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THE PHENOMENON OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS WITH IN THE AMERICAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The article examines the phenomenon of political correctness in American political discourse. The focus of the study is to assess the effectiveness of using politically correct vocabulary by representatives of American political circles. During the study of this problem various theories of justification of political correctness were considered both in the works of Ukrainian and foreign scientists. The concept of «political correctness» has been defined in the article, the origin of this phenomenon in the US and in countries of Western Europe has been substantiated. The reasons for the emergence of the phenomenon of political correctness in America have been highlighted and the arguments for and against the phenomenon of the functioning of political correctness in American society, in particular due to the analysis of the statements of famous linguists and media criticism, have been revealed. Examples of typical politically correct units created as a result of replacing their previous «wrong» counterparts have been given. The phenomenon of euphemism has been explored and the effectiveness of the use of the euphemistic units in the speeches and appeals of well-known American politicians, namely Joe Biden and Barack Obama have been demonstrated. The main factors determining the phenomenon of euphemism during political speeches have been singled out. The article also contains examples of maintaining and ignoring the rules of political correctness by representatives of the American political elite, in particular, the acting President of the United States, Donald Trump.

Key words: *political correctness, public speech, debate, liberalization, racial discrimination, gender identity, euphemism.*

Formulation of the problem. Our time is one of the transitional epochs in the history of culture, when the question of the need to overcome such phenomena as aggression, intolerance, violence is urgent before mankind. During the last decades, in the study of language, the problem of its functioning as an instrument of human communication came to the fore. Any public speech activity is characterized by the replacement of words and expressions that the speaker considers obscene, rude, offensive to a particular category of recipients, to be more neutral or accepted in a particular language community in the form of an appropriate replacement. This phenomenon corresponds to the term «political correctness». Political correctness is reflected, first of all, in speech behavior, the modern ideology of Western democracy, based on the concepts of «justice», «equal rights» and «observance of human rights»¹.

The object of the research is the American political discourse.

The subject is the linguistic expression of the political correctness as a cultural-behavioural tendency of political discourse.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recently, the problem of political correctness is discussed particularly widely. Political correctness is of interest not only to the public, but is also the subject of research by linguists, political scientists, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and cultural experts. In particular, it is analyzed in the writings of foreign researchers N. Fairclough, R. Holder, N. Komlev, L. Lobanova, G. Nikiforovich, S.

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¹ Zabotkina V.I. (1989), *New vocabulary of modern English*, Moscow: Higher school, 126 p.

Nagle, I. Galperin, L. Hryshayeva, V. Zobotkina, Y. Gumanova, L. Tsurikova, J. Wilson, R. Feildstein and others. In Ukrainian science, E. V. Shvachko, Y. A. Ishchenko, O. V. Tjaglo, E. K. Bystrytsky are engaged in philosophical researches devoted to the study of certain aspects of tolerance and the specifics of its manifestation in the socio-cultural space of Ukraine.

The category of political correctness has deeply penetrated the language and culture of America. It touched upon all spheres of human life. Therefore, the issue of political correctness, its problems and urgent issues do not remain unnoticed. The urgency of this topic is due to the fact that, despite the existence of a certain number of studies devoted to this problem, there are no common standards for the linguistic strategy of political correctness, and ambiguous attitude to this phenomenon prompts a detailed analysis of the views of both parties on its functioning.

The **aim of the article** is to investigate political correctness as a socio-cultural phenomenon and its manifestation in the American political discourse.

Achieving this aim involves realization of such **scientific tasks**:

- to define the notion of political correctness ;
- to investigate the origin of the phenomenon;
- to represent the examples of politically correct units;
- to single out «for» and «against» political correctness in American society;
- to give examples of the preservation and violation of the rules of political correctness.

Presenting main material. The doctrine of political correctness matured in the 1990s in the university environment of the United States under the influence of ideas of liberalism. The linguistic and cultural phenomenon of political correctness arose in the United States in the late 60s of the XX century. Following publications in the United States, the theme of political correctness attracted the attention of intellectuals in other Western countries. During the 1990s, works on this topic were published in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Attempts to assess the phenomenon of political correctness were made in non-English speaking countries of Europe, for example, in France, Spain, Sweden, Germany. As the analysis showed, the social ideal in the doctrine of political correctness is presented as a harmonious, non-conflict society. Cultural pluralism, tolerance is seen as the principle of the relationship between different ethnic, racial, socio-cultural groups. This ideal describes not only the nature of relationships between people, but also affects the relationship between man and nature. The doctrine of political correctness absorbed the environmental motives of the last decades, and its social ideal requires the harmonious coexistence of man with the animal and plant world.

N. Komlev defines political correctness as a «constant US concept, a slogan that shows the liberal orientation of American politics, which deals not so much with content as with symbolic images and the correction of the language code. The language is decoded with signs of anti-racism, ecologism, tolerant attitude to national and sexual minorities»².

L. Tsurikova treats political correctness as a «behavioral and linguistic phenomenon that reflects the desire of native speakers to overcome existing discrimination in relation to different members of this society».³ One of the American dictionaries gives the following definition to the political correctness: «conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated».⁴

The cornerstone of the doctrine of political correctness is the idea «All people are equal». In seeking the answer to the question of the kind of equality and its subject, we drew attention to the thesis of the prevalence of egalitarian attitudes in North American society (A. De Tocqueville). There is a potential conflict between freedom and equality: people have an instinctive tendency to freedom, but getting freedom is by no means the main and constant goal of their lives, in contrast to equality.

The development of this phenomenon was conditioned by the liberalization of social order, the emergence of new trends in the life of society and the preservation in the language of units

² Комлев Н.Г. (1999), *Словник іноземних слів*, М.: Ексмо-прес, С. 273.

³ Гришаєва Л.І., Цурикова Л.В. (2007), *Введення в теорію міжкультурної комунікації*, М.: Академія, С. 19.

⁴ *Political correctness*, URL: [http://www.merriam-webster.com / dictionary / political correctness](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/political%20correctness).

that had a negative connotation in relation to these changes. Thus, the dark-skinned population was outraged by the racism of the English language, while activists of women's movements declared English as sexist. The fight for political correctness began in connection with the public protests of African Americans against the use of the name «black» to denote the black population of the US. Demanding the de-racilisation of English, African Americans pointed to the negativity of the connotations of the word «black» as opposed to the word «white» (black 72 sheep, black market, blackmail; white dove, white lie, white man). According to the black population of the country, the ethnonym name «black» was discriminatory. Therefore, the former president of the United States Barack Obama has excluded the word «black» from American legislation. The words «black» and «native of the east» were replaced by «African American» and «Asian American». The initiator of the bill was Grace Meng, who is the first American of Asian origin representing New York at the lower house of the US Congress.⁵

Thus, the socio-cultural conditionality of the linguistic phenomenon has become an acute political problem, the solution of which has led to significant changes in all variants of the English language.⁶

It should be noted that in the socio-political thought and scientific literature there are different estimates of the phenomenon of political correctness. The adversaries regard this phenomenon as a danger to traditional liberal values, first of all, to freedom of speech. Criticism of political correctness has different forms – from ironic ridicule to categorical rejection of the very idea. Proponents of the political correctness think of it as of an instrument for preventing and mitigating social conflicts, raising the political and legal culture of society. Opponents of political correctness believe that the change in the rules of speech behavior and the replacement or adjustment of the linguistic code does not provide a real solution to socio-cultural problems and conflicts, but rather represents a threat to democratic freedoms, in particular freedom of speech. Political correctness, in the opinion of its opponents, serves only as a means of creating communicative parreality, positive self-presentation and formal courtesy.⁷ The «reality-rhetoric dichotomy» provides a basis for political contensation and resistance. Part of what makes politics possible and inevitable is that the gap arises between rhetoric and reality, and becomes visible to people. The politics of language, the politics of the gap between reality and rhetoric, is a fundamental part of politics, and it includes the gap between what people say and what they do, between action, which is linguistic, and action that takes other forms, between what people implicitly claim they are through their styles of performance and what other evidence suggests they really are.⁸

G.Markuz wrote that political correctness is dangerous with its one-dimensionality, about which at one time wrote. It aims at the formation of an asexual entity of universal identity, which not only deprives the right to a public and frank dialogue, but even the desire for such a dialogue. Politically correct language allows to structure and regulate information space and provide information: to cut off the spread of politically unreliable topics and to formulate public opinion in the «right direction». Political correctness is a predetermined ideological limitation of the world view – and, as always in such cases, the picture of the world turns out to be somewhat deformed.

British linguist N. Fekauluf interprets political correctness as a «disagreement between rhetoric and reality».

That's what the Boston post says about it: «Political Correctness is very well entrenched in American educational system, at scientific, religious and community levels, the media, the workplace and even our government. It is changing the American society from within, and the

⁵ Obama banned the use of the term Negro URL: <https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3685831-obama-zapretyl-upotreblat-termyn-nehr>

⁶ Gumanova Yu. L. (1999) *Political correctness as a socio-cultural process (for example, USA): Dis. Cand. sociologist sciences*, M.: Moscow State University, 157 p.

⁷ Nagle S.J. (1998) *What is Political Correctness Doing to the English Language*, Vienna English, Vol № 7, P. 56-68

⁸ Fairclough N. (2000) *New Labour, New Language?* London: Routledge, 192 p.

citizens of this nation are increasingly censoring themselves and losing their freedom of speech out of fear of Political Correctness repression».⁹

At the same time, there are attempts to comprehensively investigate the political correctness as a phenomenon of social thought, its philosophical and historical foundations (for example, D. Meorfy, D. M. Choi). Such an analysis made it possible to identify a positive component of the implementation of the principle of political correctness. Proponents of this idea see in it, above all, a tool for preventing of social conflicts, which, despite some negative consequences, is an important value of the political life of society (for example, J. Wilson, R. Feildstein).

In his article «Political correctness as exact science» G. Nikiforovich writes that the introduction of political correctness in the United States – is undoubtedly good, as it has helped significantly reduce the level of xenophobia in American society. Half a century ago, even the most liberally-minded white would not have invited a Negro-not to be confronted with the condemnation of the neighbors. Now, on the contrary, a person who refuses to accept people of another race in his home will be subjected to condemnation. «This is a direct result of political correctness, albeit not always sincere, but much more attractive than sincere xenophobia», says the researcher.¹⁰ One can not but agree with the statement that political correctness stimulates the process of democratization of society, promotes the establishment of a sense of human dignity, demonstrates respect for the individual. It is a socio-political self-restraint, which serves as an instrument for the accumulation of civilization, teaching that people must be tolerant in relation to representatives of another race, gender, and religious beliefs.¹¹

It is safe to assert that, from a linguistic point of view, development of political correctness is inextricably linked with euphemisms. The dictionary of politically correct language includes many units of this kind. I. Galperin considers political euphemisms as means of presenting an audience of unpleasant information in a more delicate form, through the void of those moments that may provoke public indignation. For example, the usual words «good» and «bad» in political discourse turn into «appropriate» and «inappropriate». And «ghastly problem» (an important problem) becomes a «challenging issue». «Spending» is given as an «investment». «Cuts» – as «savings». It is clear evidence that euphemisms serve as a means of verifying the reality and manipulating the consciousness of the recipients.

According to definition, «political euphemism is a choice of lesser meaning of words in order to mislead public opinion and to express the unpleasantness more subtly».¹² Janet Napolitano, an American politician, notes that such euphemisation of the language is used during speeches and discussions of politicians to show that «we want to move away from fear politics».

Speeches of political leaders often have the character of euphemism. According to statistics, the higher rank is a politician, the more he tries to hide negative facts and to emphasize prosperity. By giving numerous interviews on the conflict between the United States and Syria, Barack Obama talks about the war, not even using the term «war»: «any necessary means», «regime change», «ultimate defense», «humanitarian intervention». The masking function of euphemisms was designated by J. Orwell with the term «doublespeak».¹³

In particular, one of such politicians is Vice President of the United States Joe Biden, whose speeches are a typical medium for political euphemisms in modern linguistics. He tried to show the equality of people both in terms of race and gender.

«They took a vast continent and a diverse people – what John Adams, one of our Founding Fathers and Future President once said – called an unwieldy machine. And they molded that unwieldy machine into a united representative democracy where people saw themselves as

⁹ Bill Lind. *The origins of Political Correctness*, 16.03.2001 URL <http://www.Bostonpost.com>

¹⁰ Никифорович Г. *Политическая корректность как точная наука*, URL: <http://magazines.russ.ru/zz/19/ni17.html>

¹¹ Лобанова Л.П. *Новый стиль речи и культура поколения*, URL: www.portal-slovo.ru/philology/374J121.php

¹² Гальперин И.Р. (1981) *Текст как объект лингвистического исследования*, М.: Наука, 140 с.

¹³ Holder R.W. (2002) *How Not To Say What You Mean. A dictionary of Euphemisms*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 501 p.

Americans first and citizens of their region second».¹⁴

With the help of euphemism «diverse people» Joe Biden points out the multiethnicity of the American nation, using the correct nomination to serve representatives of all nationalities inhabiting the country (instead of multi-racial).

In his speeches George Bush with the help of euphemisms also tried to mitigate not a very good picture of the lives of his citizens. The «poor» are accordingly qualified as «low-income families», although in fact this low level is often equal to zero. Speaking about the poorest, Bush also eagerly used the euphemism «vulnerable»: «If we allow our economy to drift and decline, the vulnerable will suffer most». In this way, George Bush was trying to show sympathy for the disadvantaged. Thus, euphemism acquires a unifying, consolidating, wholesale function, which reflects the desire of the speaker to maintain the spirit of cooperation in solving the tasks that he burdens. The euphemism «vulnerable» helps to create the image of a caring father of a nation that never leaves its people, including the poor, in distress.

Many euphemisms denote economical methods, actions and operations. In his election campaign, Barack Obama called for «economic patriotism». This new euphemism means «to be a rich person who supports the idea of paying more taxes for the common good». With the help of such a euphemism associated with patriotism (and Americans are proud of their patriotism), Obama promoted the idea of reforming the tax system in a favorable light, emphasizing the positive effect of its introduction. There is an obvious rhetorical function of euphemisms, which consists in attempting to influence the speaker in a certain way on the value orientations of the addressee, to change his attitude and to induce certain actions.

At the same time among American politicians there are those who do not refuse to use politically incorrect units in races with political opponents. This, in particular, concerns the current US President Donald Trump. It does not take a week for Donald Trump to say something politically incorrect. This is part of his campaign. The electorate is tired of politicians who read the speeches from the paper. «People adore the fact that Trump does not write speeches, they are not filtered, he says such things that other politicians can not even dream of».¹⁵

During the debate on the election campaign D. Trump, characterizing Hillary Clinton's activity as a politician, said: «If she can not satisfy her husband, how can she please our country?».¹⁶ With these words, according to most recipients, Donald Trump expresses his personal disrespect for Hillary as a woman, accentuating her shortcomings beyond the sphere of political activity, ridicules her public life and humiliates her in the eyes of the world.

The next level of political incorrectness is the statement by D. Trump: «She does not love Putin, because he is ahead of herself final actions». Here, too, D. Trump humiliates human dignity, intellectual ability, expresses disrespect for H. Clinton, comparing her with another politician. According to some recipients, it is by such statements that D. Trump mocks over H. Clinton, trying to humiliate her as a political figure.

But, despite all the accusations by Trump, the audience conferred a victory in US election debates by Hillary Clinton, a Democratic candidate for the US presidency, for her confidence and tranquility looked winner than Donald Trump's loud self-assurance.

During the debate Donald Trump also touches the topic of political correctness: «I think that the main problem of the USA is a rush to be politically correct».¹⁷ Perhaps his words are offensive, humiliating, and incorrect because of his attitude to political correctness as a language-ideological phenomenon. Lately he proclaimed theoretically conceiving a terrorist attack in London on June 4, 2017: «We must stop being politically correct». He spoke openly to

¹⁴ *Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to The Ukrainian Rada* URL: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/09/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-ukrainian-rada>

¹⁵ *Americans adore that «Trump does not filter» the language – professor Harvard* URL: <https://hromadske.ua/posts/amerykantsi-obochniut-te-shcho-tramp-ne-filtruie-movu-profesor-harvardu>

¹⁶ *Claim that Hillary Clinton 'can't satisfy her husband' winds up on Donald Trump's Twitter account after staffer retweets it* URL: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3043861.html>

¹⁷ *Americans Strongly Dislike PC Culture* URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018>

the city and the world: «stop pretend to throw away all those politically correct nonsense that you have always inspired and you will succeed like me».

But, despite all the accusations by Trump, the audience conferred a victory in US election debates by Hillary Clinton, a Democratic candidate for the US presidency. For her confidence and tranquility looked winner in comparance with self-assured Donald Trump.

Conclusions. Consequently, political correctness is a very topical issue of American political discourse, as each of the participants in communication today has to adjust its linguistic behavior. The main functions of this phenomenon include the regulation and overcoming of interethnic and intercultural contradictions and conflicts by avoiding the use of words and expressions that are considered by the speaker as obscene, gross, offensive to a particular category of recipients, and replacing them with more neutral or accepted in a certain community. At the same time, according to a significant percentage of American politicians and the public, political correctness is a «burden of transition», which only limits freedom of speech. However, the attitude of American society to the phenomenon of political correctness is not unequivocal, since in political circles there are many opponents of this policy, who see political correctness which only limits freedom of speech. These include, in particular, the current US President Donald Trump. Therefore, analyzing the political correctness of American political discourse of the present, we can draw a conclusion about the ambiguous attitude of American society towards this phenomenon.

The prospect of further research is to study political correctness in the sphere of translation. **Practical significance of the investigation** lies in the further usage of its basic achievements in writing thesis and manuals on lexicology and stylistics.

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Герцовська Н., Мар'ян В. Явище політкоректності в американському політичному дискурсі

У статті розглядається феномен політичної коректності в межах американського політичного дискурсу. Основна увага дослідження приділяється оцінюванню ефективності використання політично коректної лексики представниками американських політичних кіл. Під час вивчення цієї проблеми розглядалися різні теорії обґрунтування політичної коректності як у роботах українських, так і зарубіжних вчених. У статті визначено поняття «політична коректність», обґрунтовано витoki цього явища в США та в країнах Західної Європи. Висвітлено причини виникнення явища політичної коректності у Америці та обґрунтовано аргументи «за» і «проти» явища функціонування політичної коректності в американському суспільстві, зокрема завдяки аналізу висловлювань відомих мовознавців та критики ЗМІ. Наведено приклади типових політично правильних одиниць, утворених в результаті заміни їх попередніх «некоректних» аналогів. Досліджено явище евфемізації та продемонстровано ефективність вживання евфемістичних одиниць у промовах та зверненнях відомих американських політиків, а саме Джо Байдена і Барака Обами. Виділено головні фактори, що зумовлюють явище евфемії під час політичних виступів. Стаття також містить приклади збереження та ігнорування правил політичної коректності представниками американської політичної еліти, зокрема і чинним президентом Сполучених Штатів Дональдом Трампом.

Ключові слова: полікоректність, публічне мовлення, дебати, лібералізація, расова дискримінація, гендерна приналежність, евфемізм.