# An Analysis of Spatial Antonyms in Idiomatic Expressions

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# AN ANALYSIS OF SPATIAL ANTONYMS IN IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Diplomski rad

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Zagreb, 2022.

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ABSTRACT

Humans are beings that move, feel, and experience the passage of time in a three-dimensional space. We stand upright, we are symmetrical, and our canonical direction of motion is forward. Our bodily movements belong to the physical space around us while our feelings and emotions belong to the abstract and non-palpable space. To better understand the abstract world around us we lean on our body and our bodily experience in the world. Since they are more understandable to us and more familiar to us because they belong to the physical world, we use them to explain the abstract world of our feelings and emotions. Use of spatial orientation to better understand abstract concepts is called orientational metaphor. Since orientational metaphor offers a wide area of research, this thesis puts focus on only three pairs of spatial antonyms: LEFT-RIGHT, UP-DOWN, and FRONT-BACK. The analysis of the antonyms in the thesis is based on their use and representation in idiomatic expressions in three languages: English, Croatian, and Polish. The goal of this thesis is to compare the use of spatial antonyms in idiomatic expressions in all three languages, and to see whether our universal bodily experience is translated in the same way into idiomatic expressions in all three languages and whether one half of each spatial antonymic pair always represents negative values and the other half positive values.

KEY WORDS*: idiomatic expressions, spatial antonyms, orientational metaphor, conceptual metaphor, spatial metaphor*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are complex beings who can see, feel, and are aware of their existence in the world. This means that we have the need to describe everything that surrounds us or has an impact on us, be it physical or emotional. Everything that is new or unfamiliar to us presents a problem for us and makes us want to try and understand it. This is where metaphor comes in. Metaphor is a form of expression in which a word or a phrase indicating one object or action, usually concrete, is used to explain another object or action, usually abstract, to show similarity or correlation between them.[1] There is a great number of different definitions of metaphors and what they are comprised of. One theory claims that metaphors are comprised of two parts. One is called a base and the other a target where the target is the "topic of the statement" and the base is "the information about the target". (Jamrozik, et al. 2016, 1081) The cognitive linguistic view, on the other hand, defines metaphor as "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain" and it is then called conceptual metaphor. In conceptual metaphor theory, the parts that comprise a conceptual metaphor are called source and target domain where the source domain is "the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain", and the target domain is "the conceptual domain that we try to understand through the use of the source domain". (Kövecses 2002, 4)

One of the most common sources of metaphor is our physical human body. Our body is very familiar to us, we know how we move through space, how we behave when we are feeling certain emotions (e.g., sadness, happiness, anger, love), and how we experience the world around us. The notion of using our physical body as a starting point from which we draw our experience, and then using that experience to better understand some abstract concept (e.g., emotions) is called embodiment (Richie 2006). It is a starting point from which we observe the world around us, and we try to make sense of everything surrounding us by spatially relating the objects to our body that our senses are picking up (Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1993, 65). Our knowledge of the world is dependent on us living in "a world that is inseparable from our bodies, our language, and our social history – in short from our embodiment" (Varela,

[1] *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "metaphor," accessed January 13, 2022, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor.

Thompson and Rosch 1993, 149). In addition, our capacity to understand enables us to live in the world around us, it helps us make sense of it. Embodied experience and preconceptual structures of our sensibility, such as orienting ourselves, together form a meaning. The embodied patterns are not unique to the person, but more "shared cultural modes of experience" and they help us better understand the nature of our understanding of the world (Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1993, 150). Our cognition is grounded in our sensory and motor systems, and it depends upon our sensorimotor bodily experience. The concrete physical events are the starting point from which we develop and understand abstract concepts which is why we often use our physical body as the metaphorical source. (Jamrozik, et al. 2016, 1086) Metaphor sets into motion our sensorimotor systems which are connected to the base concepts of the metaphor used. When using orientational metaphors whose "base concept involves a spatial dimension, the sensory systems that are related to processing space should be activated" (Jamrozik, et al. 2016, 1082). These types of metaphors are considered to be primary and a large part of them use orientational concepts such as HEALTHY IS UP and SAD IS DOWN.

The human body is often used as a basis for the production of different metaphors. There are different ways in which metaphorical extension from the body can be realized and they are: by visual resemblance ('leg' of a chair, 'eye' of the storm), orientational ('foot' of a mountain), and functional ('head' of a family) (Richie 2006, 42). Another way of using the human body as a metaphorical base is through orientational metaphor. Humans experience the world physically and emotionally and the metaphors derived from our physical and emotional experience let us "conceptualize abstract concepts on the basis of inferential patterns directly tied to the body" (Richie 2006, 38). In the second chapter, we will show how we use our body as a source domain to explain abstract concepts such as happiness, sadness, good, bad, success, and failure. We will introduce the concept of orientational metaphors which use spatial orientation of our bodies to describe abstract concepts. The most common orientations are those that cover the three-dimensional space we live in. Things that surround us can be placed left or right of us, above or under us, behind or in front of us. These orientational pairs will be the main topic of chapter three. The analysis of the pairs will be based on their placement on the Cartesian coordinate system, and each axis will be assigned one orientational pair (up-down, left-right, front-back). Even though there are many more spatial antonyms, only these three will be analyzed because of Levinson's claim that there are three spatial planes dividing the human body into six different halves. One plane divides us into the upper and lower half, one into the left and right half, and the final one into the front and back half. (Levinson 2004, 10).

These six directions may be distinguished as either positive or negative if we imagine ourselves standing at the zero-point of the spatiotemporal coordinates. This type of viewpoint is called egocentric or a man's world where man is the measure of all things, and the directions are established based on how we are oriented. (Lyons 1977, 690) Furthermore, in an egocentric space one half of these pairs will be viewed as positive and the other as negative based on the notions of visibility, confrontation, and the phenomenon of dexterity (Lyons 1977, 691) The positive-negative distinction will be shown on the examples of metaphorical expressions across three languages English, Croatian and Polish. The assumption is that one half of the directional pair will always carry a positive meaning, and the other half will always carry negative meaning when used in metaphorical expressions. Based on our canon body position where we stand upright at a ninety-degree angle relative to the floor, look straight ahead and move forward we will assume that orientations of up, right, and front will play a positive role in metaphorical expressions while their opposites down, left, and back, will play a negative role. The left-right polarity is different from the other two but based on the phenomenon of dexterity we will presume that left will play a negative role, and right a positive role. Will this be true for all three languages, and will they all use the same positive-negative distinction? This will be answered in chapter 3 where each axis will be assigned one spatial antonym and all their uses in metaphorical expressions across the three languages will be analyzed. The assumption is that all three languages will show similarities between metaphors that use spatial orientation as a source from which the metaphor is better understood. The similarities might be bigger between the two Slavic languages (Croatian and Polish) than between English and Croatian, or English or Polish. However, the hypothesis is that all three languages will use one member of the antonymic pair to express positivity, and the other member of the pair to express negativity.

For this thesis, I have referred to several different phraseological dictionaries and online forums to find appropriate idioms in all three languages. The dictionaries used were: *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik*[2], *Baza frazema hrvatskog jezika*[3], *Współczesny Słownik Frazeologiczny*[4] and *Farlex Dictionary of Idioms*[5]. All the examples used are listed in the Appendix (chapter 6).

[2] Menac, A., Fink-Arsovski, Ž. & Venturin, R., 2014. *Hrvatski frazeološki rječnik.* Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.

[3] Baza frazema Instituta za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje, http://frazemi.ihjj.hr/ (21.1.2021.)

[4] Fliciński, P., 2012. *Współczesny Słownik Frazeologiczny.* Poznań: Wydawnictwo IBIS.

[5] Farlex Dictionary of Idioms, Idioms and phrases (thefreedictionary.com) (21.1.2021.)

The examples that were chosen for this thesis are all those that contained lexemes that referred to orientations of UP-DOWN, LEFT-RIGHT, and FRONT-BACK.

This thesis will show us how orientational metaphors are crucial to our conscience and how they, as primary metaphors, are just as important as the more complex ones because our body often acts as a starting point from which other metaphors are then later developed. We will show how the three languages and three cultures, English, Croatian, and Polish, use similar or same body parts to express the same things, same feelings, same concepts. Our worldly experience is universal, we are inherently vertical, moving forward and interacting with other things facing them forward. We have hands and feet, one on each side of our body which we use to interact with the world around us in the same way, and it is no surprise that metaphors came into existence and are based on those experiences. We tend to metaphorize the space we are living in and dichotomize our experience in that same space. Metaphorization of the space is a process that connects a concept of physical space and some abstract concept (e.g., feelings). We connect those two concepts based on our physical experience in the space when the specific feeling (an abstract concept) occurred. For example, the abstract concept of sadness and our physical experience of the feeling comply with the conceptual metaphor SAD IS DOWN. In addition, the process of dichotomization can also be noticed here. Both the abstract concept of *sadness* and the physical space of *down* exist as dichotomies. Sadness is opposed to happiness, while down is opposed to up, which would then make two dichotomies happiness-sadness, or happy-sad, and up-down. Furthermore, if SAD IS DOWN exists as a conceptual metaphor, that would mean that its opposite should exist as well based on the existence of the dichotomies happy-sad and up-down. The second conceptual metaphor would then be HAPPY IS UP and it is safe to say that both those metaphors are dichotomies as well. This thesis will show the connection between abstract and spatial dichotomies and their realization in metaphorical expressions in everyday language use.

## 2. PHRASEOLOGY – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past three decades, there has been an increased interest in phraseological units (also called fixed expressions, phrasemes, idioms, etc.). They were studied across different disciplines and only in the past twenty years have they been gathered into one discipline called phraseology. Phraseology is defined as the study of emergence, structure, meaning, use, and interpretation of phraseological units. It is a linguistic branch that has strong roots in the

European tradition but is a somewhat young discipline in the Anglo-American tradition. The main difference between these two traditions is that the European one is focused on various languages while the American tradition studies phraseology within other disciplines such as cognitive linguistics or psycholinguistics. (Omazić 2015, 18) The basic units of analysis in phraseology are phraseological units which Omazić (2015, 20) defines as "conventionalized multiword combinations that are holistically and automatically reproduced, and that may vary in frequency of occurrence, fixedness or form, and compositeness of meaning". The five main defining characteristics of phraseological units according to Fiedler (2014, 251) are polylexicality, syntactic and semantic stability, idiomaticity, lexicalization, and stylistic and expressive connotations.

Polylexicality defines a phraseological unit as an item that consists of more than two words. However, sometimes this means that compounds will be excluded if they are written as one word but included if written as two or more words. This usually happens because of differences in languages. Fiedler (2007, 18 as cited in Poulsen 2017, 190) gives a good example of that by comparing English and German where she compared the words *Krokodilstränen* and *crocodile tears*. The first word is not polylexemic and if going by the rule of polylexicality it is not a phraseological unit in the German language, while in English it is.

Phraseological units are usually syntactically stable, but they can vary in their stability "in that they encompass constituents that allow variations within the constraints of the lexicological/phraseological system" (Gläser 1998, 129). This can be seen in the following example: *to be out in left field* and *to come out of left field*. These examples have slightly different constituents but carry the same meaning.

The third characteristic of phraseological units is idiomaticity. Fiedler defines it as "the common phenomenon that the meaning of an expression is difficult or even impossible to derive from the meaning of the constituents it is composed of" (2007, 22, as cited in Poulsen 2014, 190). Idiomaticity is graded; it can range from fully opaque (e.g., *He's all left*) to more transparent (e.g., *pisati kao lijevom rukom).*

The final characteristic of phraseological units is their stylistic and expressive connotation. Connotations are additional semantic markers that are associated with the value judgments of a speech community or an individual speaker or writer (Gläser 1998, 128). They, according to Gläser, enrich the cognitive contents of a word phrase by utilizing emotive or attitudinal semantic markers. She also claims that there are three major types of connotations: expressive connotations, stylistic connotations, and register markers. These types can further be divided into categories. Expressive connotations can be divided into derogatory (e.g., *mutton dressed*

*as lamb*), taboo (e.g., *get stuffed*), euphemistic (e.g., *the great divide*), and humorous (e.g., *to have a bun in the oven*). Stylistic connotations can be colloquial (e.g., *green fingers*), slang (e.g., *reach-me-downs*), formal (e.g., *a bone of contention*), literary (e.g., *between Scylla and Charybdis*), archaic (e.g., *in days of yore*), foreign (e.g., *in casu belli*). And register markers that appear in dictionaries as references to a particular field of discourse such as medical (e.g., *corpus luteum*), astronomy (e.g., *black hole*), economics (e.g., *a high flier*), etc.

Forty years ago, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson published a book titled *Metaphors We Live By* and offered a new way of viewing metaphor by saying that it resides in our conceptual system, not just in language, and by introducing the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Conceptual Metaphor Theory provided a new view of metaphorical language, and therefore idiomatic expressions. They have defined metaphor as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 5). Humans think metaphorically, speak metaphorically, are surrounded by metaphor everywhere they go, and, most of the time, they are not aware of it happening. That is why Lakoff and Johnson concluded that metaphor was "a pervasive matter of extraordinary language in everyday life", which included not only language, but our thoughts and actions, as well, and that "human thought processes are largely metaphorical" (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 3-6).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 454) claim that our conceptual system is metaphorical and therefore everything we do has a metaphorical foundation. This can be explained through the conceptual metaphor HAPPY IS UP. We have said that conceptual metaphors emerge when one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another conceptual domain. In the example HAPPY IS UP there are two domains: HAPPY and UP. One is called the source domain, and the other target domain. We have earlier mentioned that the source domain is "a conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain", and the target domain is "the conceptual domain that we try to understand through the use of the source domain. In the given example, the domain of UP is a source domain, and the domain of HAPPY is a target domain. Many of the things we do when feeling happy are partially structured by the concept of the spatial orientation of *up*. We draw metaphorical expressions from the concept of UP to better understand the abstract concept of feeling happy. We use something familiar to us, something physical, like our body in space, to better understand something more abstract, like a feeling of happiness.

## 2.1. ORIENTATIONAL METAPHOR

Sometimes metaphorical expressions use spatial dimension to describe something metaphorically. When that happens, we can say that we are talking about a concept called orientational metaphor. The human conceptual system functions in two ways, metaphorically and non-metaphorically. Metaphorical concepts are those that are understood in terms of other concepts, while non-metaphorical concepts are those that "arise from our earthly experience and are defined in their own terms" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 195). According to them, spatial orientation is therefore non-metaphorical. However, it may be considered metaphorical when used in metaphorical expressions such as *He is all down,* or *He is all left*. These expressions are interpreted metaphorically, and they contain a sense of direction or orientation, so they are considered to be orientational metaphors. Orientational metaphors are not arbitrary - they arise from our experience in the world, and they vary from culture to culture. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 15)

Spatial concepts are important to humans because they are omnipresent in our lives. We define everything around us based on our placement in the world. Therefore, we can say that spatial concepts emerge from our interaction with the physical world around us. For example, if we look at UP orientation, we can say that UP is not understood directly in its own terms; in fact, its meaning emerges from the constant motor functions that our body performs by keeping us stand straight relative to the ground we are standing on. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 57) Spatial orientation is given to an abstract concept based on our physical experience in the world so that, for example, the abstract and non-physical concept of happiness is understood through the orientation of UP or HIGH, and the concept of sadness through the orientation of being DOWN or LOW. For example, we can say *I'm feeling up today* meaning 'I am happy today' or we can say *I'm feeling down today* meaning 'I am sad today'. Orientational metaphors are sometimes thought to be a basis for the formation of new metaphors. If we take *happy, healthy,* and *more* and place them UP, we can assume that any concept similar to these three will be expressed in similar terms. Let us take *social status* as an example. *Social status* has no physical correlation with the orientation of UP. However, having bigger social status makes us happy, and both *more* and *happy* are UP, which would also then put *social status* UP. (Lakof and Johnson 1980 in Richie 2006, 35). The same thing can be found on the opposite end of those concepts. Sadness, sickness, and less are placed DOWN, and any concept similar to these will also be placed DOWN. Let us take the same example.

Social status has no correlation with the orientation of DOWN either, but lower social status makes us feel not happy or even sad, and both less and sad are DOWN, which would also put social status DOWN. However, we must be careful when associating things because not every time MORE IS UP equals GOOD IS UP. In the example 'inflation is up', the conceptual metaphor MORE IS UP can be applied here, but GOOD IS UP cannot because inflation is a negative concept in society. (Richie 2006, 36)

We can say that these types of metaphors are based on simple physical concepts. They are not rich, but we cannot function without them. Orientation is crucial to our existence as human beings. There are different theories of how we look at space around us. Aristotelian theory (Levinson 2004, 7) claims that space has six dimensions which are not always the same but are in relation to our position depending on how we turn ourselves. The dimensions here are left, right, above, below, ahead, and behind. Up and down are vertical dimensions where up relates to "celestial spheres" while down relates to "the center of Earth". They are relative because it is hard to exactly define what *up* is. If we stand on our hands, up is not up to us, but it is to everyone else, it is relative to the viewer. Kantian theory (Levinson 2004, 11-13), claims that human spatial cognition is relative, egocentric, and anthropomorphic. It is relative because it depends on whether the viewer reflects, rotates, or translates the ground object that they are trying to assign an orientation to. It is egocentric because human is the measure of all things, and it is anthropomorphic because spatial coordinates are derived from the planes through our body. Kant (1991[1768], 28-29) said that in a physical space with three dimensions we can imagine three different planes that intersect one another at a ninety-degree angle. Those planes then divide the body into equal parts. One plane divides the body into the left and right half, one into the upper and lower half, and the third one into the front and back. The third theory, which can be thought of as a sub-Kantian theory, claims that "in many languages the same words denote the sides of the body and the cardinal points" and that there is an axis which divides the world into two halves, one of which is light and the other is dark (Hertz 1960, 102 in Levinson 2004, 11). The hypothesis is that the half thought to be dark is the left side, and the half thought to be light is the right side of the body because, according to Kant (1991[1768], 30) the right side has an advantage in "dexterity and strength", and is, therefore, considered better.

Going by the claim that three spatial planes divide our body into six halves where three of those halves are woven into darkness, and the other three halves are bathed in light, we can assume that each member of the spatial antonym will then belong to either the positive (light)

or negative (dark) side. Each side of the body is then assigned certain emotions related to our experience with those body parts. In other words, we use our body to think about abstract things, such as emotions, capability, strength, etc. The question is whether those bodily experiences are universal and whether they are translated in the same way into metaphors. The hypothesis is that they are largely universal because, joy, for example, is expressed in a very similar way in many cultures. It is reflected by moving up, being active, jumping up in the air, whereas sadness is reflected by being down, inactive, and static. (Kövecses 2005, 38) The human body itself is the basic body experience that influences the conceptualization of spatial relations and it is only natural to assume that it is so in hundreds of languages (Kövecses 2005, 79). Koller (2005 [2003], 80) states that there are different ways in which humans conceptualize spatial relations: "body-only schema" and "body and environment schema". He further states that the body-only schema uses the human body as a source from which the conceptualization of spatial relations develops. For example, *head* is related to *up* and *foot/leg* is related to *down*. The second schema that Koller mentions is the body and environment schema. Here the claim is that environmental landmarks are used to understand spatial relations. For example, *sky* equals *up*, and *earth* means *down*. We might say that spatial metaphors are conventionalized to a certain degree because even though we experience the emotions in the same way all around the world, there are always instances where some cultures do it differently. It is impossible to know how many cultures in the world function in the same way, and in which ways those that do not differ. This is why we cannot with certainty say that spatial metaphors occur in the same way in all languages even though they are based on the universal human experience.

## 2.2. SPATIAL ANTONYMS

When speaking about orientation we usually think in pairs of two (up-down, left-right, front-back). These concepts are rarely thought of in isolation from one another. Orientational pairs may then also be called spatial antonyms. Antonymy is a pair-wise relation of lexical items in a context that is understood to be semantically opposite (Jones, et al. 2012, 2) and it

consists of antonyms that come in pairs of opposites such as UP-DOWN[6]. Jones et al. (2012, 2) highlighted that if something can be described by one half of the pair, it would mean that that same thing cannot have the features of the second member of the antonym pair. For example, if we say that *a cloud is up in the sky* it would mean that it is not down. Or if a dog is said to be male, then it would mean it is not female.

This paper will deal with three antonymic pairs: LEFT-RIGHT, UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, and their usage in metaphorical expressions. Even though there are many more spatial antonyms, only these three pairs will be analyzed in further chapters because we will be going by the claim that there are three spatial planes dividing our body into six parts: left and right, up and down, and front and back. Further, these six lexemes are more likely to be interpreted as antipodal opposites (left-right, up-down, front-back) than orthogonal (etc. left is orthogonal to up and back) because they belong to the same field and "each lexeme is diametrically opposed to its converse" in a three-dimensional space (Lyons 1977, 282)

Sometimes in metaphorical expressions, one member of the pair will not be explicitly visible, but the direction will still pertain. In other words, an idiomatic expression will carry a metaphorical meaning of going down, in a downward direction, but the phrase will not explicitly contain the lexeme *down*. Let us use the phrase 'His health is declining' as an example. The phrase itself does not explicitly contain the lexeme *down*; however, the conceptual image behind this expression is that someone's health is going in a downward direction because the downward direction is contained in the lexical meaning of the verb. Downward direction can be expressed with multiple lexemes due to the mapping between word forms and word meanings. If a certain lexeme does not have a direct antonym, it can be linked with some other lexeme based on the similarity to the lexeme that has a direct antonym. Each antonym represents a member of a group of concepts that are similar to one another and are opposed to a different group of concepts of opposite meaning. For example, lexemes down, downward, declining, descending, falling are all semantically opposed to up, upward, climbing, rising, ascending.

[6] The are several basic types of antonyms. They can be gradable (*cold-mild-warm-hot*), non-gradable (*female-male*), converse (*buy-sell*), directional (*up-down*), morphologically related (*do-undo*), morphologically unrelated (*friendly-hostile*), binary (*dead-alive*), non-binary (*sweet-sour-salty-bitter*) (Murphy 2003, 188-201)

## 3. ORIENTATION IN THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE

Orientational metaphors emerge as a result of us humans having physical bodies which move and exist in the physical space that surrounds us (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 196). Humans perceive this environment as a three-dimensional space. The three dimensions that we perceive are length, width, and height. If we took those dimensions and put them on paper they would form, the so-called, three-dimensional Cartesian coordinate system[7] which can be seen in the image below (Figure 1).

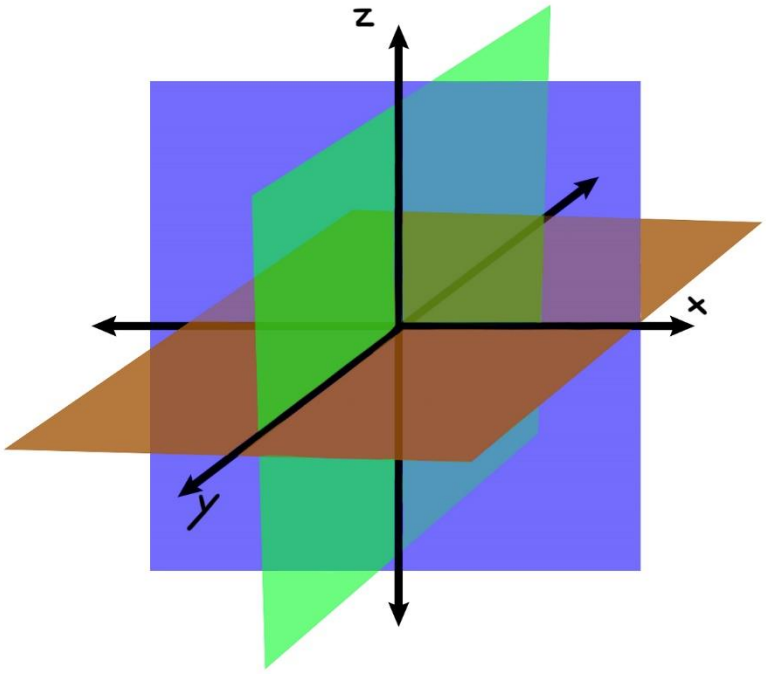



*Figure 1. Cartesian coordinate system with x, y, and z axes*

If we take on the egocentric viewpoint where a man is placed at the crossing point of all three axes, called zero-point (Lyons 1977, 690), we can establish which axis depicts which body movement. The six axes and planes divide our body into three dimensions, one vertical

[7] "Cartesian Coordinate System". 2022. *Https://Www.Newworldencyclopedia.Org*. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Cartesian_coordinate_system#Three-dimensional_coordinate_system. (Accessed 10th January 2022)

(up-down) and two horizontal ones (left-right, front-back). The x and y axes depict horizontal dimensions so we will put the left-right directionality on the x-axis and the front-back directionality on the y-axis. The remaining z-axis depicts the vertical dimension so we will put the up-down directionality on it. The orientational pairs will be placed on the axis in accordance with the way the person is oriented at the zero-point. In addition, following our hypothesis that one half of each antonymic pair will carry positive connotations, and the other half negative ones, we will place UP, RIGHT, and FRONT on the x, y, and z ends of the axes, and DOWN, LEFT, and BACK on the -x, -y, and -z ends of the axes (Figure 2)

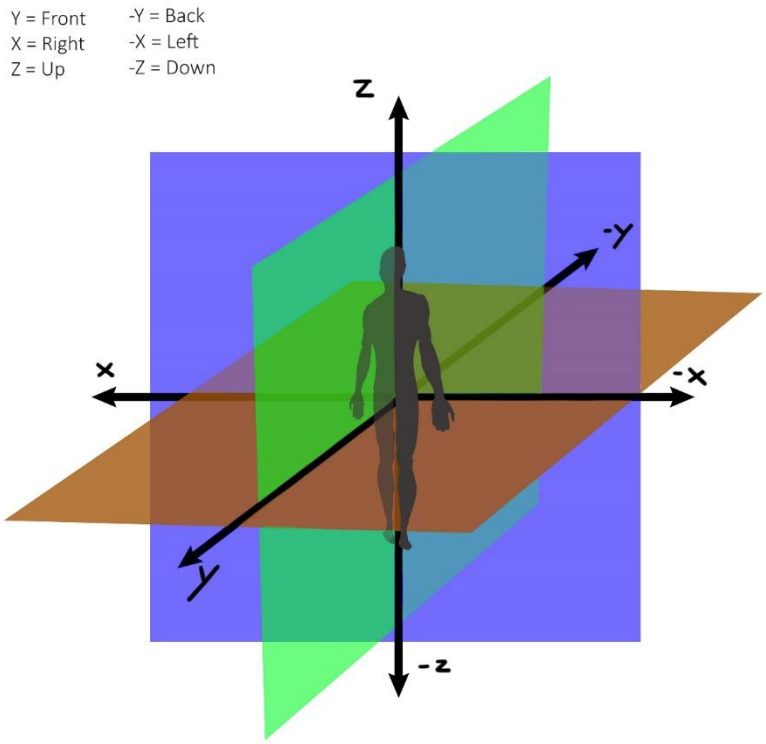



*Figure 2. Human standing at zero-point in the 3D coordinate system*

## 3.1. X-AXIS

As it was mentioned earlier, humans exist in a three-dimensional space which can be represented with three axes named x, y, and z. We have previously determined that for the

purpose of this analysis the x-axis will depict the left-right movement along the axis or the left-right stative position on the axis. We must also note that when talking about something being stative on either the left or the right side of the axis, we mean to say that those points are non-gradable - something cannot be situated more left or more right. The direction of this axis forms a pair of spatial antonyms LEFT-RIGHT which will be analyzed through their usage in various metaphorical expressions across the three languages: English, Croatian and Polish. We will see if there are any differences in meaning between the expressions across the three languages and whether a particular direction always carries the same connotation.

### 3.1.1. Etymology

The key words in metaphorical expressions that are connected to the movement along the x-axis are LEFT and RIGHT. They are different from other spatial antonyms because they belong to different lexical categories. LEFT and RIGHT can belong to two categories: nouns and adjectives. However, the adjective is more common in metaphors based on the examples found in dictionaries. The adjective *left* is defined as 'opposite of right'[8]. It is believed to originate from Kentish and northern English forms of Old English *lyft*, meaning 'weak or foolish'. The lexeme *right* is also more often used as an adjective and it is believed to have originated in the early 12th century from Old English where it referred to someone good, proper, or straight[9].

These two lexemes are most often used in a compound with the lexeme *hand*. It is believed that the compound *left-handed* originated in the 15th century where it carried the meaning 'maimed'. On the other hand, the lexeme *right* when used in combination with the lexeme *hand* was believed to mean the "correct" hand. For example, Latin words for 'left' and 'right' are *sinister* and *dexter*, respectively, and they both still have a connection with current meanings of these words. *Sinister* is classified as an adjective and defined as 'evil or suggesting that something evil is going to happen' while *dexterous* is linked to something good.

[8] "Left | Etymology, Origin And Meaning Of Left By Etymonline". 2022. *Etymonline.Com*. https://www.etymonline.com/word/left#etymonline_v_6652. Accessed January 12th, 2022

[9] "Right | Search Online Etymology Dictionary". 2022. *Etymonline.Com*. https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=right. Accessed January 12th, 2022

The notion of left being bad and right being good stems from the fact that a large number of people – roughly 90% - in the world are right-handed, while left-handed are a minority. Using one's right hand was therefore considered proper, common, and good. Anything unusual (rare, out of the ordinary) such as left-handedness was considered odd and therefore bad.

### 3.1.2. Semantic analysis

The linguistic pool of metaphorical expressions that contain lexemes *left* and *right* is not very rich. However, even if there is a small number of such idioms, it is enough to show that the former is thought to carry negative meaning and the latter positive meaning.

In the English dictionaries used for this thesis, I have found five idioms that contained the lexeme 'left': *over the left shoulder, to have two left feet, (to be) out in the left field/come out of the left field, left-handed compliment/marriage/monkey wrench, to be all left*. We can notice that some of these idioms are productive in the sense that one part of the expression can change, as opposed to others that are fixed and always have the same form; however, even if their parts are changeable they carry the same meaning and are therefore categorized as a single idiom. Further in the text, we will discuss the meaning of these idioms, their origin, and the characteristics of their equivalents in Croatian and Polish.

The first idiom that came up in the dictionary was *to be out in the left field/to come out of the left field*. The first instance of this idiom, *to be out in the left field*, means 'to be or seem uncommon, unpopular, or otherwise strange', while the second instance *to come out of left field*' means 'to originate from a strange place'.

Neither Croatian nor Polish has the exact equivalent of this idiom. In Croatian there is an expression *lijevi put* which is similar to the English versions in structure, however, the two meanings differ a little. *Lijevi put* means 'going the wrong way' and not 'to come from a strange place', as is the case with English. The Polish language has no idioms that are used in the context where *left* equals some strange place.

Idioms such as *to have two left feet*, meaning 'to be clumsy', or *left-handed marriage*[10], meaning 'marriage between persons of unequal social rank', stem from believing that anything that is or can be found on the left side of the human body is bad or evil. As we have mentioned earlier, this belief is due to the majority of the human population being right-handed, thus being left-handed was considered evil and bad. Another reason for left being thought of as bad comes from religion because different biblical texts, such as The Book of Matthew, describe God's division of people on the Judgment Day where it says:

> "And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'… Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'… And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." [11]

Another expression that explicitly shows that left is thought of as bad is *to be all left*, meaning 'to be all wrong'. This instance can be found in both Croatian and Polish, as well. Both languages use metaphorical expressions identical to the English versions which express the wrongness of the left side. In Croatian there are idioms such as *imati dvije lijeve (noge/ruke)*, meaning 'to be very clumsy or awkward', and *brak na lijevu ruku*, meaning 'bad marriage'. In Polish, there is the idiom *mieć dwie lewe ręcę*, which is equivalent in meaning to both English *to have two left feet* and Croatian *imati dvije lijeve (noge/ruke)*. The only difference between these three languages is that English uses feet, Croatian uses feet and hand, and Polish uses only hands when referring to the left side. In Polish, there is also a new meaning linked to the lexeme *left* when used in metaphorical expressions which does not appear in English nor Croatian: illegality. The two examples for this are *kupić na lewo* 'to buy something illegaly' and *lewe dokumenty* 'illegal documents'.

[10] The practice is called "left-handed marriage" because in the wedding ceremony the groom held his bride's right hand with his left instead of his right.

[11] *Bible Gateway passage: Matthew 25:31-46 - English Standard Version*. (n.d.-a). Bible Gateway. https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2025:31-46&version=ESV (Accessed 17th March 2022)

Croatian and Polish have a couple of additional expressions which depict the left side as the wrong side that do not exist in English. The Croatian language has *raditi (kao) lijevom rukom*, meaning 'to work sloppily', *pisati (kao) lijevom nogom* meaning 'to write in an ugly and illegible manner', and *lijevo smetalo* 'someone useless in something they are doing'. Similarly, Polish uses *pisać jak lewą ręką*, also meaning 'to write in an ugly and illegible manner'. The only difference between these two expressions is that Polish, again, uses hands for comparison, while Croatian uses feet. Both languages have the same idiom for expressing that someone is acting grumpy which are *ustati na lijevu nogu* in Croatian and *wstać lewą nogą* in Polish. English has a similar idiom that carries the same meaning: *wake up on the wrong side of the bed* but the phrase does not include the lexeme *left.* However, based on the comparison with other languages, we may presume that *wrong*, in this case, means *left*, especially because we have seen earlier that *left* meant 'wrong' in the past and also because *ustati na lijevu nogu* presumes that we were sleeping on the left side of the bed.

There are several idioms that are language-specific and present in only one of the languages but not the remaining two. Croatian thus uses the idiom *križati se lijevom rukom* 'to make the sign of the cross with the left hand', meaning that something is done in the wrong way. In Christianity, the sign of the cross in prayer is made with your right hand which means doing it with your left hand would be considered wrong and sinful. Polish, on the other hand, links the left side with stupidity which can be seen in the idiom *glupi jak z lewej buty*, meaning 'stupid as a left shoe'. Here, the concept of stupidity is compared to the human's left side, more specifically, the foot.

When we compare the usage of the lexeme *left* in all three languages, we may notice that Slavic languages have more expressions than the English language. This is not the case with the usage of the lexeme *right* though. Here, English is a bit richer than Croatian and Polish. As was the case with the left side, the right one is also most often compared with regard to arms/hands and legs/feet. In English there are idioms: *get off on the right foot*, meaning 'to get along great with somebody who you just met', or *to be somebody's right arm to God*, meaning 'to be a very good friend to somebody'. Another example where *right* is again used in a compound with *arm/hand* is *to give one's right arm*, meaning 'to be willing to sacrifice everything'. All these idioms have a slightly different structure, but they depict the same meaning that anything found on the right side of our body has to be good and useful. Croatian and Polish do not have a lot of idioms that contain the lexeme *right*. Both languages have the exact equivalents to the English *be somebody's right arm* and they are *biti (postati) desna ruka*

*čija (komu)* in Croatian and *być prawą ręką* in Polish. Croatian also has the exact equivalent to the English *to give one's right arm* and it is *dao bih desnu ruku*.

Even though there are not many idioms with the lexeme *right* in the three languages, we can still see that the right side does indeed carry positive values and connotations such as friendship, honesty, and reliability.

There are three different views when dealing with LEFT-RIGHT opposition in metaphors. The first view supports the belief that left is awkward and clumsy and right is good and skillful, the second says that left-right metaphors are not connected to space and orientation, and the third one claims that both sides are equal and are not morally divided. Let us explain those claims further.

The first claim is that left-right metaphors support the view that the left side is seen as clumsy and awkward and right as suitable and morally acceptable (Škara 2004, 187-188). The association of LEFT with negative values and RIGHT with positive values is thought to be connected to the lobes of the brain. More specifically, it is thought that avoidance is lateralized to the right frontal lobe which controls the left side of the body, while approach is lateralized to the left lobe which controls the right side of the body. (Casasanto 2009, 353) This would mean that avoidance is associated with the left side of the body because it is localized in the right frontal lobe, and approach is associated with the right side of the body because it is localized in the left frontal lobe. This was partially shown by examining idiomatic expressions with lexemes *left* and *right* in English, Croatian, and Polish. The three languages tie positive values to everything that may be found on the right side of our body (mostly our arms/hand and legs/feet), and negative values to everything that may come from our left.

The second claim argues that those metaphors have nothing to do with space and orientation because left-handed people would never say *He is my left hand* when wanting to compliment someone, or *He has two right feet* when wanting to insult someone. The metaphorical concept GOOD IS LEFT does not exist as a conceptual metaphor because it was ruled out by the existence of LEFT IS BAD idioms across languages and cultures. (Casasanto 2009, 361) This claim has also been proven to be true because in all three languages there was not one idiom that depicted LEFT as GOOD, or RIGHT as BAD. In addition, the latter claim also states that those metaphors are not real metaphors, but rather frozen ones because they are no longer systematic and variable. Furthermore, LEFT-RIGHT linguistic expressions use horizontal space and valence unsystematically and unproductively. Casasanto gives the example of the

idiom *to have two left feet* meaning 'to be clumsy' saying that this meaning is lost if even a single part of the idiom is changed (e.g., two left toes, two left shoes, etc.). Additionally, the expression *to have two right feet* does not mean 'to be graceful' because the expression *to have two left feet* is not situated on "a horizontally spatialized clumsiness continuum". In situations like these, where space is used unsystematically, it is unlikely that LEFT-RIGHT expressions are understood metaphorically "via mappings from space to valence". (Casasanto 2009, 365)

The third and final claim states that left and right have the same relationship and neither has any physical or perceptive proof that one side has positive value and the other negative. In addition, it claims that all this symbolic meaning stems from religion and tradition. (Kovačević and Ramadanović 2016, 55) We can say that this claim has also been partially proven because there were a couple of idioms that were connected to religion such as *my right hand to God* which originated from the verse of the Apostles' Creed[12] ('He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty') or *križati se lijevom rukom* 'to make the sign of the cross with the left hand', which probably originated from the practice of making the sign of the cross with your right hand, and doing it with your left would be wrong and sinful.

We need to note there is nothing inherently bad about left and nothing inherently good about right even though a great number of metaphors portray it like that. The reason for this is because over a period of time speakers have chosen that left signifies bad and right signifies good. The historical relationship between left and bad, and right and good partially stems from the idea that the human body is split with spatial planes into two parts, left and right, where one half, the left one, is covered in darkness, and the other half, the right one, is bathed in light (Hertz 2004 [1960, 102], 11). Kant (1991 [1768], 30) stated that nature has given us left and right and connected them with "mechanical parts of our body" where one side, the right one, was given the advantage in "dexterity and strength". This was then conventionalized in language where the left side was connected to something negative, and the right side to something positive. Next, the link between the left side and the lexeme *left*, and the right side and the lexeme *right* was formed. Both lexemes are perceived as either bad or good because they are related to the left or the right side which also carry different connotations based on the Kantian theory. The perception of the lexemes *left* and *right* as being either bad or good was further "enhanced" when the speakers started using them in metaphorical expressions,

[12] "Catholic Prayers". 2022. *Xavier.Edu*. https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/catholic-prayers. (Accessed 11th January 2022)

especially in those where *left* and *right* were not connected to body parts, but rather anything found on the left side of our body.

## 3.2. Z-AXIS

If we go back and look at the Cartesian coordinate system that we have created for this thesis, we can see that the z-axis portrays height, or rather upward and downward movements along that axis. Considering that this axis deals with the upward and downward movement we can say that antonymic pairs which belong to this axis are HIGH-LOW and UP-DOWN.

It was previously determined that spatial concepts arise from our spatial experience (Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By 1980, 56) and our interaction with the world around us. What it means, in this case, is that UP-DOWN orientation is not understood in its own terms, but it is a result of our constant and unconscious motor functions which make us stand in an erect position. (Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By 1980, 57) One of the most distinguishing characteristics of a human being is standing upright on two feet. Humans stand upright when they are healthy and happy, and they slouch or lay down when they are sick or sad. This fact predetermines our theory that the orientation of UP carries positive values, while the orientation of DOWN carries negative values. The question is whether this is visible in the usage of metaphorical expressions and whether UP is always linked to positive values and DOWN to negative values, or there are some inconsistencies.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 195) have put forth two conceptual metaphors dealing with UP and DOWN. One is GOOD IS UP and the other is BAD IS DOWN. We can see that spatial orientation was given to a concept through orientational metaphor, meaning that the concept of GOOD is understood through the orientation of UP, and the concept of BAD is understood through the orientation of DOWN. First, we need to determine what falls under the category of GOOD and what falls under the category of BAD. We can say that GOOD is comprised of happiness, health, consciousness, life, control, and virtues, while BAD is comprised of their opposites, such as sadness, sickness, unconsciousness, death, lack of control, and flaws (Lakoff and Johnson, The metaphorical structure of the human conceptual system 1980, 196) We can see this on a couple of simple examples. If we say *I am feeling up today* we mean to say 'I am happy today', but if we say *I am feeling down today* we are saying that 'I am sad today'. These expressions stem from our posture as humans when feeling certain things. In other words, our state of mind is closely linked to our posture. When we are happy, we stand fully erect with

our head held high which gives an image of being oriented UPWARD. On the other hand, when we are sad, we slump over and lower our heads giving the image of being oriented DOWNWARD.

We will now see how these two orientations are ingrained in different metaphorical expressions throughout the three languages, English, Croatian and Polish, and what similarities and differences exist among them. The way we analyze different metaphors is by using some of Barčot's categorizations of UP-DOWN orientation by using various concepts and then categorizing them based on their bivalence (Barčot 2017, 17-25). Since UP-DOWN orientation is very common in idiomatic expressions, not all the expressions are analyzed but only those that are the best representatives of the relationship between the orientation and the emotional state.

We have already mentioned that UP and DOWN form an antonymic pair, meaning that their meanings are complete opposites of one another. In addition, considering they are a pair of antonyms, we can safely say that they carry bivalent connotations as well, one positive and the other negative.

The first orientational metaphor we are dealing with is HAPPY IS UP and SAD IS DOWN. Happiness and sadness are two concepts that can be placed on the z-axis in our Cartesian coordinate system because we have previously determined that the z-axis portrays upward and downward movements of our bodies. If we link this with human posture when people are happy, we can say that happiness can be placed on a positive side of the coordinate system (z) and sadness on its negative side (-z).

Happiness and sadness are physically visible on our bodies and many metaphorical expressions depict exactly that. If we want to express that someone is happy or should be happy, we can say *keep your chin/head/spirits up*, *be up in the clouds* or *I am feeling up*. The expression *keep your chin up* gives us a conceptual image of a human standing upright, fully erect with his head turned up to the sky. The other two metaphorical expressions depict an image of a person being above the ground. What they all have in common is the upward orientation. Another idiom that depicts being happy by being high up is *be up in the clouds*. There are several different variations of this idiom such as *have your head in the clouds*, *float on a cloud*, *be in seventh heaven*, *be on cloud nine*, *walk on air*, and *be on top of the world*. They all carry the same meaning, and they all convey an image of being in the air. Any of these idioms is usually used when we want to describe that someone is elated about something.

Similar metaphors can be found in both Croatian and Polish. If we want to express elation in Croatian, we can use any of the two variations of the idiom *biti na/u sedmom/devetom nebu*, and in Polish we can use *być w siódmym niebie* or *czuć się w siódmym niebie.* Expressing happiness is closely connected to the image of being high up in the air. The higher we are, the happier we will be. Croatian and Polish also have equivalents for the English idiom *keep your chin up*. Croatian only has one version *glavu gore*, but Polish has two different versions of this idiom: *głowa do góry* (head up) and *uszy do góry*. The latter translates to 'ears up' and it is unique with respect to other languages because none have anything similar in their corpus.

Sadness as a concept forms a richer pool of orientational metaphors to describe it more closely. We have earlier placed sadness on the negative part of the z-axis of our coordinate system. Since the negative part of the axis (-z) is pointing downwards, this would mean that the concept of sadness is also expressed through the downward orientation. Linking sadness to downward orientation comes from the fact that people bow their head and slouch when they are sad, which is why most of the metaphors that use down as a spatial orientation paint exactly that conceptual image.

Expressions such as *be down in spirits*, *feel low*, *go down in the dumps* depict the idea that the closer we are to the ground, or even under the ground, the sadder we are. This concept is widely spread across different languages, and thus also in Croatian and Polish. In both languages, the concept of sadness is expressed in a downward direction as well. The Croatian language, however, does not explicitly use the lexeme *dolje* 'down' to express sadness. The case here is that Croatian depicts the action of going in a downward motion and that flow discloses the concept of sadness. For example, there are expressions such as *padati u bed/depresiju* where the state of being depressed is described as an act of falling and not already being on the ground or below it. The second example that depicts the same thing is *klonuti/padati duho*m which also depicts the idea of our inner spirit falling down or bending lower to the ground.

Polish idioms, just as Croatian and English ones, express happiness with upward orientation and sadness with downward orientation. However, in Polish, the thing that determines everything is the position of a person's head. In other words, if a person's head is closer to the ground than their legs, the expressions carry a negative connotation. There are a couple of idioms which confirm that, such as *chodzić na rękach* ('walk on hands'), *stawać na głowie* (stand on your head'), *chodzić/leżeć do góry nogami* ('walk/lie down with your feet up'), or

*świat się do góry nogami przewraca* (‘the world turned its legs up to the sky’). The first thing that we need to note is that all idioms carry negative connotations, and the second thing is that they do not depict sadness, but rather laziness and chaos around us.

Success and failure are two concepts that are also placed on the z-axis of our coordinate system because they are as well expressed through UP-DOWN orientation. In this case, the conceptual metaphor we need is SUCCESS IS UP and FAILURE IS DOWN. Success and happiness are two closely connected concepts, as well as failure and sadness, which is why they have the same orientation. The best way to see this is through the use of everyday metaphors.

All three languages use very similar metaphors to express these two concepts. In English success and failure are usually metaphorically placed on a ladder or a pole. Expressions such as *climb up the ladder*, meaning ‘to get richer or more successful’, or *to be up on the pole*, meaning ‘to be in a higher social position than someone else’, give an image of a person climbing to reach success. Another way of expressing success or desire for success is to use any of the three variations of the *aim high* metaphor, such as *aim for the sky* or *shoot high*. Success can also be seen as something that can be found on top of the world, and we must climb the “world” to reach it, for example: *go/come up in the world*, *move up in the world*, *reach the top.* Croatian speakers express success very similarly. There are only small differences in Croatian variations of the idioms; in some cases, there is no presence of the lexeme *up* or there is only one variant of the same idiom. In other words, there is only one equivalent for the *aim high* idiom, and it is *visoko pucati* which is more equivalent to its *shoot high* variant. The Croatian version of *come up in the world* idiom is *daleko dogurati* which does not describe an upward direction, on the contrary, it gives us the direction of going forward and is placed on a different axis of our coordinate system. In Croatian, progress is seen as going forward and it belongs to the conceptual metaphor PROGRESS IS MOTION FORWARD where progress, as an abstract concept, is imagined as a physical object that moves forward and the further it goes the better the progress. *Daleko dogurati* paints an image of moving in a forward motion in order to make progress or success. Kövecses (2005, 22) states that *forward* is defined “with respect to the moving observer” who “reaches farther points on the journey as he or she moves forward”. *Daleko dogurati* can also be interpreted as a SUCCES IS A JOURNEY metaphor where success is seen as something traveling toward the end goal, and the closer we are to it the better our success is.

The Polish language likewise expresses success through upward orientation in metaphorical expressions. They are slightly different from English and Croatian in their structure; however, they conceptualize the same mental image of a person being high up. For example, two expressions explicitly depict the UP orientation and they are *brać góre*, meaning 'to get a better job position', and *akcje czyjeś idą w górę*, meaning 'to be appreciated in society, to better your position on a social ladder'. Some metaphors do not explicitly use the lexeme *up*, but they provide a conceptual image of being up or the action of going up. Expression *chwycić/trzymać/złapać Pana Boga za nogi* ('to catch a God by his feet') does not explicitly say that the orientation is UP; however, knowing religion and where God is usually placed, we can say that this expression depicts upward orientation. Another metaphor like that is *być na topie* ('to be on top of something'). Again, the expression itself does not contain the lexeme *up*, but it is a general knowledge that *top* is positioned up, therefore it also depicts upward orientation.

We have now seen that SUCCESS can be placed on the positive value of the z-axis because it is portrayed through different metaphors as being up or going in an upward direction. That would mean that if the conceptual metaphor SUCCESS IS UP is true then its antonym, FAILURE IS DOWN should be true as well. If SUCCESS is seen as being at the top of the metaphorical ladder or pole, this would mean that FAILURE should be low on that same ladder or pole. There are a couple of idioms that portray this: *to be brought down a peg* and *to kick someone down the ladder*. They carry the exact opposite meaning of *going up the ladder/pole*. Failure can also be expressed by saying that something moved in the downward direction. For example, *something went downhill* or any of its variations (*something went south/down the plughole/drain*) are used to express that something went wrong and the wrongness of that something is expressed by downward orientation. If success is imagined as climbing the world, then failure is imagined as climbing down the world or falling from the world and going under it. A couple of metaphors prove that such as *sink/stoop low* or *come down in the world*.

The Croatian language does not have idioms that explicitly depict failure as something that moves in downward orientation because they do not contain the lexeme *down*. What Croatian does, is use verbs that depict that motion, such as *padati (to fall), silaziti (to climb down)* or *klonuti (to sag)*. Equivalents to English *sink/stoop low* are *nisko pasti* or *pasti na niske grane*, meaning in translation 'fall low' and 'fall on low branches'. In both idioms, we could say that failure is placed on a metaphorical tree and the lower someone is on the tree the bigger of a failure they are. In Croatian, there is also the expression *krenulo je nizbrdo* which is the exact

equivalent in form and meaning to the English *it all went downhill*. There is one Croatian idiom that is completely different in form from its English equivalent *bring somebody down a peg* and it is *podrezati krila komu/čemu* 'to clip someone's wings'. This idiom gives an image of clipping someone's wings and the result of that is them falling to the ground. We have already seen that the Croatian language connects success and happiness as being up in the air. Since the wings are the things that are keeping someone in the air, clipping them off would mean eliminating their success.

We have seen through numerous examples how UP-DOWN spatial orientation is used in everyday metaphorical language. This proves the theory that spatial concept UP-DOWN and its metaphors are grounded in our constant interaction with the physical world around us which is why our spatial concepts naturally apply to linguistic expressions. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 126) Further evidence that concepts such as HAPPY or GOOD are placed on the same axis is that metaphors HAPPY IS UP and GOOD IS UP carry similarities between HAPPY and GOOD which cannot be found between HAPPY and BAD. The same goes with SAD IS DOWN and BAD IS DOWN. There are similarities between SAD and BAD that are not visible between SAD and GOOD. (Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By 1980, 147) Positive emotions such as joy, happiness, elation, as well as negative ones, such as sadness, depression, misery, are expressed universally in the world. They are a part of our bodily experience that is universal, and universal experiences are likely to produce universal metaphors (Kövecses 2005, 38). Joy and happiness are expressed by moving around, being active, being up and jumping up in the air, and sadness and depression are expressed by being inactive and being down. Since joy and happiness are seen as good, and sadness and depression as bad, we can correlate that good and happy belong to the same orientation, as well as bad and sad. The opposite, SAD IS UP and HAPPY IS DOWN is not possible because sadness is never expressed through upward orientation, and happiness is never expressed through downward orientation. Our bodily experience does not allow us to form those metaphors.

### 3.3. Y-AXIS

It has already been mentioned that humans exist in a three-dimensional space, meaning they can move left-right, up-down, and forward-backward. LEFT-RIGHT movement and UP-DOWN movement have been placed on the x and z-axis, respectively. This only leaves

forward-backward movement which can then be placed on the final remaining axis, the y-axis. Going back to our coordinate system, we can see that the y-axis deals with front-back opposites.

FRONT-BACK orientation is imposed on us by our understanding of the world and ourselves. We understand ourselves as being oriented in a specific way relative to everything that surrounds us. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 160) We are dependent on directions because they are built into our cultural environment in different ways: writing, traffic, route directions, table settings, etc. (Levinson 2004, 112) We tend to assign an orientation to everything around us to better understand our position in space, and our relation to the things that surround us. FRONT-BACK orientation is one of those that are assigned to animate and inanimate objects. Some objects, usually animate, have inherent front and back, and some have it assigned. Inanimate objects, such as rocks or balls, do not have an inherent front and back. FRONT-BACK orientation is projected onto them by comparing them to some other object in the near vicinity. Lakoff and Johnson used a ball and a rock as an example here. They said that if we say that "a ball is in front of the rock" we have assigned a front to that same rock by thinking of it as if the side of the rock that we are seeing is its front (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 160). However, there is a variation if those inanimate objects are in motion. When inanimate objects are put into motion, they also get assigned front-back orientation. The assigned front is no longer the side that is facing us, but it is always a direction of moving. (Lakoff and Johnson, Conceptual metaphor in everyday language 1980, 468) What needs to be noted is that projections of front-back orientation onto inanimate objects vary from culture to culture.

Humans belong to the category of those that have inherent front and back because our sensory organs are positioned in front of our bodies. That further leads to the fact that we move forward, look forward, and interact with the environment facing forward. FRONT is linked to the conscious and rational part of the mind while BACK carries negative values (Škara 2004, 186) because if we can see something, it means that it is known to us, and if something is behind us it is invisible to us, and therefore unknown and possibly dangerous.

A lot of the expressions in the English language have to do with the parts of the human body, mostly limbs (feet, hands), back, and sensory organs (eyes, teeth, ears, and nose). The human back is a very common lexeme in metaphors and is usually linked to something negative. The idioms here are *a knife in the back* ('act of treachery or betrayal'), *go behind one's back* ('wrongdoing'), *to say something behind someone's back* ('to gossip about someone who is not present), and *to turn one's back to someone* ('to reject or abandon someone'). As

we can see none of these carry positive connotations. Here, Croatian and Polish are very similar to English because they both use the lexeme *back* to express some negative feelings. For example, in Croatian there are *Bogu iza leđa* ('somewhere very remote and far away in a negative sense'), *govoriti komu/što iza leđa* ('to gossip'), *zabijati/zabiti nož u leđa* ('to betray someone'). The same is present in Polish, *mówić za plecami* ('to talk behind one's back'), *odwrócić się plecami* ('to turn your back on someone'), *wbić nóż w pleci* ('to stab someone in the back'). However, there are a couple of instances in which the lexeme *back* is used in idioms that carry positive meaning. The reason for that is because the main focus of the idiom is not on the lexeme *back* but on the action of moving forward. For example, in all three languages, there is an idiom *wind in one's back* (*vjetar u leđa* in Croatian, and *wiatr w pleci* in Polish). All three provide a conceptual image of a person being pushed forward by the wind which is blowing in their back. The main part of the idiom is the direction and not the body part which is why they carry a positive connotation.

Body parts placed on the head are also very represented in metaphorical expressions dealing with orientation. Some are *talk through the back of one's neck/head* ('to talk nonsensically about something'), *get ears pinned back* ('to be harshly reprimanded'), *to be fed up to the back teeth* ('to be bored or annoyed by something persistent'). All of these carry negative connotations when used in idiomatic expressions because they use the backside of these body parts as a comparison. Other expressions, such as *in front of one's nose/very eyes* ('immediately obvious') or *to look forward to something* ('to be excited about something') carry positive connotations and they depict the motion of going forward.

Feet and hands are also largely used when talking about orientation. Feet are connected to both front and back orientation which means that they carry positive and negative values. Antonymic expressions *to be on the front foot* ('to be in advantageous position') and *to be on the back foot* ('to be in a position of disadvantage') clearly show that FRONT is linked with positive values and BACK with negative values. Another expression that represents the forward movement as positive and backward as negative is *one step forward, two steps back*. The equivalents are present in Croatian and Polish as well and they are *korak naprijed, dva koraka natrag* and *krok w przód, dwa kroki w tył*, respectively. Polish, however, does not always use *front* as something positive. There is an idiom *wyjść nogami do przodu* (in translation 'go out with your feet first') which means 'to die'.

Hands are body parts that were assigned front and back. *The back of the hand* is a lexeme that variates between carrying positive and negative values, depending on the structure it finds itself in. In expressions such as *backhanded compliment* ('insulting and negative comment') and *give the back of (one's) hand* ('to reject or snub someone'), it carries negative connotations, but when used in *know someone/something like the back of one's hand* ('to represent total knowledge of someone/something') it carries positive values even though it refers to the back orientation which has so far been shown to delineate negative connotations. The reason for this is that usually what is behind us is unknown to us, but in this case, people are more familiar with the back of their hand because that side is visible to them the most when lifting their hand in front of their eyes. Croatian and Polish speakers, on the other hand, compare something that is very known and visible to them to the palm of their hand which is given the FRONT orientation. However, their idioms do not explicitly say 'the front side of the hand' but they use the lexeme *palm* which is placed on the front of a human hand. For example, there are idioms *vidjeti koga/što jasno kao na dlanu* and *widać jak na dłoni*, which are each other's equivalent.

As we can see, body parts like the back, teeth, and ears are linked with the backward movement, and eyes and nose with moving forward. The reason for this is probably because eyes and nose are placed in the front of our bodies and back and ears are placed in the back. Feet and hands, on the other hand, fluctuate between front and back because they can be oriented in both directions. Kovačević and Ramadanović (2016, 57) explain this by saying that everything that is placed in front of us and is coming toward us is visible and clear, and everything that is approaching us from behind is hidden and unclear.

Another aspect that is often assigned front-back or forward-backward orientation is time. Time is not a physical object which means it cannot be assigned front and back based on the way it is facing us. To understand it better we conceptualize it in terms that are more familiar to us, such as our bodily placement in the world which then makes it physical and palpable (Boroditsky 2000, 3). The passage of time, or rather the past and the future, are presented as being behind us or in front of us. Charles Fillmore (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 42) claimed that there are two contradictory organizations of time. One is where the future is placed in front of us, and the past behind us, while the other is the one where the past is placed in front of us and the future behind us. Some languages, such as Aymara (Andean language) and Mandarin Chinese, put the past in the front because the past is something that you can look at. It is something that has already happened before and is known to the speaker which is why it is

placed in front of them. Aymara speakers conceptualize past events as something that is seen and familiar and place them in front of them, while future events are unseen and unfamiliar and are placed behind them. This can be observed in their lexicon where the words for past and future also mean front/seen and back/unseen, for example, *front year* means 'last year'. Mandarin Chinese also uses spatial terms front and back for time concepts of before/past and after/future (Gu, Zheng and Swerts 2019, 2) The future is placed behind the speaker because it is something unknown, something that cannot be seen. (Škara 2004, 186) This follows the theory that everything that stands in front of us is visible and known, while that what is behind us is hidden and unknown (Kovačević and Ramadanović 2016, 59). Most European languages use the 'future in front of us, past behind us' system when talking about time. The reason for this is that European languages share common cultural background which leads to them having the same or similar projections of time. The link between space and time where the future is in front of us and the past behind us stems from the fact that humans have an intrinsic front and move forward through space and time. The things that we will encounter in the future lie in front of us, while the things that we have already encountered are behind us, we have walked past them. (De la Fuente, et al. 2014, 1682) This is also reflected in metaphorical expressions. The differences in the mapping of time in space only mean that different aspects are triggered in each culture. Cultures and languages that put future in the front, and past in the back, do it so because they are focused on the future even though we do not know what it looks like. On the other hand, culture and languages that do the opposite (put past in the front and future in the back), do it because they have seen the past and know what it looks like, and the future is still unseen which is why it is behind them. (De la Fuente, et al. 2014, 1689)

All three languages place the future in the front of the speaker and the past behind the speaker. In English, the expressions that refer to time are *don't look back, look back on something, without a backward glance,* and *to look forward to something*. Expressions *don't look back* and *without a backward glance* carry the meaning of 'not going back to past circumstances' and 'leaving something in the past without regret', respectively. The remaining idiom *look forward to something* means 'to anticipate something excitedly which will happen in the future'. The image this idiom provides is of a person looking at the future event while facing forward, which is why we can say that future is oriented forward. Those that refer to the past both carry the image of a person turning their head to look behind them, giving the idea that the past is something that is behind us.

The Croatian language does not have many phrases which paint that image. One refers to the future, *budućnost je pred tobom*, and the other one to the past, *ostavi prošlost iza sebe*. Even though there are only two phrases that give us the conceptual image of time being behind us or in front of us, they confirm the claim that European languages have a similar metaphorical background. Polish has the same equivalent metaphors for both the future and the past, *zostaw przeszłość za sobą* 'leave the past behind you' and *mieć przyszłość przed sobą* 'to have your future in front of you'.

What we have seen here is that FRONT-BACK orientation is similar to the others that were analyzed earlier in the text (UP-DOWN, LEFT-RIGHT). One side is considered good or better than the other. Many idioms have shown that forward movement and anything that is assigned to the front of something carries positive connotations, while backward movement and anything found at the back of something carries negative connotations.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Humans are beings that exist in a three-dimensional space. They move, feel, and experience the passage of time during their lifetime. With it comes the need to be able to explain and understand everything around them. Some things, such as bodily movements, are easily explained because they exist in the physical world around us. Emotions and time, on the other hand, are not physical and palpable, but abstract. The best way for humans to understand them is in terms of something more familiar to us, such as the movement and orientation of our bodies in the physical world around us. Therefore, movement and direction are used as source domains and emotion, morality, etc. as target domains in metaphorical expressions. (Kövecses 2002)

We have seen how all our actions can be placed on the three axes (x, y, and z) in the Cartesian coordinate system. The main orientations were UP-DOWN, LEFT-RIGHT, and FRONT-BACK. Each member of these three pairs of antonyms was assigned a positive or negative value. Negative values were given to DOWN, LEFT, and BACK, while positive values were given to UP, RIGHT, and FRONT. The reason for this was because we use an egocentric viewpoint to look at the world around us in which we are standing in its center (the zero-point of all three axes). This viewpoint led to us being split into two horizontal and one vertical dimension by three spatial planes that intersect each other at a ninety-degree angle. Each dimension was then assigned polarity based on our physical experience. UP and FRONT

were shown to be associated with positive metaphors because anything that is UP and FRONT is visible and known. In addition, FRONT is where our sensory organs are, and it is the canonical direction of motion. On the other hand, DOWN and BACK were shown to be associated with negative metaphors because anything that is DOWN and BACK to us is unknown and not visible. The polarity between LEFT and RIGHT, where LEFT is seen as negative, and RIGHT as positive stems from the belief that the right side of the body has more dexterity and strength than the left one, and that belief was reflected in various metaphorical expressions. The LEFT-RIGHT directionality does not indicate that something is wrong or right with the person, but the origin of the words has led to thinking that everything placed on the left is bad or broken, and everything placed on the right is good and strong.

Since all humans share universal aspects of the human body (symmetry, standing upright, moving in three-dimensional space), it should mean that different speakers similarly combine orientation and metaphor. In this study, we have focused on three different languages, English, Croatian, and Polish, and seen that most of the metaphors used were present in all three languages. This has shown us that there is an overall systematicity across languages which then perceive orientations UP, RIGHT, and FRONT as good, and DOWN, LEFT, and BACK as bad. LEFT-RIGHT dichotomy has shown us that all three languages consider anything linked with the left side as negative, and the right side as positive. Their source domain for most of the expressions were body parts placed on the left and right side of our bodies (feet, hands, legs, arms, etc.). The only difference found between these languages was found in Polish where *left* was used to express illegality (*lewe dokumenty 'left documents'*, *kupić na lewo 'buy on the left')*. The left side was already used for expressing negative things, such as clumsiness, awkwardness, evil, and with time another aspect emerged that belonged that carried the same negative connotation. With UP-DOWN antonyms the languages again showed great similarities between the idiomatic expressions and their meaning. All three languages expressed positive feelings and actions (success, happiness, positivity, etc.) with the upward motion (climbing, flying, jumping, looking up, etc.), and negative feelings and actions (failure, depression, sadness, etc.) with the downward motion (falling, declining, climbing down, looking down, etc.). The only difference found was again in the Polish language where the focus in the idiomatic expression was not on the body part, but on the orientation of the body. If the head is closer to the ground than it is to the sky, or if the legs are closer to the sky than they are to the ground, it carries a negative connotation of chaos and laziness. Polish, unlike English and Croatian, puts focus on the canonical position of the body: standing upright with

our hands to our sides. The closer the head is to the sky, the more positive connotation it carries, and the closer the head is to the ground, the connotation is more negative. With FRONT-BACK opposition, the three languages have shown that anything behind our bodies is seen as negative, and anything that is in front of us is seen as positive because it is visible to us. On the other hand, anything that is behind us is seen as negative because it is invisible to us and, therefore, unknown and scary. The only difference found with this antonymic pair was that the English language sees the back of the hand as a positive thing, while Polish and Croatian see the front of the hand (the palm) as a positive thing. The difference might be because of the Slavic tradition of reading palms to see the future, and, therefore, the palm is something very familiar to us, while in the English language the focus is placed on the part of the hand that we see the most in our life, which is the back of the hand. FRONT-BACK pair is also used for the perception of time where the future and the past are seen as being in front of us or behind us. This study has shown us that the speakers of all three languages (English, Croatian, and Polish) use the same perception of time where they perceive future as being in front of them (*future is in front of you*, *budućnost je pred tobom*, *mieć przyzszłość przed sobą)*, and the past as being behind them (*leave the past behind you*, *ostavi prošlost iza sebe*, *zostaw przeszłość za sobą*). This is probably due to the very similar cultural background of all three languages, especially Polish and Croatian, which both belong to the family of Slavic languages. It would be interesting to see whether other Slavic languages (Czech, Macedonian, Russian, etc.) or other Germanic languages (German, Afrikaans, Icelandic, etc.) share the same perception of time since they belong to the same language families as English, Croatian, and Polish, or they perceive time in a different way. In addition, it would be interesting to see how they perceive spatial orientation in general, not just time, and how do they use it in their idiomatic expressions if they do. This study has shown that, even though English and the two Slavic languages do not belong to the same language family, they still show great similarities in metaphorical expressions, which could mean that the same is possible with other completely different languages as well. It would be interesting to see other spatial antonyms, as well, such as, for example, ABOVE-UNDER or IN-OUT. Do they also share the positive-negative connotation like the ones in this study or not? Is it the same in all languages or are there differences? Spatial orientation is a wide area of study that offers many different paths one can study, but when studied it offers significant contribution to linguistics because it shows how our experience is very closely connected to how we create and shape the language we use to communicate every day.

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# 6. APPENDIX

## 6.1. X-AXIS

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN | POLISH |
|---|---|---|
| Left-handed compliment/marriage | Brak na lijevu ruku | |
| Over the left shoulder | | |
| To be out in left field | Lijevi put | |
| To come out of left field | | |
| To have two left feet | Imati dvije lijeve noge/ruke | Mieć dwie lewe ręce |
| | Pisati (kao) lijevom nogom | Pisać jak lewą ręką |
| | Raditi (kao) lijevom rukom | |
| To wake up on the wrong side of the bed | Ustati na lijevu nogu | Wstać lewą nogą |
| | Križati se lijevom rukom | |
| | | Głupi jak z lewej buty |
| | | Kupić na lewo |
| | | Lewe dokumenty |
| Get off on the right foot | | |
| To give one's right arm | | |
| To be somebody's right arm (to God) | Biti/postati desna ruka čija (komu) | Być prawą ręką |
| | | |

## 6.2. Z-AXIS

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN | POLISH |
|---|---|---|
| Keep your chin/head/spirits up | Glavu gore | Uszy/głowa do góry |
| Be up in the clouds | Biti u oblacima | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Have your head in the clouds | | |
| Be in seventh heaven | Biti na sedmom/devetom nebu | Być/czuć się jak w siódmym niebie |
| Be on cloud nine | | |
| Walk on air | | |
| Be on top of the world | Biti na vrhu | Być na topie |
| Climb up the ladder | | Wspiąć się po drabinie do sukcesu |
| To be up on the pole | | |
| Aim/shoot high (for the sky) | Visoko pucati | Mierz wysoko |
| Go/come up/move up in the world | Daleko dogurati | Akcje czyjeś idą w górę |
| Reach the top | | |
| | | Chwycić/trzymać/złapać Pana Boga za nogi |
| | | Brać górę |
| Be down in spirits | Klonuti/padati duhom | |
| Feel low | | |
| Go down in the dumps | Padati u bed/depresiju | Wpadać w depresję |
| To be brought down a peg | | |
| To kick someone down the ladder | | |
| To go downhill/south/down the drain/plughole | Krenulo je nizbrdo | |
| Sink/stoop low | Nisko pasti | Upaść nisko |
| Come down in the world | | |
| | Podrezati krila komu/čemu | |
| | Pasti na niske grane | |
| | | Chodzić na rękach |
| | | Stawać na głowie |
| | | Chodzić/leżeć do góry nogami |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Świat się do góry nogami przewraca |

## 6.3. Y-AXIS

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN | POLISH |
|---|---|---|
| A knife in the back | Zabijati/zabiti nož u leđa | Wbić nóż w pleci |
| Go behind one's back | | Robić coś za czyjś plecami |
| To say something behind one's back | Govoriti komu/što iza leđa | Mówić za plecami |
| To turn your back on someone | Okrenuti leđa nekomu | Odwrócić się plecami |
| To talk through the back of one's head | | |
| Get ears pinned back | | |
| To be fed up to the back teeth | | |
| To be on the back foot | | |
| Backhanded compliment | | |
| Give the back in (one's) hand | | |
| One step forward, two steps back | Jedan korak naprijed, dva natrag | Krok w przód, dva kroki w tył |
| Don't look back | ne osvrći se | Nie oglądaj się za siebie |
| Without a backward glance | Ne bacivši pogled iza sebe | |
| To know someone like the back of one's hand | Vidjeti koga/što jasno kao na dlanu | Widać jak na dłoni |
| To be on the front foot | | |
| In front of one's very eyes/nose | Ispred nosa | |
| To look forward to something | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Leave your past behind you | Ostavi prošlost iza sebe | Zostaw przeszłość za sobą |
| Future is in front of you | Budućnost je pred tobom | Mieć przyszłość przed sobą |
| Wind in one's back | Vjetar u leđa | Wiatr w pleci |