

## СОЦІОЛІНГВІСТИКА

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### THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN MODERN ENGLISH

*The article deals with the problem of definition of the political correctness because its definition is absent in the English vocabulary, so the author tries to disclose the most correct definitions and sphere of use of this statement. Political correctness is determined to be one of the most important elements in the communicational sphere. It has the aim to avoid the discrimination of different social groups that belong to social minorities such as national, sexual etc. The representatives of these and other social groups have the risk to be discriminated by means of certain statements that are used by people, so the task of the political correctness is to change such words into neutral ones.*

**Key words:** *political correctness, discrimination, tolerance, social group, national minority.*

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### РОЛЬ ТА ФУНКЦІЇ ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ КОРЕКТНОСТІ В СУЧАСНІЙ АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

*У статті розглядається проблема політичної коректності, так як її визначення відсутнє в англійському словнику. Автор намагається розкрити найбільш правильні визначення та сферу використання цього визначення. Політична коректність визначається як один з найважливіших елементів комунікаційної сфери. Його метою є уникнення дискримінації різних соціальних груп, які належать до соціальних меншин, таких як національна, сексуальна тощо. Представники цих та інших соціальних груп ризикують бути дискриміновані засобом використання певних висловлювань, що використовуються людьми, тому завдання політичної коректності полягає в тому, щоб замінити такі слова на нейтральні.*

**Ключові слова:** *політична коректність, дискримінація, толерантність, соціальна група, національна меншина.*

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### РОЛЬ И ФУНКЦИИ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ КОРРЕКТНОСТИ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

*В статье рассматривается проблема политической корректности, так как ее определение отсутствует в английском словаре. Автор*

пытается раскрыть самые правильные определения и сферу использования этого понятия. Политическая корректность определяется как один из важнейших элементов коммуникационной сферы. Его целью является избежание дискриминации различных социальных групп, принадлежащих к социальным меньшинствам, таких как национальная, сексуальная и тому подобное. Представители этих и других социальных групп рискуют быть дискриминированы посредством использования определенных высказываний, используемых людьми, поэтому задача политической корректности состоит в том, чтобы заменить такие слова на нейтральные.

**Ключевые слова:** политическая корректность, дискриминация, толерантность, социальная группа, национальное меньшинство.

**The problem.** It is typical for the situations of the intercultural communication the presence of misunderstanding between its participants when certain statements with correct grammatical and lexical structure of foreigners are considered by the native speakers as inadequate and irrelevant ones. Such kinds of communicative paradoxes of statements are fixed immediately by native speakers. So, good knowledge in certain foreign language doesn't guarantee the correct use of its components in different conditions of real communicational situations. In such situations it is very important to study cognitive and pragmatic strategies of communication.

Taking into account the global democratic changes in the world it is very important to avoid the statements that may offend or irritate the native speaker. In such cases the statement «political correctness» has appeared in linguistics that has become very important in the process of the intercultural communication.

**The relevance.** Of the article lies in the fact that in modern Ukrainian society the statement «political correctness» is widely used by politicians, journalists and political experts. But in spite of this aspect the political correctness belongs to poorly developed linguistic criteria because it has never belonged to the subject of deep fundamental analysis in the Ukrainian translational practice. In different scientific sources of information the authors don't pay much attention to politically correct vocabulary and to the ways of its translation from the English language.

**The object** of the research is the political correctness as the language and cultural category.

**The subject** of the article is the analysis of the rules of the political correctness in the process of the use in the communicational sphere.

**The analysis of scientific works.** This question has been studied by such scientists like Terminasova S., Brodskiy M., Shlyahina Y., Vasiliev O., Remneva Y.

**The aim** of the article is to study theoretical and practical aspects

of the process of compliance of the rules of the political correctness during the use in the communicational sphere.

**Main material.** Political correctness is the process of providing of practical taboos on the use of certain statements that are offensive for certain social groups that are emitted by features of race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation [4, p. 23].

There are different attitudes to the question of the political correctness in foreign scientific discourse. The only definition for the political correctness is absent in English vocabulary. All the definitions may be divided into 2 groups. The first one includes the definitions that don't provide the language aspect of the political correctness. Such definitions disclose the connection between the political correctness and values of western society. In such a case the statement and its lexical and semantic variants determines the political correctness as the policy that is provided by the society in order to avoid the discrimination among people. The second group includes the definitions that determine the language aspect of the political correctness.

The example of the definition of the first type is the determination of statement «politically correct» in a one of the English vocabularies: «Politically correct is the statement that is characterized by the typical, progressive, conventional position in the questions of race, gender sexual orientation and ecology» [3, p. 45].

The Oxford Dictionary of New Words notices the connection between political correctness and discrimination:

«Political correctness is the subordination with liberal views in social questions that are characterized by the propaganda of the conventional ideas» [12, p. 52].

Roget's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thesaurus determines the statement «politically correct» as acceptable for society and gives such synonyms to the statement like: *considerate, diplomatic, gender-free, inoffensive, multicultural, nonracist, nonsexist, respectful* [9].

*Taking into account all the definitions of the political correctness it should be noticed that in common it means the need to behave politely, to be respectful and to follow all the rules and norms of the behavior that are approved by society.* According to Terminosova S. the political correctness is realized in the English language on a very high level and this aspect shows the high level of culture, mentality and ideology of the society that has determined the cult of every personality who has a number of rights. [6, p. 203].

The statement «political correctness» with its modern meaning firstly has been appeared in 70-s in the USA. According to the research by Naumova I. the first use of the statement «political correctness» has been appeared in the English language in 1970 in the piece of literature

by Cade T. «Black Woman». In 1975 the statement has been fixed in «Willa Cather and a Facts on File» by Gerber P. where he has shown his attitude to the sexual minorities [5, p. 103]. In 1990 the political correctness has been used widely in the educational and political life of the USA. The main reasons of the transformation of the political correctness into the communicative norm in the USA lie in such factors like:

- The multinational population of the USA and the need to consider the interests of all ethnic groups;
- The high level of the individual and collective freedoms;
- The strong position of different organizations that defend the rights of sexual and national minorities, invalids and groups that direct their activity for the environmental protection;
- The struggle for the equal rights between all people of any gender. The appearing of feministic groups [3, p. 164].

Especially important is the presence of the political correctness in the sphere of education. The reason of this aspect lies in the multiethnic content of pupils and students and that is why the new standards of education have been provided in the USA. All of them have been based on the principals of the cultural diversity and political correctness. These processes include the process of entering the educational establishment according to the plan of affirmative actions. It means the presence of certain liberties for Afro Americans, Spanish speaking people, Indians and some others groups of society (invalids, the representatives of homosexual orientation, veterans of the Vietnam war etc.)

The category of the political correctness is a part of the culture and language of the USA. It denotes to almost all spheres of people's activity and it has become as one of the most discussed question in the cultural life of the country. The fragment of the article from «Boston post» notices it:

*«The name political originated as something of a joke, literally in a comic strip, and we tend still to think of it as only half-serious. In fact, it's deadly serious. It is the great disease of our century, the disease that has left tens of millions of people dead in Europe, in Russia, in China, indeed around the world. It is the disease of ideology. PC is not funny. PC is deadly serious» [11].*

As the language category it has certain category features and has formal expressiveness. Category language features of the political correctness are: integral feature that means the absence of the discrimination according to race, nationality, gender, social status, health condition; differential feature is the ability of a language unit to except all the kinds of discrimination. Taking into account all these aspects we can distinguish a big quantity of oppositions that are characterized by such

features, they are: African-American/Negro, Asian/Oriental, Native American/Indian, senior/old, physically challenged/handicapped, low-income/poor and others [1, p. 104].

The color of skin has been always the reason of great conflicts in the USA. The great examples of it have been the US civil war in 60-s years of the XX century or the beating of the black skin man by policemen that caused a big quantity of protests and indignation of society. Despite of the declaring of equal rights between all people it is still to be the most serious problem of the USA and lots of authors of American newspapers have devoted their articles to the problem of racism or race discrimination. The good example is the quotation from the «Newsweek» newspaper

*«The 1989 election contests underline a new racial paradox: the less race seems to matter, the more it really does» [8].*

Taking into account the importance of this problem the political correctness has become the basic element of the most of media US material and there are a lot of examples of changing of many groups of words into another ones that are more acceptable and politically correct, for example:

*«That trend, still continuing, has added approximately 18 million people to the American melting pot, most of whom are eligible to be labeled "persons of color» [8].*

The example has shown that the modern tendency when the use of words that determine the race preferences like: «black» or «colored» is changed into the use of more politically correct expression like «person of color».

Sexual orientation is an important aspect of the political correctness. According to the rules of the political correctness the use of the statement «homosexual» should be changed into «gay» that determines men and «lesbian» speaking about women in press, for example:

*«People are far more comfortable with gay neighbors, friends and family than they were seven years ago [8].*

Despite of the rule of the political correctness there is a number of the examples of the use of the statement «homosexual» in press:

*«Something like that patronizing mentality may be at work in "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," a new series premiering on Bravo tonight, only now it's heterosexuals appreciating homosexuals because they do so much to pretty up the planet [8]. There are few societies around the world where homosexuals are not persecuted in some way [13].*

These rules are acceptable also for people with physical disabilities. Politically correct are the statements «invalids» or «crippled»

for such category of people. For example:

*«Here in the Louisiana capital leaders in crippled children's work have been taking an inventory for the last two days of the resources and needs of crippled children in this state «There is no general rule forbidding the use of park boardwalks by veteran or civilian invalids in wheelchairs» [10].*

In the professional sphere the politically correct lexis that doesn't indicate the gender of a referent is widely spread because its use satisfies the principals of the equal opportunities for every member of the staff. Many American companies have the position of the diversity director who has the duties to control the presence of the representatives of both genders and color of skin. The diversity director is the great example of the politically correct combination: his referent is not clearly determined, there's no indicator of gender.

According to the new ideology of equal opportunities and political correctness it is important not only to provide the working places for all the representatives of the social groups but also to comply the political correctness in the names of professions and there have been provided a number of changes in the use of the names of different professions. Such changes have been provided like: dustman is called nowadays as refuse collector, charwoman as daily help, literary agent as editorial representative, a night watchman as security agent, turf accountant as commission agent etc. [4, p. 302].

**Conclusion.** The political correctness plays a big role in the question of tolerance to all the members of the society. The USA is a great example of consideration of all the rules of the political correctness. It is connected with multinational content of society and with different cultural processes in the country. Mass media is very important aspect of the social life and to avoid the words that may discriminate certain personalities is its leading task. The representatives of sexual, national minorities, invalids and others social groups have the risk to be discriminated by means of certain statements that are used by people, so it is necessary to change such words into neutral ones. Such process is based on the principals of the political correctness that provide equal rights and opportunities for all people of any gender or any social group.

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