

THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN THE MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Understanding the evolution of political correctness in the modern English language is crucial for effective communication. This article will explore the landscape of political correctness and its impact on the language usage.

Political correctness, often abbreviated as PC, refers to the use of language and actions that are intended to avoid offending or marginalizing certain groups of people. It emphasizes the importance of inclusive and respectful communication.

Embracing political correctness promotes a positive and inclusive environment, fostering mutual respect and understanding. It encourages individuals to be mindful of their language and actions, leading to a more harmonious society.

The landscape of political correctness reflects the evolving dynamics of language, influenced by cultural shifts and societal changes. It tries to eliminate negative attitudes towards people engaged in certain types of activities and increase the prestige of a particular profession. In English, instead of garbage collector, it is customary to use such expressions as a sanitation engineer or a sanitation man; instead of janitor they use an environmental hygienist, a custodian or building engineer. The word servant has almost disappeared from use. It has been replaced by a neutral housekeeper. The hairdresser is now called a hairstylist or beautician.

The use of gender-neutral language is an important aspect of political correctness, aiming to be inclusive of all genders. It involves avoiding gender-specific terms and using neutral alternatives. Words with such morphemes as -man (chairman) or -ess (stewardess) are replaced by new ones that define a person regardless of gender: cameraman – camera operator, chairman – chairperson, foreman – supervisor, businessman – businessperson, fireman – fire fighter, stewardess – flight attendant, headmistress – headteacher, spokesman – spokesperson, postman – mail carrier. Due to the emergence of new genders, there has been a need to create new terms for people who do not agree with the social genders established in society. Thus, about 40 genders and words for their designation were born, for example, the word actron, or a person without a gender; abbreviations MtF and FtM, denoting people who have changed their gender.

Political correctness has a profound impact on communication, influencing the tone, word choice, and perception of messages. Understanding its impact is crucial for effective and respectful communication.

In educational settings, promoting political correctness is crucial for creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. It involves fostering respectful and equitable communication among students and educators. For example, the word cripple is replaced by physically different, fat – by big-boned, or differently sized. Mentally retarded people are called learning disabled, special, mentally challenged people. People without hair or bald have been replaced by hairing impaired, dumb people are called speech impaired and the blind are named as visually challenged.

Navigating political correctness also has legal implications, as it pertains to anti-discrimination laws and regulations. Understanding the legal aspects is essential for promoting equitable and inclusive environments. Instead of old it is politically correct to say senior, mature, advanced in years.

Despite the fact that many linguists did not believe in the future of political correctness and predicted its imminent oblivion, this movement exists and has a significant impact on the modern English language and lifestyle in Western countries.