

# The use of the Descriptive Phenomenological Approach to reveal the essence of the lived experience of Impaired Sensation in the feet related to Multiple Sclerosis



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## Context of the Research

- Impaired sensation is a commonly reported symptom in people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) (MS Society 2017).
- Literature has demonstrated reduced sensation in the feet is linked to poor balance and an abnormal gait pattern in people with MS (Uszynski, Purtill & Coote 2015; Citaker et al, 2011; Thoumie and Mevellec 2002).
- Quantitative studies have highlighted the importance of this phenomenon, however, they represent the external, observer's construction of the physical reality of the symptom, and not the embodied lived experience of those with MS.

## Research question:

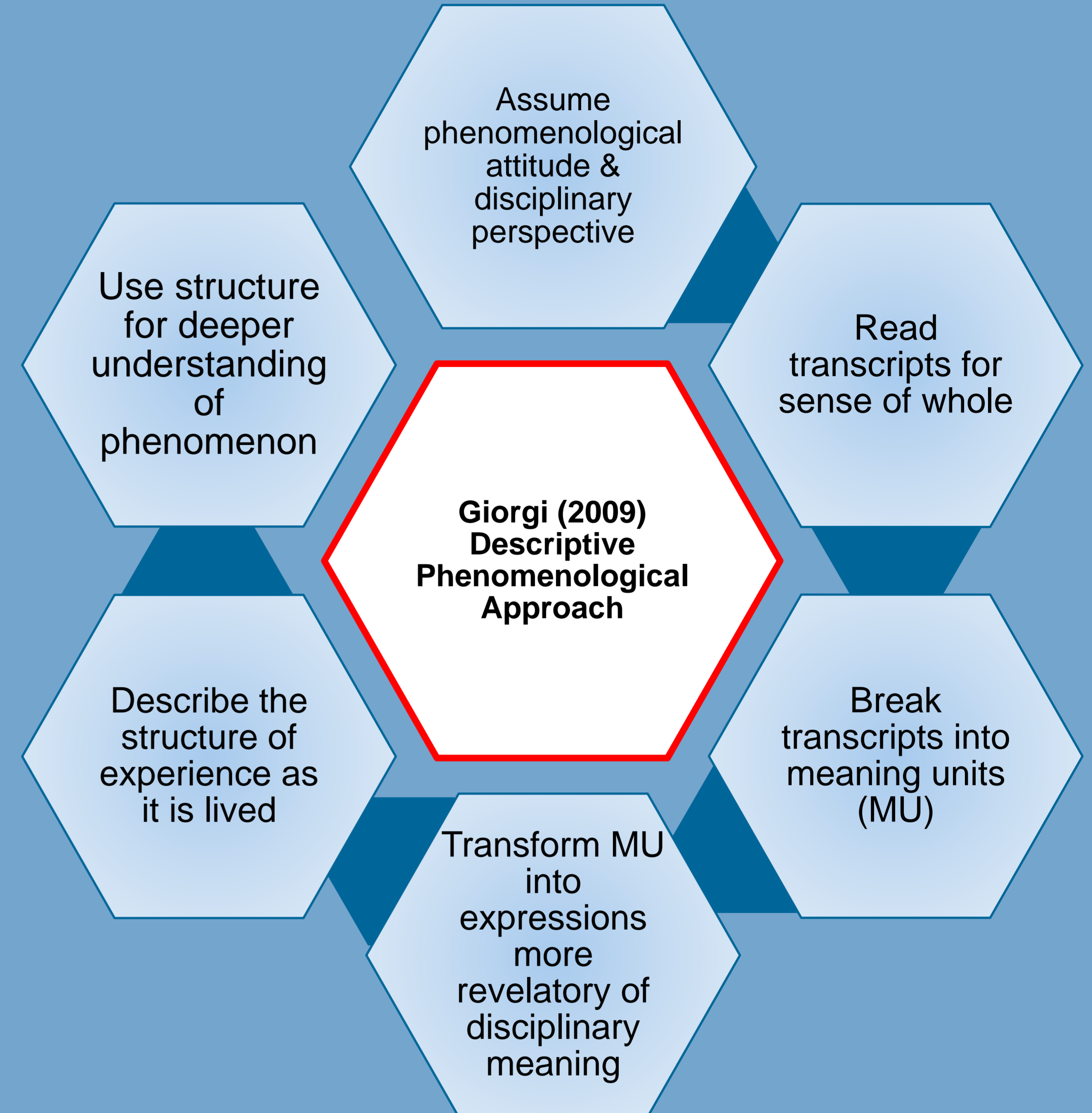
**What are the lived experiences of impaired sensation in the feet related to Multiple Sclerosis?**

## Research Method

Giorgi's (2009) Descriptive Phenomenological Approach was used to describe the essence of the lived experience as it is present to the participants.

## Data Collection

- 5 participants with MS were interviewed face to face whilst the researcher adopted the phenomenological attitude.
- Participants were asked to describe their experience of impaired sensation in their feet as concretely and in as much detail as possible.



## Rationale for use of the Method

- It enables the researcher to present the lived experience as it is explained by the participants, without interpretation or the creation of a theory.
- Bracketing encourages a naïve approach to the phenomenon and allows for richer descriptions to be obtained in open interviews
- The method interrogates the human lifeworld as lived, and allows for experiential phenomena to be explored.
- It is a reproducible, systematic method for analysis.

## Preliminary Outcomes

- Analysis is ongoing.
- Preliminary findings have highlighted the wide ranging implications of impaired sensation in the feet related to MS including the experienced change in the sense of the body and the self.
- A better understanding of the phenomenon may help clinicians to prepare for therapeutic encounters with people living with similar conditions. This may improve therapeutic relationships and lead to more meaningful person centered care.

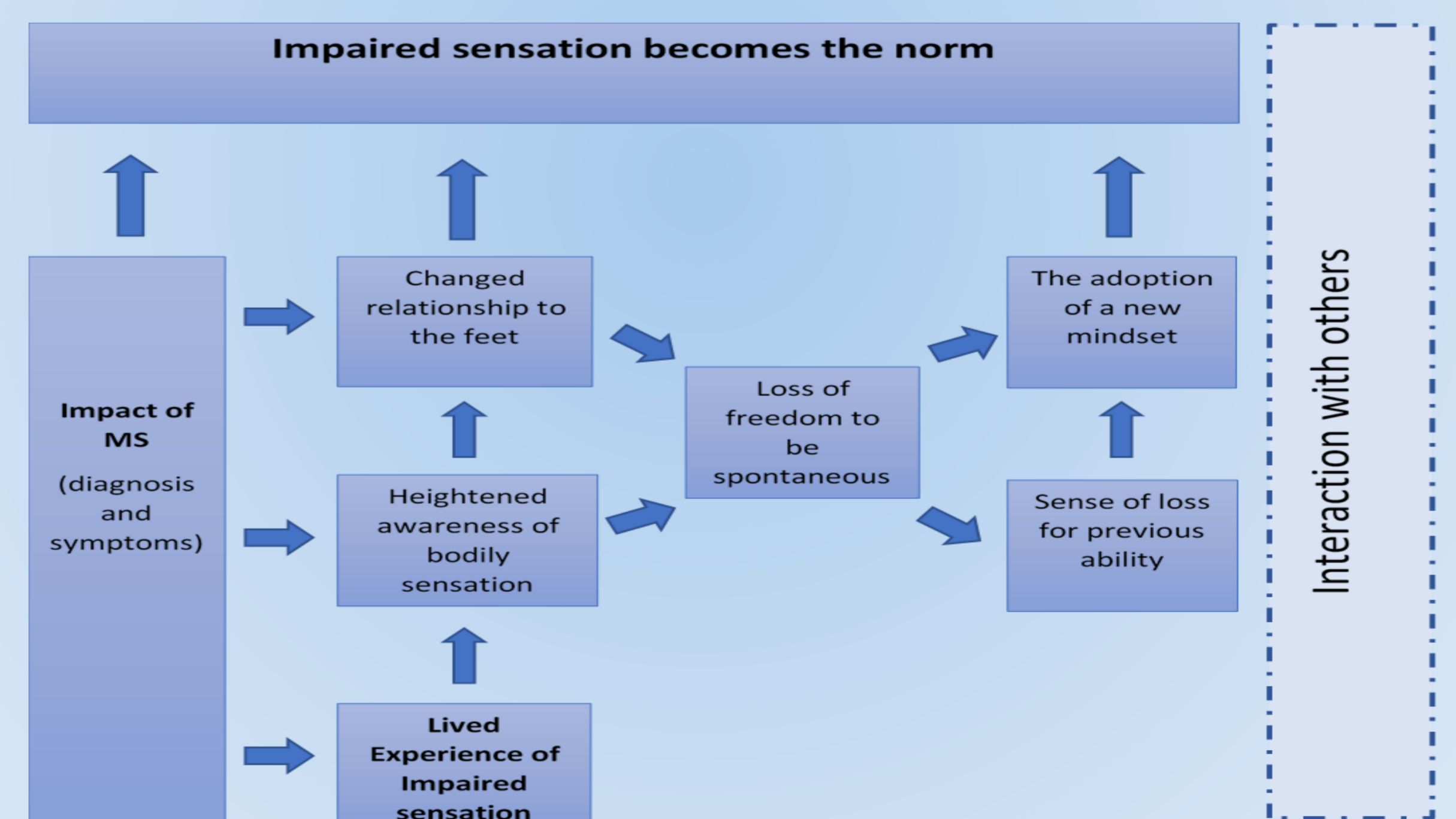


Figure 1. Preliminary Structure: Interrelated key constituents of impaired sensation in the feet related to MS

## References

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