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Is there a place for morality? Spatial characteristics of morality as a subject (Based on the German DWDS-Corpus)

Abstract

The study aims to determine the spatial features of morality as a subject. Contunuous sampling was used to select 1370 tokens mentioning morality issues from the German DWDS-Corpus. Linguistic text analysis, content analysis, analysis of dictionary definitions, descriptive-interpretive method were applied to process the tokens. As a result, it was found that the static spatial position of morality as a subject in the German language picture of the world is expressed using the verb *stehen*. The use of localizers after the *Moral steht* metaphor enables to clarify the location of morality. Orientation metaphors *Moral steht auf der Seite / im Vordergrund / über etw. / an der Grenze / im Zentrum / im Weg* indicate that morality does not have a fixed position in space, its location changes. It is determined that the metaphors presented in moral discourse are based on the following metaphorical models: UP – DOWN, ONE SIDE – THE OTHER SIDE, FRONT – BACK, LIFE IS A STAGE/PICTURE, TOP – BOTTOM, CENTER – PERIPHERY. They not only form an idea of the localization of morality but also demonstrate the moral state of the German-speaking society where needs are more important than morality while economics, society and modernization are in the foreground. In modern society, morality is no longer the focus or the basis for human existence – it is pushed to the periphery and is no longer an obstacle to committing immoral acts.

Keywords: morality, metaphor, moral discourse, metaphorical model, German language, Corpus