

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS OR LANGUAGE TACT

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Political correctness (PC) is a powerful cultural and linguistic tendency. This tendency was born more than 20 years ago because of «the revolt» of Africans, who were resented by «the racism of the English language» and demanded its deracialization.

This revolt started precisely in the USA though it had great power and success in the world's linguistic history. English, as an international language, is used as means of communication by different nationalities and races. That's why they put forward their requirements. The USA is a unique country with multinational population. Due to this fact there are various international, intercultural and interethnic problems [3].

Political correctness of the language is expressed in the tendency to find new ways of language expression instead of those, which hurt person's feelings and dignity, interfere his/her personal rights by the familiar tactless language expressions and/or by the straightforwardness in respect of racial and sexual belonging, age, health, social status, appearance and so on.

There are some kinds of political correctness: 1) racial; 2) ethnical; 3) cultural; 4) civil; 5) social; 6) professional; 7) institutional; 8) ethical; 9) moral; 10) mental; 11) gender; 12) ecological [2].

Here are the examples of those changes, which suffered «racial» words and word combinations because of the tendency to political correctness:

- Negro > coloured > black > African American / Afro-American;
- Red Indians > Native Americans.

Feministic movements first started in American English and later on prevailed at different language levels and practically in all variants of English. For example, the address Ms by analogy with Mr doesn't discriminate the woman as it doesn't define her marital status. It successfully penetrated into official English and paves the way to colloquial speech.

The «sexist morphemes» indicating the sex of the person like a suffix -man (e.g. chairman, businessman, salesman) or -ess (e.g. stewardess) are ousted from the language together with the words containing them. Such words are replaced with others, defining the person regardless of sex: chairman > chairperson; spokesman > spokesperson; cameraman > camera operator; foreman > supervisor; fireman > fire fighter; postman > mail carrier; businessman > executive > businesswoman; stewardess > flight attendant; headmistress > head teacher.

The word women is even more often written as womyn or wimmin to avoid associations with a hated sexist suffix.

The traditional use of pronouns of a masculine gender (his, him) when the sex of a noun isn't specified or unknown, is almost replaced by new ways of language expression – either his / her, or multiple form their. E.g. Everyone must do his duty > everyone must do his or her (his/her) duty > everyone must do their duty. Even more often one can come across such form as s/he instead of he/she in written texts.

The examples given below demonstrate different groups of socially disadvantaged people whom English speaking society tries to save from unpleasant feelings and the offenses caused by the language: e.g. invalid > handicapped > disabled > differently-abled > physically challenged; retarded children > children with learning difficulties; old age pensioners > senior citizens; poor > disadvantaged > economically disadvantaged; unemployed > unwaged; slums > substandard housing; bin man > refuse collectors; natives > indigenous population; foreigners > aliens, newcomers; foreign languages > modern languages; short people > vertically challenged people; fat people > horizontally challenged people; third world countries > emerging nations; collateral damage > civilians killed accidentally by military action; killing the enemy > servicing the target [2].

To avoid anthropocentrism towards plants and animals and to emphasize our biologically equal coexistence on one planet with them, the word pets includes a person as the owner and is replaced with the phrase animal companions, as well as house plants > botanical companions, and objects of the inanimate world – mineral companions.

Widely spreading, political correctness runs to the absurd sometimes (for example, replacing the word history with herstory). Quite often politically correct phrases are made fun of. Consequently the effect of «correctness» decreases. The result turns out relatively opposite.

James Finn Gardner, the writer and the actor from Chicago, has rewritten the most popular fairy tales in the politically correct language. His book «Politically Correct Bedtime Stories» was published at the same time in New York, Toronto, Oxford, Singapore and Sydney. It immediately became the best-seller number one. Fragments from these «politically correct» fairy tales don't need comments. They illustrate a tendency of the successive political correctness finished to the point of absurdity.

E.g. Once there was a young princess who was not at all unpleasant to look at and had a temperament that many found to be more pleasant than most other people's. Her nickname was Snow White, indicating of the discriminatory notions of associating pleasant or attractive qualities with light, and unpleasant or unattractive qualities with darkness. Thus, at an early age Snow White was an unwitting if fortunate target for this type of colorist thinking [1].

The given text doesn't need comments. Let's pay attention only to several «politically correct» corrections of everyday common words. The word Snow White is politically incorrect because it contains white. It inspires the racist idea that «white» is good, positive, and «black» is bad, negative. And the beautiful Snow White is described according to the laws of understatement: not at all unpleasant to look at.

The presented research is limited only to the lexicological classification of the political correctness and has only a descriptive nature. The attention is also paid to the transformation of a language picture of the world that is, actually, the aim of the political correctness.

It is not enough to practice political correctness because it only substitutes the real level of the society culture, education of tolerance towards minorities in society and the problem of xenophobia. Being politically correct doesn't solve any problems. Moreover, further practice of political correctness even promotes the increase of the hidden, not discussed xenophobia (whether it is a homophobia or national, racial chauvinism) in society. The imposed political correctness inevitably gives the rise to resistance not only of opponents of the phenomenon (for example, opponents of homosexuals or opponents of immigrants from the Third World countries), but also opponents of the political correctness.

References

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EFFICIENT BUSINESS COLLABORATION: WORKING IN MULTINATIONAL VIRTUAL TEAMS

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The development of modern business is directly connected with the effects of globalization. To achieve success and acquire higher rank among the competitors, gain a reputation in the job market, businessmen need to cooperate with colleagues from other countries, thus starting international team collaboration. The necessity of such teams is obvious. Teamwork is becoming a common and widely used method of achieving productivity in the workplace. It is important and almost inevitable, when the two goals must be achieved - high quality and production efficiency and the product rapid distribution, which lead to making profit for a company.

Many various definitions of the term «virtual team» are proposed in the researches. Such teams are formed by people from different departments, organizations, countries and cultures. However, the common feature of this group of people according to different definitions is that members of such a team live, work or study in different geographic areas and time zones. In international communication up-to-date information technologies provide opportunities for effective interaction and cross-cultural understanding between citizens of different countries [1, 2].

Members of «multinational teams» have different education and cultural backgrounds. Many of them travelled a lot and studied in different countries, and as a consequence, have different worldviews, different behavior habits, values and speak different languages [3].

When the term «multinational virtual team» is considered, one should understand that this team does not have any possibility of regular face-to-face interaction and communication. Instead, they can only use a wide range of computer hardware and software. Thus, the development of information technology allows a multinational virtual team to function effectively, despite the fact that its members are scattered all around the world.

With employers working with employees in different countries and continents, managers conferring with staff across the globe, and manufacturers and suppliers dealing with customers and clients geographically, culturally and linguistically removed, there is an urgent need for multinational virtual team working to be as efficient as physical team working [4]. To make use of this modern way of remote collaboration, it is necessary to understand its benefits. A perceptive manager can consider some merely practical advantages such as saving on rent of office premises and equipment; more convenient working hours for employees; the widest choice of candidates for vacancies without being bound to their actual geographical location; opportunity to periodically regulate the number of employees, depending on upcoming workload and completion time and selection of the most qualified personnel from all over the world [1].

The cultural diversity of such teams also presents several advantages. People from diverse cultures differ in their approaches to solving problems. When a diverse group holds brainstorming sessions, you get a variety of perspectives that contributes to developing a better solution. A team composed of members of different cultures brings a deeper knowledge of prospective product markets. A marketing team that has members of different communities is able to come up with brand promotional and advertising ideas that resonate with the culture and ethos of the particular group. For an organization that markets its products in other countries, this becomes even more significant, because ignorance of cultural symbols can lead to running a promotional campaign that does more damage than good. On a culturally diverse team, the inputs from team members belonging to a specific community are often valuable in gaining a clearer perspective. This helps overcome misunderstandings that arise due to cultural stereotypes and hamper customer service [8].

Multinational virtual teams provide a setting where the interaction strategy is set in way that diverse individuals can come together to share their cultures and backgrounds. It is important to rely on all team members to delegate the workload and to learn from individual experiences. This is a key point in any team and should be a strategy decision-