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BALANCED VIEW ON POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

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, due to the active processes of migration, 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 [2, p. 230].

Our study aims to maintain a balanced view of political correctness because it 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. Terminasova, 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 [2, p. 231].

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 sex representatives. 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].

As our domestic linguist 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. 234].

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. One of them has appeared quite recently. The conventional professions, such as *викладач, психолог*, etc. that were traditionally perceived as gender-neuter ones have acquired gender connotation as in the following examples: *викладачка, психологиня, філологиня, історикиня, маркетингогиня, фахівчиня, директорка, завідувачка, професорка* and even *доцентка*. 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.

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. Terminosova, «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; militiaman = law enforcement officer / police officer; salesman = salesperson / sales representative; spokesman = spokesperson / representative; housewife = homemaker; insurance man = insurance agent; sportsman = athlete; obese = overweight; Negro = African American [2, p. 237].

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 Sumy State 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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