Axiological Aspects of Some Projective Spatial Relations in English

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Spatial relations and evaluative language (axiology) are two extensively studied areas in contemporary linguistic research. The purpose of this paper is to propose a cognitive perspective for the axiological analysis of selected projective spatial relations in English. Projective relations – as opposed to the topological ones – are the relations between two entities that are displaced in space. The discussed terms include the spatial relations which, according to Levinson (1996), are based on the absolute frame of reference. These absolute spatial relations are analysed along two axes: the vertical one (e.g. *up* vs. *down*, *above* vs. *below*) and the horizontal one (*north*, *south*, *east* and *west*). The third aspect of the analysed spatial relations is the idea of distance relevant to the analysis of *close* vs. *far*, *here* vs. *There* etc. These three aspects of projective spatial relations – absolute spatial relations on the vertical, absolute spatial relations on the horizontal, and distance – are analysed from the point of view of their evaluative content. It appears that although all the above terms can be used in evaluative utterances, the possible motivating factors behind their axiological functions vary. These motivating factors are largely congruent with the views of major cognitive linguists on linguistic motivation (Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1999).

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