

RU

Метафорические трансформации пространства
в английских идиомах

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Аннотация. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении механизмов вербализации пространственных концептов в англоязычной фразеологии и закономерностей их метафорической проекции на социально-когнитивную сферу. В исследовании анализируется роль базовых характеристик, обозначающих организацию пространства (вертикаль, горизонталь (координационные параметры), размер, геометрические формы, расстояние от наблюдателя), в формировании метафорических моделей, репрезентирующих ключевые аспекты человеческого бытия: социальные отношения, интеллектуальную деятельность и психические состояния. 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 фразеологических единиц. Научная новизна заключается в разработке оригинальной классификации метафорических проекций, основанной на ключевых пространственных параметрах английского языка, а также в выявлении ранее не описанных паттернов метафорического переноса и определении культурно-специфических особенностей, через которые пространственные фразеологизмы формируют социальные и интеллектуальные концепты. В результате исследования определены наиболее релевантные модели, где пространственные ориентиры превращаются в метафоры для описания нематериальных явлений, таких как социальный статус, эмоциональное состояние, интеллектуальные процессы, анализ которых позволяет выявить лингвокультурную специфику рассматриваемых идиом.

EN

Metaphorical transformations of space in English idioms

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Abstract. The study aims at identifying the mechanisms of verbalization of spatial concepts in English-language phraseology and the patterns of their metaphorical projection into the socio-cognitive sphere. The research analyzes the role of basic characteristics denoting the organization of space (vertical, horizontal (coordination parameters), size, geometric shapes, and distance from the observer) in the formation of metaphorical models representing key aspects of human existence: social relations, intellectual activity, and mental states. The process of creating a metaphorical model is presented through determining the direction of metaphorical transfer and identifying semantic aspects that serve as its motivation. The study of these aspects allows us to discover the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the phraseological units under consideration. The scientific novelty of this study lies in developing an original classification of metaphorical projections based on the key spatial parameters of the English language, as well as in identifying previously undescribed metaphorical transfer patterns and determining culture-specific features through which spatial phraseological units form social and intellectual concepts. As a result of the research, the most relevant models in which spatial reference points are transformed into metaphors for describing intangible phenomena such as social status, emotional state, and intellectual processes were identified. The analysis of these models allows us to identify the linguacultural specificity of the idioms under consideration.

Introduction

The relevance of the study is linked to contemporary trends in linguistics, which place particular emphasis on the relationship between linguistic semantics and the cognitive processes underlying the comprehension and linguistic formulation of knowledge about the world. Such research makes it possible to identify universal mechanisms for conceptualizing reality and to uncover their national and cultural specificity, as language reflects the peculiarities

of thought, worldview, and cognitive strategies of a particular people. Constructing typologies of spatial metaphors, considering their motivating features, contributes to a more complete picture of the interaction between language and thought (Casasanto, Bottini, 2020). The metaphorical models under consideration are studied through the prism of cognitive linguistics, which proposes a systematic analysis of the connections between physical experience and linguistic constructs. Conceptual metaphors are considered in this vein, where spatial reference points are transformed into metaphors for describing intangible phenomena, such as social status, emotional state, and intellectual processes. An analysis of English idioms with spatial parameters allows us to identify universal cognitive schemas, culture-specific models of conceptualization, and patterns of metaphorical transfers 'physical → abstract'.

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

- to characterize the mechanisms of figurative meaning formation for idioms with spatial parameters;
- 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 linguacultural 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 with spatial parameters.

The material of the study was idiomatic expressions of the modern English language (100 idiomatic expressions), which include spatial components, selected by continuous sampling from The British National Corpus (BNC).

The work also included data from The Largest Idiom Dictionary, Compact Oxford English Dictionary, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, The Free Dictionary by Farlex, as well as contexts that illustrate the functioning of the studied idiomatic expressions.

The theoretical basis of this study is the work of Russian and foreign scientists in the field of cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, and spatial semantics. The study relied on such key areas as the concept of conceptual metaphor (Лакофф, Джонсон, 1988; Xie, Zhang, 2014; Kövecses, 2020) where metaphor is considered as a fundamental cognitive mechanism that projects the structure of the original (often spatial) conceptual domain onto abstract concepts; the theory of metaphorical modeling (Casasanto, 2017; Будаев, Чудинов, 2013; 2021), which explains how the physical experience of interacting with space shapes linguistic and cognitive structures; studies of spatial metaphors (Колесов, 2021; Кубрякова, 2004; Маляр, 2002; Маслова, 2011; Шамне, 2000; Casasanto, Bottini, 2020; Winter, Matlock, 2022; Jackendoff, Landau, 1991), revealing the patterns of representation of spatial relations in language and their influence on the conceptualization of abstract categories (emotions, social relations); works on linguacultural specificity (Levinson, 2022; Кубрякова, 2004), analyzing the national and cultural features of spatial metaphors in different linguistic worldviews. This theoretical framework provided a systematic approach to the analysis of metaphorical models, contributed to the substantiation of criteria for identifying spatial metaphors and the interpretation of the results in the context of the interaction of language, thought, and culture.

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 linguacultural studies. The research findings can serve as an incentive for studying spatial idioms.

Discussion and results

Contemporary linguistic paradigms emphasize the importance of spatial semantics as one of the fundamental channels for the cognitive organization of experience and speech (Шамне, 2000, p. 43-50). Phraseologisms based on spatial representations are not simply expressive turns of phrase, but reflect deep cultural and psychological models of world perception (Кубрякова, 2004, p. 140-151). The identification and systematization of idioms containing spatial components is based on corpus data (BNC), which ensures representativeness of examples and allows for the identification of the most productive and stable constructions. The semantic saturation of idioms with spatial meaning, that is, the importance of locative components for understanding the entire expression, was taken into account. Assessing how native speakers transfer the physical characteristics of space (vertical, horizontal, linear, distance from the observer, size, various geometric shapes and boundaries) to the abstract spheres of social, psychological and intellectual relations allows us to identify priority conceptual metaphors. The vertical and horizontal serve as basic cognitive structures that shape figurative thinking and the linguistic expression of spatial and metaphorical relationships in English phraseological units. Both models, as fundamental reference points for perceiving the world, have become firmly entrenched in the system of linguistic means, allowing for the expression of not only the physical but also the abstract organization of experience (Будаев, Чудинов, 2021). The image of the "vertical" in English idioms is traditionally associated with the representation of hierarchy, achievement, and decline. Concepts of success, power, or moral status are correlated with the concept of "high" or "low". Along with physical ascent, or descent, these metaphors convey complex social and psychological phenomena into language. Thus, the idiomatic expressions "to rise to the top" and "on a higher plane" denote the achievement of success, while the expression "fall from grace" conveys a loss of position, and the idiom "to fall through the cracks" (to lose sight of, to forget) combines the direction "down" and the image of a narrow space and emphasizes invisibility and loss of control. This use in idioms underscores the universality of the vertical dimension as a tool for assessing social status. The idiom

"to be at the top of one's game" literally means an athlete who has reached the top, but figuratively it denotes maximum performance and outstanding success in any field, such as business: *The company is at the top of its game, consistently leading the market in innovation* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). The idiomatic expressions "to rise to the top", "to rise to the occasion" and "on a higher plane" denote the achievement of success, while the expression "falls from grace" conveys a loss of position. This use in idioms emphasizes the versatility of the vertical dimension as a tool for assessing social status. The expression "over the moon" indicates a position above the moon, and the semantic load of this phrase is associated with a state of intense joy or satisfaction: *I bet she was pleased with her results. She was over the moon* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). The spatial element 'over' in this case serves as a metaphor for overcoming a barrier, going beyond the ordinary emotional state, and the lexeme 'moon', as a symbol of an unattainable or rare phenomenon, reinforces the idea of extraordinary happiness. The idiom "to hit the ceiling" expresses a sharp emotional reaction – rage: *My parents hit the ceiling when they saw my awful report card*. Thus, a number of vertical idioms are based on the transfer of the spatial concept to the realm of emotional experiences. In turn, the idiom "up in the air", where the preposition 'up' in standard perception denotes an upward direction or height, in combination with 'in the air' acquires a sense of uncertainty and incompleteness, indicating a situation that has not yet been resolved or is in limbo: *Our plans for the summer are still up in the air* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Based on the literal representation of airspace where objects can move freely and have no fixed position, the semantics transform space into a metaphor for instability and the expectation of a solution. This contrasts with the idiom "to hit rock bottom", where the association with reaching rock bottom symbolizes a critical point from which a turnaround for the better or complete stagnation is possible: *The president's popularity has hit rock bottom* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). In vertical phrases, elevation represents progress, while depression is associated with failure. Metaphorical transference is particularly evident when "height" denotes not simply success but superiority over others. The idiom "to look down on someone" literally reflects the act of looking down, while figuratively it signifies contempt or a sense of superiority: *She thinks they look down on her because she doesn't have a job* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Similarly, the expression "to rise above challenges" combines the idea of upward mobility with overcoming difficulties, enhancing the motivational connotation of the statement: *Her resilience epitomized strength, illustrating how to rise above challenges with grace and confidence* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). Such phrases can be found in any context: whether talking about business, personal relationships, or studies. The vertical can be associated with the dynamics of project development and initiation. The idiom "to get off the ground" implies a successful launch or the beginning of a new endeavor. Figuratively, it suggests that an idea has gained support, resources, and is beginning to exist beyond the draft: *A lot more money will be required to get this project off the ground* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Vertical movement is associated with increased power and status, as climbing requires effort, and heights traditionally evoke admiration. Conversely, falling symbolizes loss of control and disgrace. The opposite meaning is conveyed by the idiom "to bring something down", which denotes the cessation or destruction of something previously built: *This scandal could bring down the country's government* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). In the idiom "to be down to earth", the spatial component 'down', denoting a downward movement, in combination with 'to earth' serves as a metaphor for the characterization of a practical, reasonable and friendly person, and there is a transfer to the intellectual sphere: *In private, the prince consort was known to be quite humorous and down-to-earth* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). These contexts demonstrate the relevance of spatial features that can act as a motivational basis for nominating objects of the non-spatial spheres. In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the following models are realized: Space (coordination parameters: vertical ('top')) → Social sphere ('success', 'power', 'significance', 'strength', 'status', 'maximum efficiency', 'progress', 'superiority', 'uncertainty', 'overcoming difficulties', 'successful start', 'incompleteness', 'instability'); Space (coordination parameters: vertical ('top')) → Mental sphere ('joy', 'satisfaction', 'happiness', 'rage'); Space (coordination parameters: vertical ('bottom')) → Social sphere ('loss of position', 'critical point', 'stagnation', 'failure', 'loss of control', 'shame', 'destruction of what was previously built'); Space (coordination parameters: vertical ('bottom')) → Intellectual sphere ('practical', 'reasonable', 'friendly').

The horizontal model, in turn, manifests itself in lexical units and constructions reflecting the idea of extension, distribution, and movement along a plane. Expressions like "a level playing field" or "across the board" illustrate attention to aspects of equality, fairness, and comprehensiveness. Unlike verticality, the image of 'horizontal' in English idioms is often associated with mutual arrangement, consistency, or equality. Idioms like "to be on the same level with someone", "a level playing field", and "across the board" illustrate the idea of equal status: literally, people stand on the same level, and figuratively, they have similar rights, status, or opinions. This effectively describes situations in which hierarchical superiority is absent, and dialogue is built on the principles of partnership. Similar expressions are widely used in business correspondence, academic discussions, and when discussing social issues: *According to the mission, an election where there is not a level playing field for all contestants can hardly be considered fair* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Horizontal metaphors, indicating boundaries and limits are also represented by a large number of English idioms. The expression "to stay within bounds" literally means adhering to established boundaries, and figuratively, adhering to rules, the limits of what is permitted: *Nevertheless, the strike must obey certain criteria to stay within the bounds of the law* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). The same idea is manifested in the idiom "to push the boundaries", "to go beyond the horizon", where the horizontal boundary symbolizes the point beyond which one can go, expanding possibilities: *In many ways, our audacity to imagine helps push the boundaries of possibility* (The Largest Idiom Dictionary). The use of such imagery helps clearly and succinctly convey the idea of either maintaining order or taking an innovative step beyond conventional boundaries. The horizontal metaphor draws on the everyday experience of movement: humans intuitively perceive progress as moving

forward and setbacks as returning to a previous point. Horizontal features often indicate spatial or temporal extension, enhancing the dynamic component within a semantic field. The combination of these dimensions generates complex semantic patterns, where dimensional characteristics influence the degree of abstraction or concreteness of meaning (Xie, Zhang, 2014). For example, idioms incorporating the concepts of 'width' or 'height' often contain hidden assessments of the scale of events and the degree of impact, as manifested in expressions like "broad daylight" or "high stakes".

In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the following models are realized: Space (coordination parameters: horizontal ('top')) → Social sphere ('stability', 'equality', 'continuity'); Space (coordination parameters: horizontal ('extent, distribution, movement along a plane')) → Social sphere ('equality', 'justice', 'comprehensive coverage', 'mutual arrangement', 'coherence'); Space (coordination parameters: horizontal ('boundaries and limits')) → Social sphere ('rules', 'boundaries of what is permitted', 'adhering to rules', 'going beyond the usual limits').

Let us look at examples where vertical and horizontal metaphors intersect and complement each other. The phrase "to level up" combines the idea of 'horizontal' (leveling) with elements of 'vertical' (increasing): it reflects the process of reaching a higher level while simultaneously eliminating differences between participants; "to rise above the fray", where upward movement occurs through the horizontal plane of everyday conflict. The idiom under consideration emphasizes the desire to rise above momentary discord and the ability to maintain inner peace: *Change and conflict in the Middle East, however, are making it hard for Turkey to rise above the fray as a model and mediator* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Such constructions demonstrate the flexibility of spatial modeling in language. From a lexical-semantic perspective, vertical and horizontal metaphors are united by the presence of spatial codes reflecting universal cognitive schemes (Лакофф, Джонсон, 1988). In the vertical group, the key elements are verbs of upward and downward movement, adjectives denoting height or lowland, and nouns associated with peaks, bases, and levels. The horizontal layer is represented by vocabulary emphasizing mutual arrangement such as *within, beyond, side by side, across, along* and denoting boundaries or extent.

The perception of idiomatic expressions largely depends on the specific spatial arrangement of elements, which is directly related to such concepts as coordination parameters and distances from the observer. In linguistic analysis, these parameters help to understand how metaphorical constructions form a certain visual or semantic impression, influencing interpretation and depth of understanding (Levinson, 2022). Coordination in this context implies a certain order and mutual arrangement of components within an idiom. It can be considered in terms of axes, in particular vertical and horizontal, as well as angular and metric coordinates, which play a role in the structural organization of the expression. For example, the idiom "to keep someone at arm's length" literally implies maintaining a distance, which is reflected in the spatial division between the subject and the object. Here, it is the horizontal parameter that is important, demonstrating the level of closeness or alienation, which is transferred to the semantic field, indicating the limitations of interaction. The idiom "to walk on eggshells" suggests careful action under tension. Here, the observer automatically perceives the distance as a fine line carefully crossed by the subject, which is reflected in a high degree of sensitivity and caution in communication. Thus, a horizontal or even reverse perspective of space helps convey the nervousness or fragility of a situation: *I was always on eggshells when my family came to stay* (The Largest Idiom Dictionary).

The observer's perspective plays a critical role in shaping the semantic and emotional connotations of an idiom. Changing the observer's point of view leads to different interpretations of meaning. Visualization of idioms may differ depending on whether the observer is positioned frontally, to the side, or from above. A frontal view emphasizes synchronicity and parallelism, while a side perspective is more likely to emphasize interaction or mutual understanding on a deeper level, displaying not only superficial coherence but also internal harmony (e.g., the idiom "to be on the same wavelength"). A crucial aspect is the mutual and relative distance determined by the position of the listener or reader, who, as a witness to the expression, forms their own understanding of the essence of what is happening. For example, the idiom "to keep one's cards close to the chest", where a minimal distance is maintained between the subject and the card elements, emphasizes secrecy and caution: *All funds keep their cards extremely close to their chest, so good strategies are rarely revealed* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). If the observer is positioned more distantly, the perception of the emphasis on secrecy will be softened, and the interpretation will shift toward general mistrust rather than specific secrecy. For example, "to think outside the box" implies a violation of customary coordinates and an expansion of the horizons of thought. Here, 'box' is a fixed geometric boundary, and 'outside' is a spatial parameter denoting a move beyond convention. An observer perceiving this image as a metaphor immediately sees a break in lines and a shift in focus, creating an image of cognitive freedom: *The Task Force should serve as a strategic instrument for developing bold, new, and innovative approaches and for thinking "outside the box" to devise technological solutions that can help poor countries and people leapfrog traditional technologies and stages of development* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). The structure of the idiom "behind the scenes" contains the spatial component 'behind', which literally indicates a hidden position behind objectively visible objects. Figuratively, this expression is used to denote processes occurring covertly, out of public view: *The journalist uncovered what was really happening behind the scenes in politics* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). Similarly, the idiom "to be under the radar" is used: *Several small firms have been operating under the radar of regulators*. The spatial 'under the radar' denotes stealth and invisibility, emphasizing the orientation of visual perception. Analyzing the meaning of distance from the perspective of cognitive metaphors reveals the concept of 'nearness' and 'remoteness' of ideas, as well as the degree of the subject's involvement in the situation described by the idiom. For example, the idiom "to put something on the back burner" reflects the deliberate withdrawal of attention from a specific object or task. Here, the spatial parameter of distance also serves as a metaphor for postponement and temporary suspension. The space between the subject and the object, visible to the observer, is an important indicator of psychological

distance and the decision made: *She had to put her writing career on the back burner to care for her family* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the following models are realized: Space (coordination parameters: 'distances from the observer') → Social sphere ('closeness', 'alienation', 'transcending conventions', 'postponement', 'temporary suspension'); Space (coordination parameters: 'distances from the observer') → Mental sphere ('secrecy', 'stealth', 'invisibility', 'caution', 'sensitivity').

Size as a semantic category is not limited to strict physical parameters in language, it often symbolizes the scale of influence, significance, emotional connotation, or level of complexity. Expressions like "to think big", "a small matter", and "big shot" convey not just magnitude but also attitude toward an object, topic, or situation, reflecting social stereotypes and psychological attitudes embedded in linguistic practice. In such cases, 'big' and 'small' transcend objective dimensions, acquiring connotations of power, importance, or, conversely, insignificance and disdain. Models based on the concepts of magnitude and scale express the subject's relationship to an object through the prism of 'big' and 'small'. The phrase "big picture" serves as an example of a metaphor in which the enveloping picture of an event or process is perceived as something global and expansive. The use of this expression emphasizes the need to go beyond specific details and look at the overall strategic perspective: *In my political work, I try to concentrate on the big picture and not be distracted by details* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). In contrast, the expressions "small potatoes", "a drop in the bucket", and "a drop in the ocean" describe matters or objects that are not worthy of serious attention due to their insignificance and are often used to downplay the effort invested: *Our small donation feels like a drop in the ocean of poverty* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Stylistically, such expressions often serve as a tool of evaluation: the speaker distances themselves from the situation, demonstrating that it is not worth the effort.

The linear dimension (linearity) of space can be demonstrated by idioms that directly or indirectly highlight the concepts of direction, boundaries, and acceptable behavioral boundaries. Boundaries between elements in idioms define the demarcation of meaning, and the perception of these boundaries depends on distance and viewing angle. In English-language idioms, boundaries often symbolize either limitation or, conversely, opportunity. In the expression "to push the envelope", the boundary of the 'envelope' becomes a key parameter, crossing which signifies an expansion of opportunity or a violation of rules: *So often, it is our pride that allows us to "push the envelope" and think we are the exception to the rule* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). The idiom "through thick and thin" demonstrates the idea of passing through heterogeneous conditions. The coordinating parameters here vary from dense zones of 'thick' (good times) to transparent or sparse 'thin' (bad times), creating the perception of uneven but directed movement: *A true friend will be there to support you through thick and thin* (The Largest Idiom Dictionary). The idioms "to draw the line", "to draw a line in the sand", and "to cross the line" represent a boundary that must not be crossed. The use of these expressions signals a moral, ethical, or legal boundary: *I'll do whatever my company asks me to, but I draw the line when someone asks me to lie for them*. The hybridization of space and behavioral norms is also evident in the expression "toe the line", where the verb 'to climb, to touch with fingers' reinforces the sense of careful adherence to an established rule. This expression emphasizes the requirement for complete centralization of decisions and the exclusion of independent deviations: *The new employees must toe the line or face disciplinary action* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). The expression "to walk a fine line" combines the concepts of length and subtlety. It emphasizes the need to balance between opposing positions. The linear model of space in this case acquires an emotional coloring of tension and caution: *There are cases in which a judge will have to tread a fine line between the interests of the community and those of the individual who is bringing the human rights challenge* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). In the idiom "below the belt" the realm of combat enters the ethical plane. Here, the line separates the permissible from the unacceptable in a moral battle: *Bringing up his past mistakes during the debate was a real blow below the belt* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). Some idioms use the line to denote an area of risk or responsibility. For example, the idiom "the firing line" describes an area where one might 'get caught in the crossfire' both in a literal armed conflict and metaphorically, when an employee becomes the target of criticism: *After the faulty product launch, the team found themselves in the firing line of management* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). The construction conveys the dynamic of danger and calls for caution. The idiom "read between the lines" exemplifies a concept where linearity becomes the gap between direct and hidden meaning. This technique works well in legal texts and diplomatic communications, where the wording is as veiled as possible: *Aspects of the next president's foreign policy are there to be seen if observers read between the lines and take as much note of what is not said as what is* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). The concept of the straight line embodies the idea of strict adherence to rules or norms. For example, the idiom "on the straight and narrow" emphasizes following a path considered morally correct: *My grandmother was strict and kept me on the straight and narrow*. Here, the line serves as a metaphor for discipline and stability. Semantically, all of these idioms share a visual experience: size is associated with weight, scale, or, conversely, subtlety, while linearity is associated with direction, constraint, and precision. In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the following models are realized: Space (size ('small')) → Social sphere ('insignificance', 'neglected'); Space (size ('large')) → Social sphere ('strength', 'importance', 'global', 'voluminous'); Space (size ('linearity')) → Social sphere ('limitations', 'opportunity', 'violation of rules', 'socially unacceptable', 'compliance with rules', 'risk', 'responsibility', 'hidden meaning', 'morally correct', 'discipline', 'stability').

Among English idioms related to geometric shape, we can highlight expressions in which shapes are used to describe emotional states or social situations. For example, "straight as an arrow" implies honesty and straightforwardness, using the image of an arrow as a linear, directional object. In such cases, the geometric shape becomes a symbol of a certain personality trait or behavior. The metaphor of a circle reflects cyclicity, closure, or community. The phrase "go around in circles" denotes a pointless repetition of actions that leads to no result. The idiom "circle the wagons" is used when a group unites to ward off external pressure: *They are circling the wagons to protect the status*

quo (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). A circle also often serves as a neutral symbol of inclusion: "*come full circle*" illustrates a return to the starting point after a difficult journey: *The complex debate has come full circle, and we're back where we started* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). The idiom "*to draw the circle of trust*" conveys the idea that those inside the circle are trusted, while those outside are unknown. The expression "*outside the circle*" describes people outside the official, social, or professional community. Those who find themselves '*outside*' are deprived of access to key decisions or privileges: *He's still outside the circle of senior management* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Here, the circle serves as a metaphor for a zone of trust and influence. The idiom "*to move in the same circle with somebody*" denotes like-mindedness, similar tastes, and interests, while the expression "*to get caught/trapped in a vicious circle*" transforms the idea of being in a vicious circle into a complex, hopeless situation with numerous unsolvable problems. The image of a square is associated with order, rigid boundaries, and patterns. "*Square peg in a round hole*" refers to people who find it difficult to fit into existing structures. In the idiom "*to think outside the box*", the lexical unit '*box*' symbolizes a limited space of thought: *To solve this problem, we need to think outside the box and explore new approaches* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). Here, the square represents a conventional limitation, and the call to go beyond it stimulates creativity. The idioms "*square deal*", "*on the square*" and "*square talk*" use geometric shapes to symbolize honesty. The idiom "*to look someone square in the eye*" speaks of straightforwardness and the ability to speak openly, without flattery. The idiom "*triangulated opinions*" demonstrates images of a more complex geometric shape, a triangle, implying a collection of opinions from different sources, as if connecting three dots to gain insight into a situation: *Our research focused on triangulated opinions from experts in three diverse fields* (The Free Dictionary by Farlex). The polyhedron can be used to reflect the multifaceted nature of a problem: *His argument was a polygon of points* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). This example emphasizes that the speaker presented a complex, multidimensional structure of reasoning. In these examples of metaphorical transfer, the following models are realized: Space (geometric shape ('linear object')) → Intellectual sphere ('honesty', 'straightforwardness'); Space (geometric shape ('circle')) → Social sphere ('cyclical', 'isolation', 'difficult situation', 'community', 'lack of result', 'trusted persons', 'outside the community', 'zone of trust and influence', 'unanimity'); Space ('geometric shape' ('square')) → Intellectual sphere ('limited thinking', 'honesty', 'straightforwardness').

In summary, it can be concluded that linear properties and geometric shapes in English idioms are key tools for modeling meaning and image. Line, as a symbol of direction and boundary, is a universal means of coordinating elements within an expression, while geometric shapes add a layer of visualization and structure, facilitating interpretation. The influence of these factors manifests itself not only in the lexical-semantic sphere but also in the cognitive models that underlie the understanding and use of linguistic units.

Analysis revealed that directions and localizations not only serve as the foundation for the construction of numerous metaphorical constructs but also actively interact with culturally determined semantic fields, reflecting diverse aspects of the human psyche, social structure, and intellectual activity.

Conclusion

The results of the study led to the following conclusions.

1. The analysis revealed that spatial phraseological units in English rely on a set of semantic parameters: coordination relationships, configuration, boundaries, and size. It was established that spatial parameters (vertical, horizontal (coordination parameters), size, geometric shapes, distance from the observer, boundaries) serve as the basis for metaphorical modeling of social hierarchies, psychological states, and intellectual processes. Vertical models express social status, emotional states, and the dynamics of life events; peaks and troughs are perceived as the extreme points of positive and negative spectrums. The horizontal metaphor draws on the everyday experience of movement: people intuitively perceive progress as forward movement and setbacks as a return to a previous point. Horizontal constructions emphasize relationships of equality, boundaries, and acceptable distance between communicative participants. Metaphors of size and scale allow one to assess the degree of importance or the narrowness of one's views, while linear representations focus attention on purposeful movement and possible deviations from it. The images of a circle and a boundary demonstrate how closed or expandable frames serve as a means of describing the processes of discussion, creativity, and behavior regulation.

2. Dominant metaphorical models were identified: Space (coordination parameters: vertical) → Social sphere; Space (coordination parameters: vertical) → Mental sphere; Space (coordination parameters: horizontal) → Social sphere; Space (coordination parameters: vertical) → Social sphere; Space (coordination parameters: vertical) → Intellectual sphere; Space (coordination parameters: distances from the observer) → Mental sphere; Space (size) → Social sphere; Space (geometric shape) → Intellectual sphere; Space (geometric shape) → Social sphere.

3. The analysis of spatial metaphors realized in English-language idiomatic expressions demonstrated their ability to structure abstract concepts through reliance on the physical organization of space. Such spatial characteristics as coordination relations, configuration, boundaries, size reflect ideas about moral or social status movements and actively influence the perception of life situations. The specificity of the perception of space in the English-language linguaculture is manifested through the metaphorization of everyday phenomena. In the mechanisms of formation of figurative meanings, the key role is played by the process of metaphorical transfer through the identification of common features between physical and abstract space.

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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