

Gender issues of political correctness in english and ukrainian contexts

The term *political correctness* is supposed to be first used in 1987 in Alan Bloom's bestseller *The Closing of the American Mind*. In a narrow sense, this term is associated with protest against male dominance over females. In a broad sense, it covers sensitive topics of age, race and gender identity, social and property status, health and appearance, physical development, unemployment, and others. Most scholars consider that a precursor of political correctness must comply with various unwritten rules in many societies. In other words, to follow the principles of decency. All these things are relevant today as well.

Recently, political correctness has become a proven mechanism of behavior in various situations. In Western countries, they usually adhere to rational principles in everything, including language. As US scholars such as D. Adler, A. Bloom, D. Souza, D. Leo, D. Taylor noted, political correctness is continuously being implemented in practice since only tolerance in statements and actions can ensure the peaceful coexistence of different nationalities on the same territory. Political correctness is manifested in the attempt not to use such language units that can hurt an individual's feelings and dignity but to use appropriate positive or neutral euphemisms. Political correctness has become a kind of way of life there, dictating specific standards of socio-cultural and linguistic behavior [6, p. 264].

Our study aims to compare the features of gender political correctness in English and Ukrainian discourses. After all, political correctness has become a matter of increasing interest to foreign and domestic linguists, philosophers, and culturologists. The works by L. Ionin, V. Panina, O. Alexandrova, V. Karaban, S. Terminosova, and other scholars emphasize that political correctness has caused a lot of heated debates for years and divided not only linguists but the entire public into ardent supporters and ill-wishers. The former defend this concept because it can effectively combat intolerance, prejudices, and injustice. The latter consider it only as an instrument of political control and manipulation, which is an obstacle to freedom of speech. Their arguments are based on the fact that too many expressions that have already been accepted or proposed as "politically correct" often sound exaggerated, unnatural and even ridiculous [3, p. 56].

Additionally, they argue that messages are often lost because of political correctness. Adding ambiguity, it worsens language

However, political correctness is an issue that cannot be overlooked and undoubtedly a fundamental issue for teachers of English as a foreign language. Our research also aims to increase the ability of teachers, and hence students, to be aware of certain social aspects such as diversity, flexibility, tolerance,

democracy, and other characteristics. After all, we strive to prepare competent and qualified English language users, able to communicate successfully and properly understand its cultural aspects and subtleties.

In recent years, significant changes have occurred in gender-sensitive words and expressions in the English language. People become more attentive to the use of lexical elements and phrases that women perceive as offensive [6, p. 264].

Many of them, especially those who conclude various official documents, find it necessary to treat both men and women seriously and equally. Thus, for representatives of different sexes, words, and expressions that diminish their role or significance can be offensive. It is recommended not to use such terms and phrases that are perceived as those that reduce the role or importance of any sexrepresentatives. Besides, unless it is crucial in a particular context, do not use words, expressions, and linguistic elements that characterize a person's gender.

According to H. Blamires, who is known for his works of literary history and criticism, *political correctness* has had its main effect on English in two areas of usage: the traditional vocabulary of gender and the vocabulary used in reference to human abnormalities [1, p. 311].

In this article we would like to focus on gender issues of political correctness.

Feminists have called for abolition of using the words 'man', 'men' and 'mankind' to cover both sexes. Instead of them, words such as 'person', 'people' and 'humanity' are employed. Feminists have sought standardization. In this respect the current situation is somewhat chaotic. Only some male and female forms have survived, such as 'actor' and 'actress', 'host' and 'hostess', 'waiter' and 'waitress', and even 'proprietor' and 'proprietress'. The words 'hero' and 'heroine' and 'master' and 'mistress' in their various usages also seem indispensable. But a large number of feminine terms are being discarded. We do not now hear the words 'authoress', 'poetess', 'instructress' or 'sculptress'. Other feminine forms, such as 'creatix' from 'creator', have also gone out of fashion. However, interesting survivals of that feminized form are still with us. There is the word 'executrix', still used officially and unofficially. But the word 'doctor' never had 'doctrix' as a matching feminine form in English. The words once used were 'doctoress' or 'doctress', and they have long gone out of use. The favoured present practice is to insert the word 'woman' before the masculine term ('woman doctor') where needed.

Awkward linguistic problems can arise where we attempt to change the suffix 'man'. We hear such compounds as 'chairperson' and 'spokesperson'. Traditionally there have been always a difference between a 'postman' and a 'postwoman', a 'milkman' and a 'milkwoman'. The attempt to popularize 'person' in cases like these has not proved popular. And it would seem impracticable to eliminate the syllable 'man' in such words as 'craftsmanship',

'horsemanship' and some others. Compounds which have 'man' as a prefix, such as 'manhole', 'manslaughter', 'manpower' and 'manhandle', also resist adaptation. It is likely that inconsistency and illogicality will be with us in this sphere for some time. For instance, the feminine form 'hostess' is still being used in the partying world, whereas there is talk in the sphere of surrogate motherhood of the 'host mother'. It is interesting that when foreign words are adopted, they do not necessarily become homogenized. English-speakers still distinguish a 'masseur' from a 'masseur', but they seem to have lost the feminine 'chauffeuse', used early in the twentieth century. Compounds involving 'master' and 'mistress' were once common enough. 'Schoolmaster' and 'schoolmistress' survive [1, p. 312].

There are still a few words in use which distinguish masculine from feminine by the addition of the suffix 'ette' for the feminine version. An 'usher' (a word perhaps chiefly used now of a man showing guests to their places at a church wedding service) is balanced by an 'usherette' (used of the woman who shows you to your seat in the cinema). The young girls fitted out in uniform for their musical parades are described as 'drum majorettes'. In pre-war Oxbridge it was common to speak of 'undergraduates' and 'undergraduettes'. The word 'hackette' came into use for a female 'hack', a disparaging word for a cheap journalist. The French basis of these usages is obvious. The masculine French ending 'et' becomes 'ette' in the feminine. There are cases where only one of a French pair without taking the other has been adopted. The French 'coq' (English 'cock') produced the French word 'coquet' (for a gallant man) as well as the word 'coquette' (for a flirtatious woman). Only the latter form has been adopted but not the former.

On the whole, the flavour of delicacy and femininity does hang around the ending 'ette'. Where the word 'toilet' is now used chiefly for a lavatory, the word 'toilette' is associated with refined feminine attention to personal appearance. Associations of refinement also resonate in the word 'etiquette'. Strictly speaking, the ending 'ette' was a diminutive form too. Thus we have 'cigarette' as a small version of 'cigar'. And a small disk once used in computers was called a 'diskette' [1, p. 313].

The main linguistic problems arise with the use of pronouns. The singular pronoun 'everyone' has always taken a singular verb. 'Everyone goes home at the same time', we say. But when a possessive pronoun is introduced the official usage used to be masculine. 'Everyone must search his own heart' was the usage, and even 'Everyone must look after himself.' People had been unhappy with this particular usage long before the feminists attacked it. A headteacher of a mixed school, addressing his pupils, would generally say 'Everyone must lock their own locker properly', using 'their' as a singular pronoun. This practice has now become established. But there are cases where awkwardness can be avoided by use of the plural 'all' instead of the singular 'every'.

It combines the power every motorist needs with the refinement they expect.

This collision between the singular ‘motorist’ and the plural ‘they’ could be avoided by use of the plural: ‘It combines the power all motorists need with the refinement they expect.’ However, the practice of treating ships as feminine has remained. It has been claimed that this practice has sometimes led to comic misunderstandings, as when a journalist is reported to have described the launching of a liner thus:

Her Majesty smashed a bottle of champagne against the bows, and then she slid gracefully down the slipway into the water [1, p. 314].

Certainly, in the early decades of the twentieth century, no garage mechanic and no motorist with a serious interest in the new automobiles would have spoken of a car’s performance or discussed problems in the engine except with feminine pronouns. ‘She pinks when she gets down to thirty in top on a hill.’ This was a spoken rather than a written idiom. It expressed a kind of familiarity between man and machine. The converse practice of using the neutral ‘it’ where human beings are involved is unsatisfactory.

We feel that the smart employer should be concerned with the general health, morale, and efficiency of its workforce.

An employer cannot become ‘it’. Use of the plural would eliminate the problem: ‘Smart employers should be concerned with the general health, morale and efficiency of their employees.’ It is odd that the one context in which the use of ‘it’ for a human being was once acceptable was in reference to babies. ‘Lay the baby on its tummy’ still sounds good, though in the case of older children we should find the neutral pronoun uncomfortable.

The question about the use of ‘man’ and ‘men’ to cover both sexes may be looked at in the light in which we speak of other living creatures. There has always been inconsistency here. The dictionary will define a ‘mare’ as a female horse and a ‘vixen’ as a female fox, but would not define a ‘woman’ as a female man, rather as a ‘female human being’. ‘Horse’ seems to be used rather as ‘man’ was used. We speak of ‘wild horses’ and we do not think we are excluding mares. We speak of the ‘swans’ on the river, and we do not feel that we are excluding the pens. Contrariwise, we say that we are ‘keeping hens’ even when a cock is included. The feminine sex takes precedence also in reference to ‘geese’, where the masculine creature is a ‘gander’.

Certainly it would seem that pursuit of political correctness in this respect can lead to curious logical dilemmas. It would appear to require one to choose between the kind of statement above, using ‘they’ (‘the applicant does not have to tell us they are pregnant’) or such usages as: ‘If an employee becomes pregnant, he/she will be allowed the usual period of absence [1, p. 315].

As V. Karaban says, political correctness is a kind of censorship; this fact is emphasized by its opponents when they characterize political correctness as a challenge to democracy. Nevertheless, political correctness is a typical feature of

the modern Western discourse reflecting the fundamental values of the corresponding societies (equality, personal rights, and freedoms). Political correctness is a relatively new area of lexical problems. It is considered necessary in official publications, including mass media [2, p. 213].

The number of politically correct lexical items in English is steadily growing from year to year. Currently, they are given preference when gender-marked words are considered to be socially unacceptable.

In Ukraine, the movement for political correctness in speech is not so prominent. There are only some trends in this direction. Nevertheless, while working with our students and post-graduates (especially of the Journalism Department) at professional texts, we often encounter gender-neutral lexis required to be adequately translated, avoiding misunderstanding.

Under gender-neutral words, we understand words which lack an explicit seme (female or male). Some of such words can have the above implicit semes, such as in words orphan and sibling. English gender-marked words include lexical items with word-building elements *woman, girl, man, boy, maid, father, mother, sister, brother, king, queen, master, wife, husband*, the so-called feminine suffixes *-ess, -ette, -ine*, some pronouns (*he, she, his, her, hers*), some borrowed words from Latin (*alumna, alumnus*), etc. that should be avoided in translations into English [2, p. 214].

A politically correct gender-neutral rendering is based mainly on avoiding gender-marked words and phrases, for instance, *голова зборів (chairperson)*, using gender-neutral pronouns instead of source sentence gender-marked one and avoiding gender-specific words in translations altogether. It should be noted that such gender-neutral English equivalents are largely used in the official and journalistic styles in neutral contexts where mentioning a person gender is not appropriate: *Спортсменка не повинна рекламувати сигарети – An athlete should not appear in cigarette advertising.*

Here are some more examples demonstrating how to avoid using gender-marked English words.

We can also mention such a translation technique of avoiding gender-marked lexical elements and using gender-neutral English, as substituting a Ukrainian gender-marked personal pronoun of the third person singular (she or he) by an English noun phrase consisting of a demonstrative pronoun and an equivalent of the noun used in the first clause of the Ukrainian sentence: *Це не стосується тих випадків, коли пасажир не встиг на стиковочний рейс, на який він зробив броню. – This does not apply when a passenger misses a connecting flight for which that passenger has a reservation.*

In order to translate into English a gender-neuter one, it is also possible to use the definite article instead of a third person possessive pronoun, usual in other cases, in a translation: *Член Ради може бути позбавлений права на*

привілеї. – *A member of the Council may be deprived of the right to privileges (замість, наприклад, her right).*

Sometimes it is possible to drop gender-marked possessive forms of personal pronouns (her, his) in translation altogether or to substitute an article, for example, *Середній студент турбується про свої оцінки.* – *The average student is worried about grades.*

Sometimes Ukrainian sentences with gender-marked possessive forms of personal pronouns can be transformed using the transformation of passivization which will remove the need to use such forms in translation, for example, *Кожний учасник іспитів повинний негайно здати свою роботу.* – *Papers should be handed in promptly; Кожний учасник змагань повинен здати свою форму після змагання.* – *Sports gears should be returned after the competition.*

Another transformation that helps avoid using gender-marked possessive forms of personal pronouns is recasting a participial phrase into a clause in translation, for example, *Тільки послушайте дворічну дитину, як вона використовує короткі прості речення у спілкуванні.* – *Only listen to the two-year-old using short, simple sentences to communicate.*

Now we come to consider translating Ukrainian sentences with indefinite pronouns *хтось* as a subject. The first technique is trying to transform a sentence to avoid using such an indefinite pronoun, for example: *Якщо на мене так хтось хоче тиснути, то він глибоко помиляється.* – *If I am being pressurized in this way, people (they) are grossly mistaken;*

To make one's translation gender-free, a complex sentence may be transformed into a simple sentence to avoid the use of gender-specific pronouns in translation: *Якщо учень навчається серйозно, то він буде навчатися успішно.* – *Students who study hard will succeed. (but not If a student studies hard, he (she) will succeed.)*

Using the inclusionary pronoun *one* instead of an exclusionary pronoun may also help avoid exclusionary words in translations into English: *Вона може задуматися, якою може бути її відповідь.* – *One might wonder what one's response might be. (but not She might wonder what her response might be).*

To avoid using the gender-specific word *man* in translation into English, the pronoun “no one” can be used instead: *Жодна людина не хоче війни.* – *No one wants a war (instead of No man wants a war)* [2, p. 215].

Although the Ukrainian language does not have enough gender neuter words, there are roundabout ways of translating Ukrainian sentences with gender-marked words that employ grammatical transformations of source text sentences.

Having researched this topic, the authors consider it necessary to familiarize students of all specialties with this concept. This research will probably help them better understand the culture of English-speaking countries.

Furthermore, this topic offers a wide range of relevant vocabulary. When selecting teaching materials for students majoring in “Law”, “Journalism”, “Economics” and “Medicine”, the emphasis is primarily on words and expressions that are not recommended for use due to their undesirable connotations. According to S. Terminasova, “Political correctness requires removing from language all those linguistic units that affect an individual’s feelings and dignity. Preferably, to find appropriate neutral or positive euphemisms for them.”

We must pay attention to words and expressions that can be used instead, without negative connotations:

chairman = chairperson / chair; congressman = representative / member of Congress / legislator; anchorman = anchor; policeman = police officer / law enforcement officer; businessman US = businessperson / business executive / manager / business owner / retailer; cameraman = camera operator / cinematographer; forefather = ancestor; layman = layperson / nonspecialist / nonprofessional; mailman = postman / mail carrier / letter carrier; militiaman = law enforcement officer / police officer; salesman = salesperson / sales representative; spokesman = spokesperson / representative; stewardess = steward / flight attendant; housewife = homemaker; insurance man = insurance agent; sportsman = athlete; obese = overweight; deficiency = impairment; blind = visually challenged; deaf = aurally challenged; penniless = financially challenged; stupid = intellectually challenged; short people = vertically challenged people; Negro = African American [6, p. 265].

Moreover, an understanding of political correctness will provide new perspectives in teaching English and expanding students’ vocabulary while promoting justice, non-discrimination, and equality.

So, we can conclude that using politically correct language, which began with English and spread to many other tongues, was caused by the constant growth of socio-political consciousness. People began to realize the need to treat each other with understanding and respect - regardless of gender, nationality, religion, age, sexual preferences, etc. Politically correct language reflects all the changes in modern society that have taken place with the growing awareness of various minorities and disadvantaged groups’ rights. However, many opponents of this language reform believe that the development of political correctness has gone too far. Some of them argue that political correctness threatens freedom of speech and thought. Some Americans believe that if you say the “wrong thing” in America today, you could be penalized, fired, or even taken to court. Political correctness is running rampant, and it is absolutely destroying this nation [4].

Opponents of political correctness predict its imminent end. Their confidence is not without foundation in connection with the events of recent years. Thus, the terrorist attack on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* reminded people of freedom of speech. The perished cartoonists from *Charlie*

Hebdo and the magazine itself became symbols of the struggle for freedom of expression. Besides, it is worth mentioning D. Trump's attacks against political correctness. In his own words, Trump stated, "The big problem this country has — is being politically correct. And I don't frankly have time for total political correctness. And, to be honest with you, this country doesn't have time either [5]."

We believe that some politically correct words and phrases will remain in use, not to mention Western countries. For example, many students from the African continent study at our university. Our local students would never call them Negroes, as everybody knows that it sounds offensive. Therefore, in our opinion, this language phenomenon will survive. Still, Western society may get rid of excesses and extreme bigotry of political correctness.

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GENDER ISSUES OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN CONTEXTS

Abstract: We acknowledge that political correctness is an important social, cultural, and linguistic phenomenon that has become widespread in English-speaking countries and has significantly impacted the English language and speakers' world outlook. Political correctness is manifested in the attempt not to use such language units that can hurt an individual's feelings and dignity but to use appropriate positive or neutral euphemisms. PC embraces the most sensitive areas, such as gender-biased language, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, mental and physical disabilities, etc. This article focuses on gender problems of political correctness, considers the ways to avoid gender-marked lexical elements, describes significant changes gender-sensitive words and expressions have undergone in recent years, highlights, and explores the arguments of PC ardent supporters and detractors. The article deals with using politically correct gender-neutral words in translation from Ukrainian into English, compares the features of gender political correctness in English and Ukrainian discourses. The authors emphasize the importance of PC issues for EFL teachers who strive to produce competent and efficient English users, able to successfully communicate and adequately understand the cultural aspects and background of the language.

Key words: political correctness, euphemism, gender-neutral words, freedom of speech, male, female

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ГЕНДЕРНІ ПИТАННЯ ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ КОРЕКТНОСТІ В АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ ТА УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ КОНТЕКСТАХ

Анотація: Ми визнаємо, що політична коректність є важливим соціальним, культурним та мовним явищем, яке набуло широкого поширення в англійськомовних країнах та значно вплинуло на англійську мову та світогляд користувачів. Політична коректність виявляється у спробі не використовувати такі мовні одиниці, які можуть зашкодити почуттям та гідності особи, а використовувати відповідні позитивні чи нейтральні евфемізми. Політична коректність охоплює найбільш вразливі сфери, такі як гендерна упередженість, етнічна належність, раса, сексуальна орієнтація, психічні та фізичні вади тощо. Ця стаття присвячена гендерним проблемам політичної коректності, вона розглядає шляхи уникнення гендерних лексичних елементів, описує значні зміни, які зазнали слова та вирази в залежності від статі за останні роки, висвітлює та досліджує аргументи гарячих прихильників та критиків політичної коректності. У статті розглядається використання політично правильних гендерно - нейтральних слів у перекладі з української на англійську, порівнюються особливості гендерної політичної коректності в англійському та українському дискурсах. Автори підкреслюють важливість проблем політичної коректності для викладачів англійської мови як іноземної. Адже вони прагнуть підготувати компетентних та дієвих користувачів, здатних успішно спілкуватися та адекватно розуміти культурні аспекти та передумови англійської мови. Компетентність у цьому питанні допоможе студентам підвищити обізнаність щодо конкретних соціальних питань, таких як різноманітність, гнучкість, толерантність, демократія тощо.

Ключові слова: політична коректність, евфемізм, гендерно нейтральні слова, свобода слова, чоловічий, жіночий

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ГЕНДЕРНЫЕ ВОПРОСЫ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ КОРРЕКТНОСТИ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УКРАИНСКОМ КОНТЕКСТАХ

Аннотация: Мы признаем, что политическая корректность является важным социальным, культурным и языковым явлением, которое получило широкое распространение в англоязычных странах и значительно повлияло на английский язык и мировоззрение пользователей. Политическая корректность проявляется в попытке не использовать такие языковые единицы, которые могут повредить чувствам и достоинству личности, а использовать соответствующие положительные или нейтральные эвфемизмы. Политическая корректность охватывает наиболее уязвимые сферы, такие как гендерная предвзятость, этническая принадлежность, раса, сексуальная ориентация, психические и физические недостатки и тому подобное. Эта статья посвящена гендерным проблемам политической корректности, она рассматривает пути предотвращения гендерных лексических элементов, описывает значительные изменения, которые претерпели слова и выражения в зависимости от пола за последние годы, освещает и исследует аргументы горячих сторонников и критиков политической корректности. В статье рассматривается использование политически правильных гендерно-нейтральных слов в переводе с украинского на английский, сравниваются особенности гендерной политической корректности в английском и украинском дискурсах. Авторы подчеркивают важность проблем политической корректности для преподавателей английского языка как иностранного. Ведь они стремятся подготовить компетентных и эффективных пользователей, способных успешно общаться и адекватно понимать культурные аспекты и предпосылки английского языка. Компетентность в этом вопросе поможет студентам повысить осведомленность о конкретных социальных вопросах, таких как разнообразие, гибкость, толерантность, демократия и тому подобное.

Ключевые слова: политическая корректность, эвфемизм, гендерно-нейтральные слова, свобода слова, мужской, женский

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