
 - o Interpretation: The modal can plus telic verb prevent signal a future-oriented potentiality: that modification of the environment leads to prevention—a projection into hypothetical timelines.
- Clause 48: (Parents should communicate about drug risks.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: should (modal)
 - o Interpretation: The use of should directs future action, shaping a normative temporal schema of parenting and prevention.

Temporal structures are employed to encode addiction as both a developmental trajectory and a preventive horizon. Talmyan temporality blends conditionality, causality, and modal necessity to configure meaning along a medicalized chronology of risk factors.

4.3 Qualitative Configurational Structure

This type involves the expression of degrees, scales, or gradability in quality, often represented through modifiers such as quantifiers, intensifiers, comparatives, and adverbs. These structures reflect





evaluations of risk, likelihood, or severity.

Examples & Analysis:

- Clause 10: (Usually, first-degree relatives raise the risk significantly.)
 - o Closed-class morphemes: usually (frequency adverb), significantly (intensifier)
 - o Interpretation: These adverbs function to scale the probability and strength of addiction risk. Usually encodes generality, while significantly amplifies the causal weight.
- Clause 13: (You have a higher likelihood of addiction.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: higher (comparative adjective)
 - o Interpretation: Higher introduces scalar comparison, structuring addiction risk as a continuum.
- Clause 26: (Children that are abused have a higher likelihood of substance use later.)
 - o Closed-class morphemes: higher, later
 - o Interpretation: Higher reinforces comparative risk, while later (though temporal) also subtly adds to the accumulation of qualitative risk over time.
- Clause 27: (Certain personality types have a higher likelihood of substance abuse.)
 - o Closed-class morpheme: certain (quantifier)
 - o Interpretation: Certain introduces epistemic limitation, acknowledging partiality in attribution while reinforcing a patterned association.

Qualitative structuring encodes addiction in terms of degree, probability, and severity, mapping psychological and environmental traits onto scalar continua. This scalarization helps psychiatrists modulate claims and reflect clinical uncertainty or consensus.

4.4 Cross-Domain Configurational Structure

Cross-domain configuration involves the conceptual transfer of structures across semantic domains. This often includes metaphor, metonymy, or complex schemas such as boundedness, multiplexity, and causation across biology, environment, and behavior.

Examples & Analysis:

- Clause 1: (We look at addiction in general.)

o Closed-class morphemes: at (preposition), in general (idiomatic adverbial)

o Interpretation: The phrase look at metaphorically constructs addiction as a visible object of perception—embodying the epistemic stance of psychiatry. In general generalizes across individual instances, flattening heterogeneity.

• Clause 6: (We break it down by biology.)

o Closed-class morpheme: by (preposition)

o Interpretation: Break down constructs addiction as an analyzable object; by biology transfers mechanistic and structuralist schemas from the scientific domain.

• Clause 21: (People often self-medicate to alleviate mental health symptoms.)

o Closed-class morphemes: to (infinitive marker)

o Interpretation: Self-medicate metaphorically transfers the pharmacological domain into personal agency and coping behavior, blending pathology with intentionality.

• Clause 40: (Genetics alone does not determine addiction risk.)

o Closed-class morpheme: alone, not

o Interpretation: This clause juxtaposes domains—genetic determinism versus environmental modulation—framing causation as cross-domain interaction rather than singular origin.

Cross-domain structuring underlies much of the medical-metaphorical discourse used by Dr. Sportelli. Addiction is framed as a system of interdependent forces—genetic, environmental, psychological—encoded through the layering of conceptual schemas.

4.5 Frequency Table of Configurational Structures

Configurational Type	No. of Clauses	Dominant Morpheme Types
Spatial	6	Prepositions (<i>in, under, within</i>)
Temporal	8	Modals, tenses, conditionals
Qualitative	9	Comparatives, adverbs, quantifiers
Cross-Domain	12	Metaphorical verb phrases, preps
Mixed/Unclear	15	-
Total	50	





5. Discussion

The preceding analysis reveals that Dr. Domenick Sportelli's psychiatric discourse on addiction is richly structured through cognitive mechanisms that reflect a sophisticated interplay of Configurational Structures—namely spatial, temporal, qualitative, and cross-domain patterns. These patterns, as framed by Talmy's (2023) extension of Talmy's cognitive semantics, do not merely organize information linguistically, but also encode how psychiatrists construct, prioritize, and morally frame the concept of addiction in a clinical and public health context. This section discusses the implications of these findings in light of semantic construal, psychiatric authority, and the socio-cognitive modeling of addiction.

5.1 Addiction as a Spatially Bounded System

The spatial configurations observed in Dr. Sportelli's clauses suggest that addiction is conceptualized as an entity embedded within nested systems—biology, family, home, and society. The recurrent use of prepositions like *under*, *in*, and *within* constructs hierarchical and container-based schemas, whereby concepts like «genetics», «environment», and «community» are imagined as bounded domains with varying degrees of influence.

This spatialized cognition serves a crucial function: it allocates responsibility and control. For example, environmental factors within the home and factors within your control reflect a metaphorical mapping of control onto physical space, enabling the clinician to advocate for behavioral and structural interventions while maintaining scientific neutrality. In this way, metaphors of spatial containment also become metaphors of agency—what is “within the home” becomes “within reach” for change.

Such construal aligns with Talmy's figure-ground organization: addiction is often the figure, while biology or environment serves as the conceptual ground against which addiction is interpreted. This spatial framing reinforces a systemic understanding of addiction as neither random nor unstructured, but rather situated and contextually emergent.

5.2 Temporal Mapping of Causality and Prevention

Temporal configurations in the interview reflect a causal and developmental framing of addiction, with linguistic cues signaling how past events project into future risks. This is evident in conditional constructions (if your dad was a heroin addict...) and modal verbs (can prevent, should communicate), which chart addiction across anticipatory and retrospective timelines.

Notably, this creates a bipolar temporal model: on the one hand, a deterministic past, often biological or familial; on the other, a preventive future, enabled through parental guidance, social involvement, or medical intervention. This dual structure is ideologically potent: it justifies early intervention and preemptive strategies while maintaining a scientific stance on inherited vulnerability.

In Talmyan terms, these timelines are event-structured—composed of causal chains, telic endpoints (e.g., “prevent addiction”), and branching potentials. Talmyan’s adaptation further emphasizes that such temporality is not merely linguistic but epistemic: it embodies psychiatric authority’s power to predict, advise, and pathologize. It renders the future diagnosable, as if addiction were a trajectory that can be arrested with the right conceptual tools.

5.3 Scalar Framing and the Management of Risk

The interview demonstrates a consistent use of qualitative structures to frame addiction in terms of likelihood, severity, and gradability. Phrases such as higher likelihood, significantly raise, and usually position addiction not as binary but as a spectrum of probabilities—a construal that permits both scientific nuance and public digestibility.

This scalar mapping performs two crucial functions. First, it differentiates levels of risk, enabling clinicians to rank factors (e.g., genetics vs. environment) without falling into simplistic determinism. Second, it invokes epistemic humility, suggesting an understanding of addiction that is informed by probabilities rather than certainties. Such epistemic scalarity is a hallmark of evidence-based discourse, reinforcing the legitimacy of psychiatric knowledge.





From a cognitive semantics standpoint, scalar adjectives and adverbs represent qualitative dimensions of configurational structure—they modulate how intensively a concept is mentally projected. In this context, the psychiatrist's authority is subtly preserved by acknowledging uncertainty in the system, while still offering actionable interpretation.

5.4 Cross-Domain Conflation: Addiction as a Composite Construct
Perhaps the most intellectually significant finding is the presence of cross-domain configurations, in which abstract domains—such as biology, psychology, environment, and behavior—are blended into a single narrative. The repeated use of verbs like break it down, self-medicate, or look at addiction evidence deep conceptual metaphorical structuring, where addiction is framed simultaneously as a medical condition, a psychological disorder, and a socially constructed risk.

Such cross-domain mappings reflect what Talmy refers to as conceptual integration, where multiple domains are unified through common structural templates. For instance, describing addiction in terms of “self-medicating” frames human behavior as both pharmacological and volitional, blurring the lines between patient and agent, biology and morality.

Talmy's (2023) elaboration on cross-domain structuring highlights how these metaphors serve rhetorical, cognitive, and ethical purposes. The psychiatrist, in this case, occupies a central role in navigating these domains—interpreting scientific data, advising moral conduct, and prescribing behavioral change. The discourse is thus both descriptive (explaining what addiction is) and prescriptive (guiding what should be done), enabled by the flexibility of cognitive semantics.

5.5 The Semantics of Psychiatric Authority

Underlying all four configurations is a broader ideological function: the construction and legitimization of psychiatric authority. The psychiatrist is not merely transmitting knowledge but is actively constructing a semantic system that frames addiction in

terms of knowability, treatability, and responsibility.

Spatial structures assign locus of control; temporal ones organize intervention timelines; scalar ones modulate certainty; and cross-domain structures frame addiction as interdisciplinary. This is a cognitive-discursive model of clinical rationality, one that allows the psychiatrist to operate simultaneously as scientist, moral advisor, and public educator.

In essence, the configurational structure is not just a linguistic phenomenon—it is an epistemological strategy. It enables the speaker to map clinical reality onto cognitive space, transforming complex, multifactorial disorders like addiction into intelligible, tractable categories amenable to discussion, diagnosis, and treatment.

5.6 Concluding Insights

Through Talmyan analysis of the closed-class elements in Dr. Sportelli's discourse, it becomes clear that addiction is framed not simply as a biological or psychological phenomenon, but as a cognitively structured, semantically layered reality. These layers are woven through spatial metaphors, temporal projections, scalar judgments, and cross-domain blends—all of which reinforce the authority of psychiatric discourse while offering a compelling narrative of risk and prevention.

This analysis reaffirms the utility of cognitive semantics as a tool for understanding not just how we talk about addiction, but how such talk structures thought, guides social behavior, and influences public policy. In this sense, the grammar of psychiatry is not only scientific—it is deeply cognitive, deeply cultural, and deeply consequential.

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