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Фразеологическая репрезентация пространства стихии
в английском языке

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Аннотация. Цель исследования – выявить наиболее значимые и типичные модели метафоризации непространственных объектов на основе переосмысления пространственных образов в английском языке посредством изучения пространственной лексики в совокупности прямых и переносных метафорических значений. На основе анализа метафорических значений, созданных в результате различного переосмысления пространственных значений, в статье выявляются актуальные представления при восприятии пространства носителями английского языка посредством определения семантических признаков, выступающих мотивационной основой метафорической номинации. В статье охарактеризованы основные сферы жизни человека (социальная, интеллектуальная, психическая) через метафорические значения, создаваемые пространственными существительными с семантикой пространства стихии, входящими в состав идиоматических выражений. Представлен процесс создания метафорической модели через определение направления метафорического переноса и выявление семантических аспектов, служащих его мотивацией, изучение которой позволяет обнаружить культурно-языковые особенности рассматриваемых лексических единиц. Научная новизна данного исследования состоит в том, что метафоры английского языка, репрезентирующие пространство стихии, рассматриваются в работе в русле когнитивного подхода; анализируются лексико-семантические варианты, отражающие как физические, так и нефизические объекты; выявляются релевантные для пространственной и непространственной номинации признаки, описываются реализуемые при этом метафорические модели. В результате исследования определены наиболее релевантные модели, актуализирующие социальную, психическую и интеллектуальную сферы деятельности человека, анализ которых позволяет выявить лингвокультурную специфику рассматриваемых идиом; выявлено наличие закономерностей формирования вторичных обозначений непространственных объектов на базе пространственной метафоры для представления базовых сфер жизнедеятельности человека.

EN

Phraseological representation of the elemental space in English

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Abstract. The research aims to identify the most significant and typical models of metaphORIZATION of non-spatial objects based on the reinterpretation of spatial images in the English language by studying spatial vocabulary in a set of direct and figurative metaphorical meanings. Based on the analysis of metaphorical meanings that resulted from the figurative rethinking of spatial meanings, the current ideas in the perception of space by native English speakers are identified by defining the semantic features that serve as the motivational basis for metaphorical nomination. The article characterizes the main spheres of human life (social, intellectual, mental) through metaphorical meanings created by spatial nouns with the semantics of the elemental space included in idiomatic expressions. The process of metaphORIZATION described is carried out by identifying the direction of metaphorical transfer and motivational semantic aspects, which allows us to point out the linguocultural specificity of the lexical units used in the texts under consideration. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that metaphors of the English language representing the elemental space are considered in the work within the framework of cognitive linguistics. In addition, lexical and semantic variants reflecting both physical and non-physical objects are analyzed, features relevant to spatial and non-spatial nomination are identified, and metaphorical models realized are described. As a result of the research, the most relevant models that actualize the social, mental and intellectual spheres of human activity were identified. Their analysis allows us to determine the linguocultural specificity of the idioms under study. We have revealed the presence of patterns in the formation of secondary designations of non-spatial objects based on spatial metaphor for representation of basic spheres of human activity.

Introduction

The relevance of the research is determined by modern trends in linguistics, which focus on the study of semantically interconnected categories covering various aspects of human life. These aspects were identified during the analysis of metaphorical ideas about the elemental space using the example of the English language. In the current conditions, when language studies seek to better understand how language reflects individual and collective experience, the study of these metaphors becomes especially relevant. Research in this area involves creating a more complete picture of the relationship between language and thinking, revealing the internal mechanisms that govern the formation of semantics and its linguistic expression.

To achieve this aim, it is important to solve the following tasks:

- to characterize the mechanisms of figurative meaning formation for Space Elements idioms;
- to identify the most significant and typical models of metaphorization and determine their motivating features;
- to highlight the key characteristics that indicate the peculiarities of perception of space by native English speakers, and to provide a linguocultural interpretation of these aspects.

To successfully solve the tasks, the following methods have been used: the descriptive method, which involves the selection, classification, and description of lexical material, and implemented in the techniques of component analysis, aimed at identifying functionally significant components of the original and resulting meanings, as well as the cognitive-pragmatic method, which made it possible to establish and describe the cognitive mechanisms underlying the construction of the metaphorical meaning represented by the idioms of the elemental space.

The material of the study was idiomatic expressions of the modern English language (100 idiomatic expressions), which include the nouns “water”, “air”, “land” (“earth”, “ground”), selected by continuous sampling from The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms (edited by Judith Siefring. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2004).

The work also included data from The Largest Idiom Dictionary (<https://www.theidioms.com>); Compact Oxford English Dictionary (<http://oxforddictionaries.com>); Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>); The Free Dictionary by Farlex (<https://www.thefreedictionary.com>), as well as contexts that illustrate the functioning of the studied lexical units.

The achievement of the set goals was made possible by the theoretical basis set out in research concerning language resources and methods used to convey spatial localization (Всеволодова, Владимирский, 1982; Маляр, 2002; Шамне, 2000; Яковлева, 1994; Jackendoff, Landau, 1991); spatial metaphor, cognitive metaphor (Будаев, Чудинов, 2013; 2021; Вольф, 1988; Колесов, 2021; Лакофф, Джонсон, 1988; Скребцова, 2018; Xie, Zhang, 2014).

The practical significance of the research lies in the ability to apply the data obtained in theoretical courses of lexicology of the English language and linguocultural studies. The research findings can serve as an incentive for studying spatial idioms.

Discussion and results

Spatial metaphor is the most effective cognitive and linguistic structure, and space is the fundamental principle of perception and thinking. Spatial concepts formed based on spatial perception are the most important metaphorical sources for the formation and understanding of other complex non-spatial concepts (Будаев, Чудинов, 2013, p. 52-65; Скребцова, 2018; Колесов, 2021, p. 15-159). Metaphors are largely a product of the culture in which a person develops (Будаев, Чудинов, 2021, p. 22-36). The concept of space is one of the fundamental concepts of culture, one of the main life realities that determine a person’s judgment of the world and it plays a key role in human thinking (Шамне, 2000, p. 43-50). The forms of language embody the results of a person’s cognitive and transformative activity, “directed from the very beginning at their awareness of their place in the surrounding spatial and temporal world, subject to direct sensory perception and influence” (Ибрагимова, 1990, p. 64). Language includes the integration of spatial and non-spatial (social, mental, intellectual) spheres. Social relations can depend on such spatial factors as distance, occupancy, coordination parameters, configuration, boundaries, size, structure of space, its occupancy and its functional characteristics. Space refers to the physical world around us, including the sky, land and sea. Phraseological representation of the elemental space in English reflects cultural ideas, symbolism, and is associated with various natural elements, such as water, earth and air. The scope of analysis includes idiomatic expressions in the metaphorical meaning; their original meaning is made up of the direct meanings of their constituent lexical units, namely spatial nouns with the semantics of the elemental space. By “element” we mean a substance that a person perceives through space. By “elemental space” we mean a space occupying a large area, filled with air, earth and water substances. By “air space” we mean free space above the ground, filled with a substance necessary for the life of humans, animals and plants, and by “water space” we mean a large space on the ground, filled with a substance that is a colorless liquid that forms water bodies. The space of the earth is a space filled with a solid substance capable of supporting a person. We believe that the images of the elemental space serve as a source for metaphorical understanding of social, intellectual and mental spheres. The spatial nouns “water”, “air”, “land” (“earth”, “ground”) included in idiomatic expressions act as a source of metaphorical understanding. We also highlight the space of the sky, which we understand as the visible space above the surface of the earth, filled with an air substance. Lexical units denoting the space of the elements in the original meaning contain spatial semantics: **water**: *a liquid without*

colour, smell or taste that falls like rain, is in lakes, rivers and seas, and is used for drinking, washing, etc.; **air**: *the mixture of gases that surrounds the earth and that we breathe, the space above the ground, especially high above the ground*; **land (earth)**: *the world; the planet that we live on, the surface of the earth that is not seen* (Compact Oxford English Dictionary). The presented dictionary definitions contain the components of interpretation “distance”, “place”, “location”, indicating the spatial relations denoted by the corresponding lexemes.

The earth environment is an area capable of supporting human existence and providing the necessary stability. The earth space is under human feet, it is filled with a substance that is perceived as solid and motionless. The earth space is considered a place of human habitation, belonging to people and serving as a starting point, this space is perceived as a native place of life, familiar and close. It is metaphorically interpreted as a sphere of activity in which a person feels like a master and is protected from any external influences. The analysis of phraseological units containing the spatial noun “earth” (*land, ground*) allowed us to reveal that in the social sphere, based on the semantics of the earth space, an image of stability, security, community of ideas and views is created. The spatial semantic feature ‘*coordination parameters (bottom)*’ that motivates the transfer is rethought. For example: the idiom “*to be on solid ground*” is metaphorically thought of as ‘*to be in a position of stability*’ (The Largest Idiom Dictionary). The semantic feature ‘*coordination parameters (bottom)*’, when rethought, motivates the designation of the state of stability in affairs: *I feel like I’m finally on solid ground again now that I’ve got a new job* (The Largest Idiom Dictionary). The idiom “*back to earth*” has the figurative meaning ‘*regaining a realistic view of or attitude about something*’ (The Free Dictionary by Farlex), where the semantic feature ‘*coordination parameters (bottom)*’, when rethought, denotes a realistic attitude towards something: *Those newlyweds think that marriage is utterly blissful, but they’ll come back to earth soon enough* (The Largest Idiom Dictionary). These contexts demonstrate the relevance of spatial features that can act as a motivational basis for nominating objects of the non-spatial (social) sphere. In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the model “Elemental Space → Social sphere” is realized: ESps (elemental space sphere) ‘*coordination parameters (bottom)*’ => SS (social sphere) ‘*realistic*’, ‘*stability*’; ESps ‘*border (absence of restrictions)*’ => SS ‘*shared beliefs or interests*’, ‘*a foundation for mutual understanding*’ in the idiom “*common ground*”.

In the mental sphere, the earthly space is metaphorically thought of as something reasonable, reliable, and real. The earth in this case represents calm and composure, emphasizing the ability to stay down to earth amid chaos. The spatial semantic feature ‘*coordination parameters (bottom)*’ is realized by such semantic features as ‘*sensible*’, ‘*calm*’, ‘*utterly devoted to something or someone*’, ‘*extremely loyal and reliable*’ (the idioms “*to have one’s feet on the ground*”, “*down to the ground*”, “*to be grounded*”). In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the model “Elemental Space → Mental sphere” is realized: ESps ‘*coordination parameters (bottom)*’ => MS (mental sphere) ‘*sensible*’, ‘*calm*’, ‘*unpretentious*’, ‘*utterly devoted*’, ‘*loyal and reliable*’. In the metaphorical understanding of the intellectual sphere, the earthly element is the basis for the formation of both positive and negative human qualities, such as unusual, unique, genuine, very good or worthy, morally sound (the idioms “*like nothing on earth*”, “*the salt of the earth*”), untidy, unattractive, evil, without good qualities, worthless (the idioms “*like nothing on earth*”, “*the scum of the earth*”). When transferred, the semantics of filling the space is actualized, where there is an indication of the degree and nature of its filling. In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the model “Elemental Space → Intellectual sphere” is realized: ESps ‘*filling*’ => IAS (intellectual activity sphere) ‘*unusual*’, ‘*unique*’, ‘*genuine*’, ‘*very good*’, ‘*worthy*’, ‘*morally sound*’, ‘*untidy*’, ‘*unattractive*’, ‘*evil*’, ‘*without good qualities*’, ‘*worthless*’. These contextual examples – “*Mrs. Jones is the salt of the earth. She is the first to help anyone in trouble; Don’t worry, even with all his success, Robert is still the salt of the earth. He donates most of his salary to charity and volunteers weekly at the hospital*” (The Free Dictionary by Farlex) – confirm that the named spatial semantic feature served as the basis for the formation of figurative meanings.

The water elemental space seems unknown and unexplored to a person. In the social sphere, water is often thought of as an obstacle in business. For example, in the idiomatic expression “*come hell or high water*” – ‘*no matter what difficulties may potentially stand in your way*’ (The Largest Idiom Dictionary), the semantic feature ‘*significant size*’, when rethought, motivates the designation of obstacles, difficulties that arise in business. In metaphorical transfers, the semantics indicating the nature of the water substance filling the space is also actualized. For example, “*in hot water*” – ‘*in trouble or state of shame, find yourself in a serious situation where you could be punished, provoke anger by your actions and open yourself up to criticism or disgrace*’ (The Largest Idiom Dictionary), the spatial semantic feature ‘*filling (character)*’ serves as the basis for the formation of a figurative meaning expressed by such semantic features as ‘*in trouble*’, ‘*a state of shame*’, ‘*in a serious situation*’. In the idiomatic expression “*head above water*”, which means ‘*to succeed to survive in bad financial situations, to keep itself out of trouble in any difficult situation, to manage to live well even in financial difficulties, to keep up with some difficult work or task in unfavourable circumstances (if you do not keep your head above water you will drown). Typically used when you are “drowning” in work or debt*’ (The Largest Idiom Dictionary), the semantic spatial feature ‘*coordination parameters (above)*’ forms the figurative meanings ‘*bad financial situations*’, ‘*trouble*’, ‘*difficult situation*’, ‘*difficult work*’, ‘*unfavourable circumstances*’, and in the idiom “*water under the bridge*” it actualizes the figurative meaning ‘*not important*’. In the idiomatic expression “*come hell or high water*”, the figurative meaning ‘*no matter what difficulties may potentially stand in your way*’ (The Largest Idiom Dictionary) is formed as a result of rethinking the spatial feature ‘*significant size*’, present in the literal meaning. The spatial semantic feature, when rethought, motivates the designation of obstacles and difficulties that arise in affairs. In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the following models are realized: “Elemental Space → Social sphere”: ESps ‘*coordination parameters (above, below)*’ => SS ‘*bad financial situations*’, ‘*trouble*’, ‘*difficult situation*’, ‘*difficult work*’, ‘*unfavourable circumstances*’, ‘*not important*’; “Elemental Space → Social sphere”: ESps ‘*size (significant)*’ =>

SS 'difficulties'. In the mental sphere, water is also actualized in the resultant meaning as a complex, dangerous or unclear, uncertain situation (the idioms "in deep water", "muddy the waters", "uncharted waters", "unfamiliar waters"); the following models are realized: "Elemental Space → Mental sphere": ESps 'size (extent in depth)' => MS 'a very serious situation', 'a time of great difficulty'; ESps 'filling (character)' => MS 'unclear', 'hard to understand', 'complicated', 'uncertainty', 'unfamiliar situation', 'foreign', 'dangerous', 'difficult'. In the intellectual sphere, the image of an outwardly serene expanse of water that can be dangerous, in a figurative sense, characterizes an outwardly calm, quiet, shy person as a person with deep feelings or as an interesting person if you get to know them better (the idiom "still waters run deep"). For example: *No, Sarah is actually one of the smartest people in the company. She may not talk or socialize much, but still waters run deep* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the model "Space → Intellectual sphere" is realized: SpS (space sphere) 'filling (character)' => IAS 'interesting personality', 'having deep feelings', 'having high intelligence'.

Spatial meanings of the air elemental space are also relevant in idiomatic constructions in the metaphorical understanding of phenomena related to the social, mental, intellectual spheres. Air is an invisible, colorless substance that is found almost everywhere on the surface of the earth. Air, constantly changing and fluid, represents the unknown, leaving us suspended in a state of doubt. Being in the airspace in the social sphere is understood in the system of metaphorical transfers as something unreal, uncertain, doubtful, unrealistic, unattainable (the idioms "to be up in the air", "castles in the air", "to beat the air", "to clear the air"). The following models are implemented: "Elemental Space → Social sphere": ESps 'coordination parameters (top)' => SS 'undecided', 'uncertain', 'unsure', 'unresolved', 'full of doubt'; ESps 'filling (character)' => SS 'impossible', 'unachievable', 'unrealistic'. In the mental sphere, the spatial semantics of the upper space (being in the air), when interpreted, carries the meaning of a state of satisfaction, pleasure and a sense of freedom (the idioms "walk on air", "to take to the air"); the model "Elemental Space → Mental sphere" is realized: ESps 'coordination parameters (upper)' => MS 'awfully excited', 'pleased', 'freedom', 'liberation'. In the intellectual sphere, air is a symbol of deception and superficiality and in metaphorical terms characterizes a boastful and insincere person (the idioms "to be full of hot air", "give yourself airs"); the model "Elemental Space → Intellectual sphere" is realized: ESps 'filling (character)' => IAS 'boastful', 'arrogant', 'self-centered', 'exaggerating their achievements or abilities', 'pretentious', 'snobbish'.

Thus, phraseological units representing the elemental space in the English language fill the language with vivid images and contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural and emotional aspects that influence human experiences. Through the metaphorical meanings created by idioms with the semantics of the elemental space, the characteristics of the basic spheres of human activity are given. We have identified and described relevant spatial metaphorical models for designating non-spatial objects within the framework of the direction of metaphorical transfer from the spatial to the social, mental, intellectual spheres, the systematization and generalization of which allows us to draw the conclusions.

Conclusion

The results of the study led to the following conclusions:

1. The conducted study of idioms with the semantics of the elemental space demonstrated that the semantics of these units serves as the basis for the formation of images of the metaphorical meaning in the social, mental, and intellectual spheres. In the figurative understanding of the social sphere, the semantics of the earthly space is associated with the images of stability, security, community of ideas and views; the semantics of the water space underlies the images of obstacles, difficulties that arise in business, and the semantics of the air space is associated with the images of something unreal, uncertain, doubtful, impracticable, unattainable. In the metaphorization of the mental sphere, the semantics of the earthly space serves as the basis for the images of something reasonable, reliable, real; the semantics of the water space is metaphorically thought of as a complex, dangerous or uncertain situation, and the semantics of the air space is associated with a state of satisfaction, pleasure and a sense of freedom. In the figurative understanding of the intellectual sphere, the semantics of the earthly space is associated with both positive and negative human qualities; the semantics of the water space forms the image of a person with deep feelings or as an interesting personality, and the semantics of air is associated with the symbol of deception and superficiality and characterizes a boastful and insincere person.

2. The analysis of the semantic features of lexemes' figurative meanings allowed us to identify the directions of metaphorical transfer and motivational metaphorical features: "Elemental Space → Social sphere": ESps 'coordination parameters (bottom)' => SS 'realistic', 'stability'; ESps 'coordination parameters (above, below)' => SS 'bad financial situations', 'trouble', 'difficult situation', 'difficult work', 'unfavourable circumstances', 'not important'; ESps 'coordination parameters (top)' => SS 'undecided', 'uncertain', 'unsure', 'unresolved', 'full of doubt'; ESps 'border (absence of restrictions)' => SS 'shared beliefs or interests', 'a foundation for mutual understanding'; ESps 'size (significant)' => SS 'difficulties'; ESps 'filling (character)' => SS 'impossible', 'unachievable', 'unrealistic'.

"Elemental Space → Mental sphere": ESps 'coordination parameters (bottom)' => MS 'sensible', 'calm', 'unpretentious', 'utterly devoted', 'loyal and reliable'; ESps 'coordination parameters (upper)' => MS 'awfully excited', 'pleased', 'freedom', 'liberation'; ESps 'size (extent in depth)' => MS 'a very serious situation', 'a time of great difficulty'; ESps 'filling (character)' => MS 'unclear', 'hard to understand', 'complicated', 'uncertainty', 'unfamiliar situation', 'foreign', 'dangerous', 'difficult'.

“Elemental Space → Intellectual sphere”: ESps ‘filling (character)’ => IAS ‘boastful’, ‘arrogant’, ‘self-centered’, ‘exaggerating their achievements or abilities’, ‘pretentious’, ‘snobbish’, ‘unusual’, ‘unique’, ‘genuine’, ‘very good’, ‘worthy’, ‘morally sound’, ‘untidy’, ‘unattractive’, ‘evil’, ‘without good qualities’, ‘worthless’, ‘interesting personality’, ‘having deep feelings’, ‘having high intelligence’.

3. Spatial semantic features that specify the coordination parameters, border, and content are relevant in the process of metaphorical designation of the elemental space in the social sphere. For the figurative nomination of objects of the mental sphere, semantic features that specify the coordination parameters and size, border, configuration, functional characteristics are significant; for the figurative nomination of objects of the intellectual sphere, a semantic feature that specifies the content of space is significant. The identified spatial characteristics are conceptualized using special linguistic units, which is evidence of their significance in the consciousness of the English native speakers.

Further research perspectives lie in the need of applying the approach implemented in the work for studying the metaphorical potential of other units of the lexico-semantic system of the English language.

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