

**МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ
СУМСЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ
ТА СОЦІАЛЬНИХ КОМУНІКАЦІЙ**



СОЦІАЛЬНО-ГУМАНІТАРНІ АСПЕКТИ РОЗВИТКУ СУЧАСНОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА

**МАТЕРІАЛИ ВСЕУКРАЇНСЬКОЇ НАУКОВОЇ КОНФЕРЕНЦІЇ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ,
АСПІРАНТІВ, СПІВРОБІТНИКІВ ТА СТУДЕНТІВ**

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ГЕНДЕРНОЇ ОСВІТИ

GENDER ISSUES OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS
IN MODERN ENGLISH

V.S. Kurochkina, *lecturer*
(*Sumy State University*),
T.V. Pochatko, *lecturer*
(*Sumy State University*)

The term political correctness was first used in 1987 in Alan Bloom's bestseller *The Closing of the American Mind*. In the narrow sense, the term is associated with the protest against male supremacy over women, and in a broad sense - it covers the sensitive topics of age, race, sex, social and economic status, health and appearance, physical development, unemployment, and so on.

In recent years, the use of gender-sensitive words and phrases has undergone significant changes in the English language. More and more people become more attentive to the use of lexical elements and phrases that could be perceived by women as offensive. Political correctness is manifested in the attempt not to use such language units that can hurt the feelings and dignity of an individual or a group of people, but to use appropriate positive or neutral euphemisms.

The following words and expressions with no negative connotations can be used instead of those ones that contain undesirable connotations: *chairman* = *chairperson* / *chair*; *congressman* = *representative* / *member of Congress* / *legislator*; *policeman* = *police officer* / *law enforcement officer*; *businessman* = *businessperson* / *business executive* / *manager* / *business owner* / *retailer*; *spokesman* = *spokesperson* / *representative*; *stewardess* = *steward* / *flight attendant*; *housewife* = *homemaker*; *insurance man* = *insurance agent*; *sportsman* = *athlete*, etc.

Such prepositive attributes as *lady*, *female*, *girl*, *male*, etc. in the phrases: *lady doctor*, *female lawyer*, *girl athlete*, *male secretary* are considered to be undesirable from the point of view of political correctness. These expressions are perceived as neglectful. In cases when it is necessary to indicate a female sex as an attribute, it is recommended to use the words *female* or *woman* instead of *lady*.

From the standpoint of political correctness, the titles before surnames such as *Mr*, *Mrs*, or *Miss* are considered unfair to women, putting them in an inferior position. While *Mr* in reference to men does not reveal their marital status, it is not about titles *Mrs* or *Miss* which have been recently replaced with a newly coined *Ms*, because it is comprehensive and neutral, similar to *Mr*. [2, c. 57]

In terms of political correctness, it is desirable to change *man*, *men*, *mankind* with *person*, *people*, *humanity* in relation to both sexes. However, the situation is ambiguous because *actor* / *actress*, *host* / *hostess*, *waiter* / *waitress* and even *proprietor* / *proprietress* still remain in use. [1, c. 312]

Besides, the use of the word *person* has not become widespread in the words *postman* / *postwoman* and *milkman* / *milkwoman*. It is almost impossible to remove *man* in the notions *craftsmanship* and *horsemanship*. *Man-* as a prefix remains indispensable in the words *manhole*, *manslaughter*, *manpower*.

Linguistic inconveniences also arise when using pronouns. Pronoun *everyone* is always used with a verb in singular: *Everyone goes home at the same time*. However, the possessive pronoun is traditionally used in the masculine gender: *Everyone must search his own heart*. When addressing to students, it is usually said: *Everyone must lock their own locker properly*, where *their* is used as a pronoun in singular. In some cases, the inconveniences can be avoided by employing *all* instead of *every*. [1, c. 312]

By the way, the pursuit of political correctness can sometimes result in some interesting logical dilemmas as, for example, in the following statements: *The applicant does not have to tell us they are pregnant. If an employee becomes pregnant, he / she will be allowed the usual period of absence*. [1, c. 313]

So, political correctness is a phenomenon which cannot be ignored, and, undoubtedly, it is a very important issue for teachers of English as a foreign language. After all, we strive to produce competent and efficient users of English, able to successfully communicate and properly understand the cultural aspects and background of the language. Besides, teachers' competence in this matter will help students to increase their awareness of certain social aspects such as diversity, flexibility, tolerance, democracy and so on.

1. Blamires Harry. Penguin Guide to Plain English / Harry Blamires. – London : Penguin Books, 2000
2. <http://www.digibib.tu-bs.de/?docid=00051308>