ジェンダーと言語：政治的正解（PC）言語運動における異文化分析[*]

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Gender and Language: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Politically Correct (PC) Language Movement

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1. Introduction: No Offense Intended.

Discrimination takes on many forms and permeates all world societies. Although the permanent end of all discrimination is the rant of an idealist, this author feels that humanity is benefited greatly by its efforts to end discrimination. Human rights and discrimination are directly correlated. The *politically correct* (PC) movement was created out of an effort to end discrimination in language—especially through the use of gender-neutral vocabulary. Discrimination may be based on race or ethnic orientation, gender, language, age, religion, employment, economic status or disability. Please refer to the following table for a brief description of types and examples of discrimination.

Table 1. Types of Discrimination

Types	Examples
Linguistic	Speaking in words that belittle, the mocking of minority languages
Racial	Negative comments on national origin, racist comments on skin color
Sexual	*Othering* or mistreatment of LGBTs, mocking one's sexual orientation
Religious	Open attack on one's religious belief or philosophy, imposing of one's religion
Educational	Opportunity and development blatantly blocked or denied due to credentials
Disability	Lack of public *barrier free* access, insults based on mental or physical ability
Appearance	Teased because of personal body style, weight, height, hair color, etc.
Economic	*Class* exclusion from public places, institutes, restaurants, and stores
Social Status	Labeled derogatorily by others—*trailer park trash, red neck, welfare mother*

[Source: author]

2. PC Movement Overview.

Political Correctness or "PC" is a term created from a social movement to minimize offence through racial, gender, ethnic, aged, disabled or other identity groups. Political correctness concerns the language, policies, ideas or behaviors toward social groups. Ideas, behavior and language that may cause offence are referred to being "politically incorrect". For the purpose of this article, the author will maintain that political correctness is in reference specifically to speech and language.

PC speech movement sparked attention in the early 1990s with TV programs such as *Beavis and Butthead* with what was at the time considered grotesque language that challenged previously established standards for television (Bush, 1995). Making language fair towards the feelings of all society members was the basis of the PC movement in the 1990s in the

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wake of the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) hearings which changed the guidelines and rating systems for the music industry. Accountability, censorship, and guidelines become keywords for setting standards. The PMRC hearings had a direct influence on the PC movement as both originated from left-wing politics as terms of disparagement towards radicals and extremists (Bush, 1995). Social values in question as compromising and change became the new debate. The PC movement has not lost momentum in many respects as the same trends can be seen in academia and in global societies (O'Neill, 2011). The author has noticed the PC movement on the international scene in Asia as perhaps a response to social changes in the West.

The PC movement is defined as an intellectual effort to promote social progress through language. Through the PC movement, gender-neutral vocabulary was created out of the awareness that language should not offend on the basis of gender. Male dominance over women is manifested in various ways in world societies. Patriarchal societies where males hold primary power and social privilege over women and children are common throughout the history of the world. The economic, political, religious, social, and legal organization of most world cultures is maintained under a patriarchy system (Malti-Douglas, 2007). Western history as well as Asian history carries many similarities of male authority and social privilege over females (Lockard, 2007). Both Western culture and Asian culture under Confucian philosophy maintain the male family name for genealogy and reference to ancestors. The birth of a male child is celebrated for carrying on the *family name* or maintaining royalty or divine lineage.

Modern society continues to portray women in submissive roles as manifested in language. As an example, one might consider the concept of the term *date rape*. This term denotes a problematic concept that *rape* requires specific classification. A rape is a rape whether it is perpetrated by a date, where either force or a drug might be used to gain compliance, or a stranger who uses force or the threat of violence to gain compliance. This author believes that this term to separate *date* rape as a type of rape is merely an effort to suggest that a female might have encouraged the rape such as invite a male to her residence.

This author believes that both the concepts of *male dominance* and *female submission* are learned and socialized through language. It is important to define *sexism* or *sexual discrimination*. Both of these terms are based on an assumption of a difference between men and women which is not *biologically* justified and such distinguishing of women and men leads to unfair assumptions and prejudice. Sexist language and the sexist use of language are also important to define. Sexist language is language that is inherently sexist in that it is exclusive to language itself and often cannot be avoided. A sexist use of language is the use of language that is discriminatory and is avoidable. Pronoun reference and other set phases are examples of the sexist use of language. Pronoun reference is a common example of sexist language as in the following sentence examples: *A student who passes the final will get a passing grade, won't **he**? If a person hits you, you have a right to hit **him** back., Any person who speaks **his** mind about religion could get in trouble.*

Here we see the ubiquitous presence of *he, him*, and *his* as the default resumptive pronouns. A resumptive pronoun is defined as a pronoun that has the same referent as an earlier noun phrase—in these cases *any person* and *a person*. Use of *he, him*, and *his* has historically been dictated by those who enforce *Standard* English. In this context, the use of these pronouns makes women invisible. Interestingly, many people have come to use officially ungrammatical plural pronouns like *they, their*, and *them* to avoid this problem, as in the following examples: *Any person who passes the final will get a passing grade, won't **they**? Any person who gets hit by another person should hit **them** back. Any person who gives some of **their** money to the poor should receive some sort of commendation.*

This author suspects that the later examples arise in part out of a desire to be politically correct by avoiding use the masculine form and in part in an effort to simplify their speech by avoiding the cumbersome locutions *he or she, him or her* and *his or her*. Anyone who writes for publication faces this problem. This author has adopted two different solutions. The first solution is to use cumbersome compound phrases and the other is to use masculine and feminine pronouns in some sort of random order. Neither is satisfactory. The correct solution in this author's opinion is to follow suit and use *they* and *their* despite how traditional grammarians may feel about it.

The invisibility of women is also fostered by words like *mankind* and *chairman* and *fireman*, such other terms that refer to humans generally with words with male referents. Those hoping to sound PC might say *humankind*, or *chairperson* or *firefighter*. In using these male-oriented terms, not only are females treated as invisible, males are seen as being the normative sex. Many terms for vocations establish males as the normative sex (Bush,

1995). Many people use *doctor* when referring to male doctors and *woman doctor* when referring to female doctors. In other cases, the fact that males are the norm is shown by the existence of separate terms for males and females, the latter always being longer thanks to the addition of a suffix. Examples of this include *actor* and *actress, prince* and *princess, Jew* and *Jewess, lion* and *lioness*, etc. Interestingly, according to a Wikipedia entry, "Jewess" was sometimes used for Jewish women. This word, like "Negress" is now at best an archaism, and is generally taken as an insult. However, some modern Jewish women have reclaimed the term Jewess and use it proudly.

If you listen carefully to how female actors talk, many insist on referring to themselves as *actors*, not *actresses* because they know that *actress* has less status associated with it because it is restricted in its reference to women and in society, in general, women have less status than men. Therefore, when women are not made invisible by general terms for referring to people, they are frequently referred to using lower status forms.

Table 2. Gender-Neutral Words

Gender-Oriented	Gender-Neutral
chairman	chair person
businessman	business person
salesman	sales person
stewardess	flight attendant/cabin crew
cameraman	camera operator
actress	actor
career woman	career professional
fireman	fire fighter
hostess	host
maid	house cleaner
waitress	server
heroine	hero
policeman	police officer
mailman	mail carrier/postal worker
master	expert
garbage man	sanitation engineer
prince/princess	royal highness

[Source: author]

Content of EFL curriculum has also changed recently in response to the PC movement. As *political correctness* concerns the language, policies, ideas or behaviors toward social groups. Perceived discrimination fuels language changes to avoid offense or to soften meaning for political or societal purposes. As sexism, racism and discrimination are reflected in language, textbooks have changed over the past few years to new genderless, non-discriminatory vocabulary which is accepted as politically correct (O'Neill, 2011). As an example, gender-specific vocabulary such as *fireman, policeman, mailman, businessman*, and *chairman* have been changed to *fire fighter, police officer, mail carrier, business person*, and *chairperson*. Researcher Tsunoda (1988) observed the suffix *–man* used liberally in the Japanese language as well. Words such as *salaryman* for *businessman* are openly endorsed by Japanese society (Tsunoda, 1988).

Vocabulary that existed in both feminine and masculine form such as *waiter* and *waitress*, *steward* and *stewardess* have been changed to genderless form as *caterer* and *flight attendant*. This trend has continued over the past few years and is gaining support and momentum as the author has noticed the EFL textbooks previously endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology reprinted with genderless vocabulary.

Expressways textbook published by Kairyudo and New Horizon published by Tokyo Shoseki are examples of this curriculum trend. Recently, the Expressways and Expressways II text has been expanded, at the request of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) to include the teaching of cultural variations of English by including Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom English as study units in addition to the standardized American English which has become popular in Japan in the wake of World War II. Oxford University Press author Ritsuko Nakata (2016) has also supported this trend in her textbook series Let's Go. Let's Go textbook series has received full endorsement by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) and is currently used in many elementary schools and middle schools throughout the country. Let's Go series, which at the time of this writing is now at its forth reprint. Alteration of vocabulary to reflect genderless nouns and illustrations showing multinational students modeling dialogs are noticeable changes in the Let's Go texts. Refer to Figure 1 for a sample page of Nakata's Let's Go text featuring revised genderless PC vocabulary:
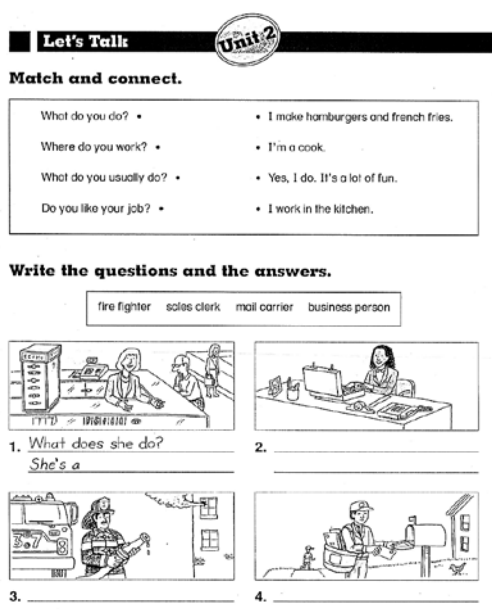

Figure 1. Let's Go EFL text authored by Ritsuko Nakata and published by Oxford University Press.

As the PC movement continues, the author has noticed changes in textbooks and other overt curriculum as being a trend in curriculum. The PC movement is a determining factor in creating explicit curriculum. There are numerous other ways in which male dominance is codified in language. Letters are addressed to *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* but almost never seen addressed to *Mrs. and Mr. Smith*. A locution that establishes not just male dominance but the subservience of women to men occurs in the old fashioned but still used phrase uttered at wedding ceremonies: *I pronounce you man and wife*. This is a ludicrous expression as how would one go about pronouncing someone to be a man? This phrase establishes the woman in the subservient role of wife. There is an easy way to improve the language of wedding vows. One may simply use *husband and wife*. Notice though how odd sounding *I pronounce you wife and husband* is. As a social rule, the man must always come first.

There are various instances in which linguistic distinctions tend to mask the marital status of men but not women. The most obvious is the distinction between *Mr.*, which is used for married and single men, versus *Mrs.*, which is used only for women who are or were married as with widows, and *Miss*, which is used for women who are unmarried or for a female child. The women's liberation movement tried to establish *Ms.* as the equivalent to *Mr.* Another way in which males are treated differently from women is that the term *bachelor* refers to males who are single and who may or may not be divorced. We have *divorcee* for single women who were previously married and no one-word term for single women who have never been married. The contrast between *bachelor* and the highly pejorative term *spinster*, used to refer to those who have never married, makes clear that a woman who has not been married, the object of serious male attention, is a lesser being than a male who *chooses* not to be married.

3. PC Movement in Japan.

Sexism is not exclusive to the English language as multiple examples can be examined throughout languages and cultures in the world. In the Japanese language gender-neutral words are also emerging as can be observed with the new expression *kangoshi* 看護師 instead of *kangofu* 看護婦 to represent one's profession as a *nurse*. In Japan, workplace law titled 雇用の分野における男女の均等な機会及び待遇の確保等に関する法律 was established to change many of the words for women in the workplace. Examples of these changes are included in the following table:

Table 3. Gender-Neutral Words

Gender-Oriented	Gender-Neutral
婦人警察官→女性警察官	referred to as 警察官 after employed full-time
営業マン	営業職
保母	保育士
看護婦	看護師
スチュワーデス	客室乗務員

[Source: Wikipedia Japan]

Japanese also has many gender-neutral given names such as Shinobu, Chiharu, Hikaru, Asuka, Kaoru, Kiyomi, etc. Whether this is a result of social awareness or mere random changes is a topic for further research. This author has likewise noticed many gender-neutral names in Korea and the United States. To distinguish between male and female occupation is to discriminate; therefore, gender-neutral terms are considered more PC. Perhaps gender-neutral given names also coincide with this movement.

There are also controversial terms for *husband* and *wife* in Japanese such as 亭主、主人、奥さん、家内 that are still used liberally in everyday speech; however, there are restrictions on using these terms in the media. Other examples of controversial terms include 未亡人、帰国子女、入籍する、嫁、嬲る、etc. Casual study of Japanese points to expressions that is obviously *sexist*. For example ご主人 means *husband* but it also means *master*. So the woman has to refer to her partner as *master*.

As one studies kanji, one can see characters that seem more or less degrading to women, when one looks at the use of the *onna* 女 female kanji character. Shirato (1963) observed how the *onna* 女 kanji character is used to degrade females in the Japanese language as documented in her article on the lexical and character contests in Japanese language teaching materials. The *onna* 女 character is weak and submissive *onna-rashii* 女らしい whereas the male *otoko* 男 character is strong and *otoko-rashii* 男らしい. Two *onna* 女 women characters together is even more weak or *memeshii* 女女しい. Three *onna* 女 women characters *kashimashii* 姦しい can mean both noisy or rape (Shirato, 1963). The *onna* 女 kanji is used in many words describing negative emotions such as 嫉妬 (jealousy) and 怒り (anger). The negative use of the 女 kanji can also be found used liberally in the kanji radicals in a variety of other negative terms including: 妨げる (disturb), 妖しい (suspicious), 奸計 (evil scheme), 妄りに (recklessly), 如何様 (trickery), 婢僕 (servant), 媚 (flattery), 妖怪 (monster), 妖術 (witchcraft), 妬ましい (envy), 威嚇 (threat), 威張る (pride), 嫌 (unpleasant), 嫌がらせ (harassment), 激怒 (rage), 婆/姥/媼 (old hag), 姦淫 (adultery), 婬 (lewd), 姦通 (fornicate), 姦夫 (adulterer), 娼婦 (prostitute), 妄語 (lie), etc. There are numerous examples of the negative use of 女 in kanji characters. These examples show us how women are identified and characterized through the language of kanji.

There are many gender differences in the Japanese language and the existence of distinctive "women language" or *onnakotaba* in Japanese. Researchers Siegal and Okamoto (2003) have studied how women's speech in Japan is a measure of femininity and also distinguishes social class through language. Ending statements with *wa* or the use of *kashira* instead of *kamoshirenai* and *atashi* to refer to oneself are the most immediate and measurable examples of *onnakotoba* (Siegal & Okamoto, 2003). By Understanding the Japanese language, we can identify two issues. These two issues can show us different status of man and women in Japanese culture. In Japanese culture many expressions are used to treat women differently from men. In many cases these expressions are used to criticize women and refer to them in a derogatory manor based on their physical appearance and status. In Japanese female/woman is referred to as *onna*, while on the other hand, male/man is called *otoko*. Both of these expressions for male and female have positive and negative connotations. In Japanese *onna* can mean mistress or prostitute, but *otoko* can mean a good man or a sexy man depending on how you use it. For example: In Japanese if you say, *Yasushi wa ii otoko ni natta*, this can mean that Yasushi has become a good man or a sexy man. However, if Yasushi is not a male but a female and you say, *Yasushi wa ii onna ni natta*. This could mean that Yasushi has become a good mistress or a prostitute.

As another example, 子女 has two meanings. It can refer to children (boys and girls), and it can also be used to refer to girls only. There is a misconception by some people that 帰国子女 only refers to girls which is why in some circles it is changed to 帰国生徒 mainly by public institutions. In Japan, referring to the number of brothers and sisters one has is generalized as *kyodai* 兄弟. However, *kyodai* 兄弟 directly refers only to the vocabulary "brother" making female siblings or "sister" invisible. Therefore, when one asks *kyodai wa nan nin desu ka* it is assumed that sisters or *shimai* 姉妹 are included even if not directly referred to.

When one looks at the roots of the Kanji characters and how the characters originated

in China, it is easy to see the parallels to Confucian ideology. Confucian ideology is sexist in that it is the male that carries social importance for both rituals and for preserving family heritage. Confucian culture is a male-oriented social structure. The importance of the male role was perhaps portrayed through the ideogram kanji characters in reflection of the societal standards. The male testicles which are important for reproduction and carrying on the "family name" in Confucian culture were given the slang term "golden balls" or *kintama* 金玉. Female reproductive organs are given much less glamorous slang terms.

Male 男 centered between two females 女 is a *flirt* but a female 女 centered between two males 男 is a *tease*. There are obvious societal-based gender behavioral assumptions at play in these terms. Interestingly, both the 女男女／嬲 pattern and the 男女男／嫐 pattern are read as なぶる in Japanese.

In reference to marriage, it is symbolic as the *day*（日）the *woman*（女）takes her husband's *surname*（氏）forming a *marriage*（結婚）. After marriage, the *person*（人）who is the *lord*（主）of the house is the *husband*（主人）and the one who is expected to stay *in*（内）the *home*（家）and cook and clean is the *wife*（家内）. As the *captured*（囚）*woman*（女）spends her days cooking and preparing and *washing dishes*（皿）, she becomes a grandmother（媼）. Of course, the wife is expected to give birth to children and the act of sex or copulating is lewd（婬）as explained in kanji is a *woman*（女）*clawing*（爪）her *king*（王）. When the wife is introduced by her husband to people of a higher rank, he will refer to her as "gusai"（愚妻）or his *stupid*（愚）*wife*（妻）. It is common for when couples are home alone, the husband will use only the second 妻 character to call his wife. The Japanese language is *strongly* based on politeness, so words referring to family relationships and personal pronouns have a few different forms which are used depending on a situation. It should be noted that most of these words aren't used in everyday conversation, and those which are still referenced have potentially lost their

original meaning. Not to mention that there are many woman-related kanji characters that aren't negative at all. And some of the above "explanations" might be misinterpreted analogies as to the true meaning behind the kanji.

4. Past, Present and Future of the PC Movement.

Francine Wattman Frank and Paula A. Treichler (1989) wrote in Language, Gender, and Professional Writing that "language combines the functions of a mirror, a tool, and a weapon… [Language] reflects society… human beings use it to interact with one another [and] language can be used by groups that enjoy the privileges of power to legitimize their own value system by labeling others *deviant* or *inferior*." The language planning movement that attempts to eliminate sexist, racist, and pejorative terms from the English language, often referred to as the *politically correct* or PC reform movement, draws on all three of these aspects of language as the basis for arguing the necessity of language reform. Such reform can provide semantic empowerment for the powerless victims of those who use language as a way to maintain their advantages in society and, if such reforms take hold, the new sensitivity in the language may reflect a better society. In exploring this current PC language reform movement, it is important to understand the history and reasoning behind the reform effort.

George Orwell (1984) stated in the opening quote of The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook that "It was intended that when *Newspeak* had been adopted once and for all and *Oldspeak* forgotten, a heretical thought… should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words." This indicates the author's understanding of the theoretical premises underlying the arguments for language reform. Linguist Edward Sapir said in the 1940's that language "is a guide to social reality" and joining forces with fellow linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf, the two developed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

which holds that language influences our worldview and "powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes" (Francine & Treichler, 1989). In other words, "it is the major force in *constructing* what we perceive as *reality*" (Beard & Cerf, 1993). Though Francine modifies this assertion with theories developed from more current research, she concedes that modern thinking is still that "linguistic and social factors are closely interrelated..." (Francine & Treichler, 1989). This idea based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, that language is a filter through which we view reality, is a cornerstone of the "politically correct" PC language reform movement.

However, it was the burgeoning of the feminist movement in the 1960's and 70's that utilized this idea when it launched the campaign to eradicate gender-based terms from the language. Aileen Pace Nilson writes that the National Council of Teachers of English was dealing with the Nonsexist Use of Language as an issue as early as 1975 (Nilson, 1977). The struggle for civil rights and racial equality within the same period contributed to a similar interest in eradicating racial pejoratives from the language. Much work has been done by linguists and scholars in this field and the 1980's saw a gathering momentum. In explaining this momentum, Catherine R. Stimpson, in her Presidential Address to the Modern Language Association in 1990, says that the "politically correct" phenomenon is an obvious response to two developments: "The first is the formidable body of contemporary humanistic scholarship about the relations between power and culture... [and] the second development is the linkages between the social changes on our campuses and the intellectual ones" (Stimpson, 1990). As examples of the second development, Stimpson offers the fact that the greater presence of women, gays and lesbians, as well as racial minority groups on American campuses have contributed to the development of women's studies, gay and lesbian studies, racial studies, etc.

The "politically correct" movement is the result of many converging factors. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis provided a theoretical basis for linking language with social structures. For the feminist and civil rights movements that came a decade or two later, in which these disadvantaged groups were struggling on several fronts for more power within society, Sapir and Whorf's work made language another viable front to attempt such changes. As Stimpson (1990) points out, this trend toward "opening up" our society to diversity of all kinds has continued and the language reform movement, designed to aid this social change, has developed concurrently. As such, the best current definition of "political correctness" the author could find, which takes into account this historical development, is that by Edward S. Herman, quoted in a book review by "The Nation's" Richard Lingeman: "The challenge of dissidents and minorities to traditionally biased usages and curricula, as perceived by the vested interests in existing usage and curricula and those seeking a basis for attacking the current challenges" (Lingeman, 1992). To put it more succinctly, Beard and Cerf quote Betsy Warland: "If we change language, we change everything" (Beard & Cerf, 1993).

It is evident that the motives underlying PC speech reform are quite laudable. The author agrees with Lingeman that "language should change to eliminate racist, sexist, classist, ageist, etc. pejoratives" (Lingeman, 1992). With this in mind, the author conducted an informal questionnaire to 48 colleagues and associates both locally and from his alma mater in the United States. Demographics of the participants are 30 male and 18 female. The author wanted to determine if his colleagues and associates, in their everyday speech reflected any of these new PC changes. The questionnaire consisted of ten multiple choice questions in which the participants selected the most used term among older and more recent "politically correct" terms after the PC terms were solicited from senior colleagues, The newer terms are taken from The Officially Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook.

These choices focused on semantic labels dealing with race, gender, and disadvantaged groups.

The formula for calculating the mean is

included here for reference. For this formula for the variance of the population, N is the population size and μ is the population mean.

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} x_i \qquad\qquad \sigma^2 = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} (x_1 - \mu)^2$$

The variance is one of the measures of dispersion. It measures by how much the values in the data set are likely to differ from the mean of the values. It is the average of the squares of the deviations from the mean. Squaring the deviations ensures that negative and positive deviations do not cancel each other out. The results of the responses are as follows:

Table 4. Results of Questionnaires on Politically Correct Labels. N=48 (30 male, 18 female)

data set	memo	number	%	mean(μ)	median	range	variance(σ^2)
1	politically correct	39	81.3	16	6	36	266
	culturally sensitive	6	12.5				
	appropriately inclusive	3	6.2				
2	Asian	27	56.3	16	12	18	62
	Oriental	9	18.7				
	Chinese [by nationality]	12	25				
3	black	33	68.8	16	9	27	146
	person of color	6	12.5				
	African [by nationality]	9	18.7				
4	senior citizen	30	62.5	16	15	27	122
	old person	15	31.3				
	mature person	3	6.2				
5	fat	36	75	15	6	33	222
	overweight	6	12.6				
	big boned/eating disorder	3	6.2				
6	chairperson	27	56.3	16	15	6	74
	chairman	15	31.2				
	chair	6	12.5				
7	disabled	39	81.4	16	6	36	266
	physically challenged	6	12.5				
	differently abled	3	6.1				
8	prostitute	33	68.9	16	12	30	158
	hooker	12	25				
	sex worker	3	6.1				
9	mankind	21	43.8	16	15	9	14
	humankind	15	31.2				
	humanity	12	25				

10	minority groups	42	87.6	16	3	39	338
	people of color	3	6.2				
	emerging group	3	6.2				

It is difficult and inappropriate to draw general conclusions from such a small sample, but this author feels that some trends can be detected. Questions dealing with racial identification show that more people using the preferred term for *Asians*, however *African American* is still not used as much as *Black*. Minority Groups is overwhelmingly used as opposed to the alternative, newer terms *people of color* or *emerging group*. The author has also heard terms such as *ebony, coloured, black*, and *negro*, used randomly by participants. The gender questions, show differences with the majority using *chairperson*, yet *mankind* is used over *humankind* or *humanity*. Questions that deal with disadvantaged groups show less success for the newer terms. Finally, the no longer "politically correct" term of Politically Correct is still the preferred term over *culturally sensitive* and *appropriately inclusive*.

This author does not believe that it is an accident that the alternatives for formerly gender-based terms have taken hold in the speech of his respondents the most since the effort to change gender marking in language has gone on the longest. Time may be needed to see how well other alternative terms take hold, and which ones, if any, will never do so. However, besides the factor of time, there is also the factor of a very real backlash to the PC language reform movement that may hinder progress and many of the respondents mentioned this. Several questions on the questionnaire dealt with respondents' attitudes toward language reform, "politically correct" language, whether they felt pressured by these reforms, and how well they felt these reforms were really benefitting society. The author will present these answers in more general terms.

Only three respondents felt totally positive about the whole movement and felt it could change society. Twenty respondents felt that it had no positive effect whatsoever, and actually had some negative effects. Twenty-seven respondents felt the movement was somewhat positive but had its problems and limitations.

Of the twenty-seven who felt it was somewhat positive, their basic reasoning was that changing our labels is a good first step toward changing society. However, many pointed out problems. Several respondents pointed out that many of the "politically correct" terms are cumbersome and awkward and at least six respondents stated said the movement has gone too far, too fast in its efforts. Many respondents pointed out that changing the language does not eliminate racism, sexism and stated that it can have the opposite tendency of separating people. It was pointed out to this author that *African American* may not always be appropriate since many Black Americans are from the Caribbean and South America; moreover, *African-American* carries a nuance that one is not entirely *American* if *African* is added as a prefix to *American*. With this in mind, one would not say *European-American* or *German-American, Irish-American, English-American* to describe those citizens who descended from European ancestry. To distinguish is to discriminate.

Of the respondents who felt the language reform movement did no good at all, several simply felt it was a waste of time and pointed out that "politically correct" terms can be offensive or separating. It was stated that the PC movement is merely a shallow "feel-good" attempt to avoid dealing with and confronting real problems in society. This point has been perpetuated with the "black lives matter" movement fueled by police brutality and continued racial tensions. It can also be debated that the PC movement exhibits

linguistic intolerance and repression, and thus poses a free speech issue.

Many of the respondent's complaints and concerns are echoed throughout the media by scholars, writers, and journalists. John Seigenthater wrote in an article in the March 6, 1993 edition of Editor & Publisher, that the term *politically correct* strikes him as oxymoronic. He explains that his journalistic coverage of politics and political campaigns have inured him to the idea that political speech will eventually and inevitably be "hateful, mean-spirited, insulting, personally demeaning and emotionally debilitating to those at whom [it] is directed, and uninvited and unwelcome, not only to the political opponents who [are] the brunt of [it], but to many neutral listeners as well who did not wish to hear [it]" (Seigenthater, 1993). Jeff Johnson, an English professor, makes a similar point in discussing recent efforts on college campuses to eliminate a Western cultural bias from literary text selections. Johnson says, *"Politically* implies coercion; *correct* is relative only to the politics," and he continues by quoting Northrup Frye from his 1954 essay, *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, "social criticism being passed off as literary criticism is nothing more than a *substitute for criticism*" (Johnson, 1992). The point these two people are bringing out, this author believes, is the one mentioned by some of the respondents: *Political correctness*, as a language reform movement, has "gone too far" by trying to move beyond the provinces of language into other areas that many feel are inappropriate, ineffective and counterproductive. This author agrees with much of this criticism and believes this is the source of a lot of the current resentment and backlash against this movement.

Another even more significant source the backlash towards *political correctness* is the perceived, whether correct or not, rising intolerance of some who desire to promote certain language reforms towards the speech of others who dislike or resist these attempts. Johnson takes a quote from an editorial in The

Economist magazine—"The most pernicious form of intolerance is *political correctness* because it comes disguised as tolerance" (Johnson, 1992). Seigenthaler expresses a similar concern that enforcing politically correct speech is offensive to free speech liberties and to "the traditional concept that the academy should be an open forum" (Seigenthaler, 1993). Taken one step further, the logic of this argument becomes clear. The real problems of prejudice, racism, inequality, and powerlessness, cannot be significantly grappled with without honest, open dialogue, however messy and hurtful it may at times be. Forbidding or discouraging certain terms or certain kinds of speech will not enhance this process, and may instead drive another kind of wedge between groups which must deal with other issues that already divide them.

Many are coming to recognize that the PC movement may have gone too far and a new call for a sense of balance in promoting language reform is emerging. Many are leaning away from linguistic reforms by pointing out its obvious limitations in solving society's ills. Stimpson (1990) states, "I predict that the PC phenomenon, now hyped up, will eventually dry up. Our many differences will persist". Johnson's quote from The Economist that "Imposing a new orthodoxy is not the way to tackle prejudice" (Johnson, 1992). Lingeman echoes this by stating that, "Inventing new ugly, tendentious words is not the answer to old ugly, racist or sexist ones. Calling wives *unpaid sex workers* or whatever is not going to reduce domestic violence" (Lingeman, 1992). A quintessential statement of a newer, more balanced approach ends Francine Fialkoff's editorial, entitled "The Word Police," in the January 1993 edition of Library Journal that "…ultimately, however, we hope we use language that is more sensitive without enforcing strident political correctness or orthodoxy" (Fialkoff, 1993). Lingeman closes his book review in The Nation, which included a review of Beard and Cerf's "Dictionary," with a call for the use of humor in fighting against

oppression. One of the criticisms of the proponents of *political correctness* is that they can't laugh at themselves, but humor has always been an invaluable tool in breaking down barriers between people. As Lingeman points out, African American comedians, in the 1960's and 70's, like Dick Gregory and Richard Pryor, "effectively used humor to spotlight the absurdities of segregation" (Lingeman, 1992). Proponents of *political correctness* should not be upset that many, like Beard and Cerf, are also using humor to highlight the absurdities and excesses of PC speech. They are only pointing out the need for a more balanced approach to language reform.

Comedian and political commentator George Carlin expands on the point that PC language is merely an effort to remove social guilt from language and that this is an irresponsible approach that is counterintuitive for what the PC movement initially set out to resolve. Carlin (2001) argues that PC language has removed true *meaning* and *humanity* from language. Examples stated include how "torture" has become *enhanced interrogation techniques*, "medicine" has become *medication*, "information" has become *directory assistance*, the "dump" has become *the landfill*, "car crashes" have become *automobile accidents*, "used cars" have become *previously owned transportation*, and "poor people" are the *economically disadvantaged*. The list of examples one can find is extensive and evolving.

As an example of the evolution of PC expressions one can see how the expression "shell shock" has evolved to become devoid of meaning. In World War I, the traumatic conditions soldiers experienced on the battlefield and the psychological damage caused under such trauma was known as "shell shock." This expression, only two syllables in length was direct and honest in its description of the condition. However, by World War II, the same combat condition become known as "battle fatigue." At four syllables, it takes longer to say and the language "fatigue" does not seem to hurt as much as "shock." World War II was followed by the Korean War in the

1950s, where "battle fatigue" became relabeled "operational exhaustion." At eight syllables, the humanity has been entirely removed from the phrase. As Carlin (2001) explains, "operational exhaustion" sounds like a mechanical condition such as something that might happen to an automobile as the language is not associated with a living human, the term is devoid of humanity. The Korean War was followed by the War in Vietnam which lasted until April 1975. By this time, "shell shock" had evolved to become "post-traumatic stress disorder." Still eight syllables when compared to "operational exhaustion," however, a hyphen has been added. The pain of the condition is completely buried under jargon (Carlin, 2001). Carlin further states that if the suffering Vietnam War veterans' condition was called "shell shock," they would have received the attention that they needed at the time instead of being ill-treated by the government and society. Current returning soldiers from the Middle-East suffering from "shell shock" have now been labeled as having "PTSD"- *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* has now become a lifeless non-threatening acronym, totally devoid of pity.

There is a sense of smugness and dissociation from guilt or responsibility being echoed by PC vocabulary. This author feels this trend on both sides of the ocean as being "fired" or "losing one's job" is now referred to as "management curtailing redundancies in the human resources area where previously employed people are no longer viable members of the work force." Humanity is removed from language making people an inanimate and completely disposable entity. The well-being or needed employment of an individual is entirely deemphasized. In Japan, リストラ and the new term クーリング are such examples of individuals being marginalized and linguistically disposed of after losing one's job. The Labor Law in Japan was designed to create a way to achieve full-time employment; however, certain institutes are circumventing this by imposing a period of "cooling" or an entire half-year break from employment and reinstating the educator

as a disposable entity. The legal implications of this act are questionable, but total compliance is required for "future" employment. The term "cooling" is an example of PC language, removing negative nuance from a violent and unfair act. Being forced out of one's livelihood and career is a violent act buried in semantics as "cooling". If one were to be honest and label "cooling" for what it is, perhaps the plight of part-time workers and educators would be recognized.

Concealment of guilt is manifested throughout PC language. Police using violent force to *depopulate* or *neutralize* instead of "kill". War is now known simply as a "police action" or a "conflict" or "disturbance". One who was labeled as *crippled* or *handicapped* is relabeled through the PC movement as *physically challenged*. The use of *physically challenged* is a euphemism to relieve guilt by giving a positive name to the condition. George Carlin refers to this feel-good approach of the PC movement as nothing more than a distraction. Carlin (1998) further claims that the PC movement is pretentious since it is about controlling language instead of openly confronting discrimination. *Differently abled* is also an oxymoron considering that all of humanity is *differently abled* since everyone as individuals have unique skills and challenges. As Carlin (1995) stated, "in the Bible, Jesus *healed the cripple*—he didn't engage in *rehabilitative strategies to improve the conditions of the physically disadvantaged*" to illustrate how language is in denial and has removed the condition from the person.

5. Conclusion

Language can be used as a weapon, by the powerful against the powerless and by the powerless in fighting back. However, this author believes that language's true and most noble purpose is to serve as a bridge—as a tool for people to communicate with and understand each other. So far as language reform enhances sensitivity and understanding, this author endorses it, but when the reform itself becomes repressive it is time to step back and reassess.

This author believes that "political correctness" in language is at this juncture and many recognize it. Those who were surveyed seem to feel this also. Language reform is only one of the many fronts of social reform and hopefully, excesses will not derail good intentions. Certainly we have the luxury of living at a point in history when we have the time to think about and analyze our language.

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