

## POLITICALLY CORRECT LANGUAGE IN MODERN BRITISH PRESS

**Lizak K.M.**

*Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute*

**Statement of the problem.** Nowadays the whole world is obsessed with Political Correctness. It is the result of the language planning movement that started in the US in the 1980s aiming at eliminating sexist, racist, and pejorative terms from the English language, often referred to as the Politically correct (PC) reform movement. Since then it has grown into an influential movement not only in the USA but in European countries like Germany, France, Portugal, Spain as well as the UK. In addition it has become an important part of the ideology and practice of the language in these cultures.

Political correctness (PC) norms are highly controversial and have been subject to political and philosophical debates for decades. Yet, surprisingly little empirical research has been conducted to understand whether they have any impact at all and how they affect media, British press, in particular. This paper is intended as an investigation of the use of politically correct English language in British press and its perception of the PC phenomenon.

**Newness of the study.** The relevance of the research topic is that today, since we all live in the globalized world demanding to understand some significant facts even if they are skillfully hidden, it is really important to comprehend the language that is used by both politicians and newspapers. Therefore in the present paper an attempt is made to analyse the politically in/correct vocabulary use in modern British press.

Hence **the aims** of the present paper are twofold:

- to examine theoretical approaches and background of PC language, as well as investigate the phenomenon of political correctness in the British press,
- to identify and analyse the politically correct expressions used in today's English newspapers

According to the aims of the present research the following **tasks** can be marked out:

- to describe the political correctness phenomenon,
- to examine its functioning in language and the British press

To achieve the set goals an overview of research on the subject and empirical research will be carried out involving article studies and analysis of politically correct language in two British newspapers, namely *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*. So **the subject** of research is the politically correct expressions used in English political discourse, and the most common instances for usage of them.

Considering that language influences our worldview and powerfully conditions all our thinking the hypothesis of the present paper will be the widespread use of politically correct language and neutral terms by both *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* with the prevalence of strong terms in *The Daily Mail*.

**Findings and discussion.** The terms "political correctness" and "politically correct" are very popular and widely used nowadays. While it usually refers to a linguistic phenomenon, it is sometimes extended to cover political ideology or public behaviour [11, p. 542; 18, p.1092; 9, p.177; 5, p.896; 21, p.978; 7, pp.367-368; 15, p.1175; 6, p.1276]. Whichever definition of politically correct language we take it is perceived as a kind of polite mode of expression, which is used to soften the unpleasantness of reality.

According to D.Crystal the most loaded words in the language are those associated with the way society talks about itself, and especially about groups of people whom it perceives to be disadvantaged or oppressed. The most sensitive domains are to do with race, gender, sexual affinity, ecology, and (physical or mental) personal development [9, p.177].

Political correctness (PC) norms are highly controversial and have been subject to political, philosophical and linguistic debate for decades. There have been many strong criticisms of PC, its aims and ideology since its first appearance. One of the most common arguments of PC critics is that PC affects free speech and threatens democracy and freedom of speech, whereas on the other hand there is a belief that it plays an important role in society. Thus political correctness has its opponents as well as proponents. Among those supporting the idea of political correctness are Geertz, [12], Andrews [4], Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap [16], Gerasimenko, D.V. [2], Boldiryeva, S. I., Boldiryeva M.V. [1], Sternynin, I.A. [3], whereas Scatamburlo, Valerie L. [19], Debra L. Schultz [10], P. Lauter [13] and O'Neill, Ben [18] oppose the idea of its use or are sceptical about it.

In nowadays world language has become not only the means of communication, but a device used to have an influence upon people's mind and actions. In accordance with Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or Whorfianism, which insists on cultural change with the help of linguistic change, language constitutes thought as well as controls it. Cameron explains the hypothesis as follows: — language reflects and determines what we perceive as real (or salient, or significant) [8, p.9]. In other words, language determines thought and —there is no pristine perception of reality unmediated by thought's categories and classifications [Stein 20, p.23].

In his essay "*A Critique of Politically Correct Language*", Ben O'Neill points out that those in favor of politically correct language claim that society discourages the use of words that have negative or offensive connotations in order to become more "civilized", and, as a result, victims of unfair stereotypes gain more respect [17, p. 279-280].

Further, he expresses his disagreement and strongly criticizes the supposed purpose of politically correct language, i.e. discouraging the reflexive use of words and promoting conscious thinking, since in his opinion the effect is exactly opposite: "Politically correct language is narrow, faddish, and highly reflexive in character, consisting in large part of euphemisms. It sometimes promotes or amounts to outright dishonesty. Moreover, the drive for this kind of language involves aggressive attempts

to delegitimize the use of politically incorrect terms that fail to keep up with current fashions.”[31, p.286].

Another concern expressed by a rising number of people is that political correctness actually limits open debates; that it threatens the freedom of speech. Lutz in his *The World of Doublespeak* warns against the dangers of doublespeak, against the corruption of language which can have far-reaching consequences, as “ it breeds suspicion, cynicism, distrust, and, ultimately, hostility” [14, p.353].

Accordingly, supporters of PC language say that the way we speak changes the way we think. Therefore, for example, if we use nondiscriminatory language, we will not think of other people in a discriminatory way. However, the opponents of political correctness argue that it is impossible to change our perception of other people by using politically correct expressions.

It is common knowledge that newspapers are one of the main sources from which people learn about the latest events providing them through their point of view and their point of view through words, phrases and expressions. As a result their language is a powerful tool that profoundly influences the reader’s mind.

In collection of data for analysis the focus was on two English newspapers that cover a range of political orientations and target audiences: *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*. The choice immediately fell on the *Daily Mail* on the one hand, partly because of its constant attacks from those who represent liberal views and because it has got an online version and as a result it is easily accessible.

The second newspaper considered is *The Guardian* because first, it has one of the largest daily circulations and secondly, it has got an online edition making it easily accessible to the readers and for the research. Besides, contrary to *The Daily Mail* it is a broadsheet newspaper. Finally, because of the newspaper's reputation as a platform for liberal and left-wing opinions. Since *The Daily Mail* is conservative in its views and *The Guardian* is considered to be liberal, it would be useful to compare their coverage.

In order to carry out a survey on PC language use in Modern British press an unrepresentative sampling of 70 newspaper articles 35-35 issues respectively, were examined. The vast majority of newspapers was issued between the beginning of July 2013 and the end of March 2014. To satisfy the requirements of the present paper, a corpus of 40 politically in/correct terms have been isolated from 70 issues of the aforementioned newspapers. It is important to note that, not all the days of the weeks in the months were analysed, and some articles were selected randomly for the purpose of the analysis. Despite a careful search, this list of politically correct terms analysed in the paper cannot be considered as being exhaustive due to the small number of sample since 40 politically correct expressions were subjected to analysis. However, it is not the purpose here to list every term but to investigate the use of PC language in the aforementioned English newspapers.

In the present study news reports, which are supposed to remain factual and objective were taken into consideration to find evidence of the PC language use. The articles chosen for the analysis were found in the newspapers’ online archives on basis of keywords they contain and that are important for the survey on PC language -

ethnic, minority, and gender issues. The selection of mainly political articles containing PC expressions was followed by classifying the expressions into politically correct and politically incorrect terms.

Two types of analysis were undertaken: first, a numerical count of the so-called 'PC'-related terms in each of the two newspapers; and second, a comparison of the PC terms which occurred within the corpus in these two newspapers.

Data of the study shows that the most common topics found in the analyzed articles were multicultural issues and conflicts of free speech in relation to ethnicity- or gender-based behavior and attitudes. In total 40 different politically in/correct terms were found in the two newspapers in the analysed period.

Due to space restrictions the following table presents only a few examples of the terms under the rule of political correctness.

**Table 3. Examples of politically in/correct terms used in *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian***

The breakdown of the examples is as follows:

<b>Newspapers</b>		
<b>Daily Mail</b>	<b>The Guardian</b>	<b>Both</b>
<b><i>1. Religious and Racial expressions</i></b>		
<b>Politically incorrect term</b>	<b>Neutral Term</b>	<b>Politically in/correct term</b>
Black	African American	African American/Black
Asian	Asian American, Oriental	Asian American/Asian
Minority Groups	Emergent Groups	Minority Groups/Ethnic minority
Christmas	Seasonal	Christmas, Seasonal
<b><i>2. Gender and Sexist expressions</i></b>		
Mankind	Humankind	Mankind/Humanity/Humankind
Chairman	Chair/ Chairperson	Chairperson/ Chairman
Prostitute	Sex Worker	Prostitute
<b><i>3. Different groups of socially disadvantaged people</i></b>		
Disabled	Physically Challenged /Differently Abled	Disabled/ Differently Abled
Old Person	Senior citizens	Old people
Unemployed	Unemployed	Unemployed

The following are only a few examples of the politically in/correct language to illustrate their use in the newspapers.

### **1. Religious and Racial expressions**

One of the most important PC areas covers race and ethnicity related terms. The results suggest that politically incorrect expressions related to racism and religion appear at a high rate among the analysed articles. Moreover, even the explicitly racial/ethnic expressions and mentions of religion were associated with both *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* whereas politically correct discourse is mainly a characteristic feature of *The Guardian* newspaper. In the *Daily Mail* they were relatively rare and they were mainly religious terms.

Although the term *black* with all its connotations seems to have become one of the most powerful taboo words and is likely to be considered offensive in Britain surprisingly enough it is used in both newspapers.

*1. Essence is known for honoring **black** women, but during Oscar week, they'll also be lauding the accomplishments of African-American men in film.*

(The Daily Mail, 10 February 2014)

*The truth is the most prevalent forms of racism, which many **black** people experience today, are the insidious kinds.*

(The Guardian, 11 July 2013)

### **2. Gender and Sexist expressions**

An area of early PC language use with a great linguistic change is gender. The word *man* was among the first ones being addressed by PC although *man* means *person* rather than male.

*I'd like to mark it by asking whether it has benefited **mankind**.*

(The Daily Mail, 13 March 2014)

*For All **Mankind**: vintage Nasa photographs, 1964-1983 – in pictures.*

(The Guardian, 22 January 2014)

Apart from terms for policy, gender, sex is also a topic for which PC language is widely used. Despite the fact that *prostitute* is considered the strongest taboo word it was used not only in *The Daily Mail* but also in *The Guardian*. However the politically correct expression *sex worker* was found only in *The Guardian*.

*A new lawsuit has revealed the extent of former President Clinton's friendship with a fundraiser who was later jailed for having sex with an underage **prostitute**.*

(The Daily Mail, 19 March 2014)

*Police say the number of **prostitutes** has dropped by two-thirds.*

(The Guardian, 11 December 2013)

*How can we ensure that **sex workers** are leading any public debates on "this issue" – that is, about their own lives?*

(The Guardian, 15 March 2014)

### **3. Different groups of socially disadvantaged people**

Another area where PC terms began to be used is people with disabilities or illnesses. It was thought that the use of PC language to talk about people who suffer from various handicaps may have led to the increasing level of acceptance of “the handicapped” by

society. Similarly to previous examples of PC language use no cases for the use of *physically challenged* which is considered neutral were found in *The Daily Mail*, while *The Guardian* widely uses the term *disabled* which is considered politically incorrect.

1. *An Ohio couple were found guilty on Friday of enslaving a **mentally disabled** woman for two years through intimidation, abuse and threats that they would harm her young child.*

(The Daily Mail, 7 March 2014)

*Liz Sayce, the head of Disability Rights UK, says schemes such as the Work Programme, which cost hundreds of millions of pounds each year, are failing **disabled people**.*

(The Guardian, Tuesday 8 October 2013)

It is difficult and inappropriate to draw general conclusions from such a small sample, but nevertheless some trends can be detected.

Expressions dealing with religious and racial identification, show preferred term for *Black* (26) with *African American* (9) still not used as much as *Black*. Accordingly *Asian* (23) is used more frequently than *Asian American* (7) whereas *Oriental* was used only once over the analysed period in *The Guardian*.

*Minority Groups* (17) is overwhelmingly used as opposed to the alternative, newer term *Emergent Groups* (1). The same is true for *Christmas* (23) and *Seasonal* (1), accordingly.

The gender words is a high frequency wordgroup with the most frequently used *Mankind* (14), *Humankind* (8) and less frequent newest term *Humanity* (2) found in both newspapers. There is a slight majority of articles using *Chairperson* (11) rather than *Chairman* (9) with preferred use of *Chair* (7) in *The Guardian*. When dealing with such a strong taboo word as *Prostitute* (11) it was found out that its use is preferred as compared to the less successful newer term *Sex worker*. Regarding disadvantaged groups there is much less success for the newer terms.

Expressions denoting different groups of socially disadvantaged people show slight difference in the numbers of politically correct, incorrect and neutral word use. At the same time the preferred word is still *Disabled* (14) to *Differently Abled* (11) with *Physically Challenged* (1) used in *The Guardian* only.

When writing about age related issues the word *Old* (28) is very much favoured to *Senior* (9) used in *The Guardian* only.

*Unemployed* (23) was the only word used to denote people temporarily without a job.

The PC terms of the present survey included gender, racial, cultural, sexual orientation, beliefs or ideologies, disability and age-related contexts. Apparently, some of the listed PC terms are well-known and widely used; others are actually becoming old-fashioned, some seem to be very context dependent, but one thing is clear: almost any human activity from policy through everyday activity including housework can serve as an example for PC language.

The hypothesis outlined at the beginning of the present paper was that first, politically correct language would prevail in the newspapers under analysis second,

politically incorrect or the so-called strong terms would be found in *The Daily Mail* only or at least in the majority of cases and third, politically neutral expressions would prevail in *The Guardian*. The research, however, brought rather inconsistent and unexpected results. Overall, the examples found in both *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* differed only slightly; these differences emerged mainly in the case of politically neutral language use.

The use of politically in/correct terms is similar in the analysed newspapers. In both newspapers, the preference was given to the use of politically incorrect terms and both seem to be more tolerant of politically incorrect equivalents and widely use them. Although *The Guardian* indicates a stronger tendency towards careful usage of politically correct language than *The Daily Mail* examples of all the strong terms used by *The Daily Mail* were also found in *The Guardian*. According to data analysis, certain so-called strong terms were frequently used in articles of both *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*. Thus, contrary to expectations, the corpora from both newspapers indicated a preference for politically incorrect words. Besides, both newspapers were similar in the nonoccurrence of the latest coinages for politically correct words and expressions.

The number of newspapers and newspaper articles analysed in the present study was perhaps sufficient for the purposes of this study, however, it is not possible to draw unambiguous conclusions from it. Nevertheless, the research shows that both *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* are aware of the phenomenon of political correctness and attempts to hide inconvenient truths in public discourse using politically correct terms and possible effects on people and the way they think. Finally, it cannot be claimed that the findings of the present paper are representative for the UK in general. However, because many of the articles appear in hundreds of papers nationally, it can be assumed that many readers across the country are receiving a similar message about PC. Nevertheless, this analysis serves primarily as an empirical illustration of hypotheses that has been developed to describe the role of the media in the emerging culture of PC in the UK.

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## Резюме

Мова як основний засіб спілкування реагує на усі зміни в житті. Так, політично коректна мова досить швидко стала впливати на політичну та лінгвістичну культуру цілого ряду західноєвропейських країн. Не дивлячись на те, що політкоректність стала предметом вивчення багатьох лінгвістів, мало емпіричних досліджень було проведено для розуміння його впливу і, зокрема, наскільки політично коректна мова присутня в мові британської преси.

Метою даної роботи, в першу чергу, є розгляд теоретичних підходів і передумов появи ПК та дослідження феномену політичної коректності в британській пресі, а також пошук і виявлення політично коректних виразів, які використовуються в сучасних англійських газетах та складання списків ПК виразів і їх групування та аналіз відповідно до їх характеристик.

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### **ДЕЯКІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ СПОЛУЧУВАНOSTІ СЛОВОТВОРЧИХ СУФІКСІВ З ОСНОВАМИ РІЗНИХ ТИПІВ В НАУКОВІЙ ЛІТЕРАТУРІ З ПОЛІТОЛОГІЇ**

**Ляшина А.Г.**

*ДВНЗ «Ужгородський національний університет»*

**Постановка проблеми та її визначення.** Як показує історія науки, вивчення елементів, а відтак і структури об'єкта, є, хоча важливим і необхідним, але тільки початковим етапом наукового пізнання. Наступним кроком виступає аналіз його функціонування. У процесі функціонування мовні одиниці не тільки активізують свої потенційні можливості, але й характеризуються здатністю приймати ще додаткові (функціональні) риси, які проявляються саме у процесі комунікації. У сучасній лінгвістиці на перший план все більше висувуються проблеми функціонального словотворення [7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16]. Суфіксальний спосіб словотворення давно почав привертати увагу лінгвістів, але дослідники обмежувалися висвітленням тільки окремих її сторін [1,4]. Серед найменше досліджених проблем, пов'язаних із суфіксацією в англійській мові, особливо виділяються проблеми опису функціональних особливостей моделей суфіксального типу. Огляд лінгвістичної літератури зі словотвору показує, що у більшості випадків лінгвісти обмежувалися висвітленням тих чи інших аспектів суфіксації [3,10,11], але не проводився аналіз цілої системи суфіксації англійської мови у тому вигляді, як вона реалізується у мовленні.