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ABSTRACT

By getting hold of the dominating verbal structures, political correctness has tried (according to Paul Berman) to "get everyone to abandon certain previously unanalyzed phrases that contain the entire structure of oppressive social domination." Unfortunately, "political correctness" has become a pejorative term used to identify and denigrate what is perceived as liberal orthodoxy. In terms of appropriate usage in communications-related professional situations, a number of conclusions can be reached based on informal surveys: (1) at the moment there is only one textbook publisher that provides fairly comprehensive and specific guidelines to authors and reviewers--and even that guide is incomplete; (2) informal editor-author consultation is the primary method of dealing with bias-free usage; (3) the most widely used style guide, the "APA Publication Manual" provides advice on gender-free usage; (4) journal editors rely on reviewers and associate editors to deal with instances of bias and insensitivity; (5) in addition to concerns about sexism, concern for bias-free usage now includes ageism, racism, ethnic, religious and national slurs and bias against persons with disabilities and bias against lesbians and gay males; (6) many authors welcome the trend toward more sensitive language; (7) bias free language is a concern for newspapers too but there is equal concern that the desire to be inoffensive has undermined debate; (8) some practitioners in speech communication believe that an orthodoxy has cut off major lines of inquiry and research. (Contains 68 notes and 2 appendixes detailing publishers' guidelines and research material.) (TB)

SHOULD TEXTBOOKS BE POLITICALLY CORRECT?
. . . . AND SEVERAL OTHER ISSUES

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SHOULD TEXTBOOKS BE POLITICALLY CORRECT? . . . . AND SEVERAL OTHER ISSUES

When I proposed this paper, I intended to write about the impact of "political correctness" on publishing. It seemed straightforward: I would concentrate on guidelines for the representation of marginalized groups. My focus was to be on recommendations for language usage and their impact on writers and publishers. However, the more I read and heard, the more I realized that "political correctness" does not have this simple meaning.

Last spring I heard a debate on political correctness at a regional convention, and I expected an analysis of prescriptive or non discriminatory language use, or perhaps of freedom of speech. What I heard were musings that singularly neglected to define "political correctness" and that rambled into such issues as whether graduate faculty in the United States should accept other cultures' criteria for plagerism and whether we pay lip service to multiculturalism without implementing it. One debater also lamented that, because of "political correctness," he had to be careful about the way he prepared his address for the convention because he knew there were some things he could not say to his audience. I thought, "Isn't that called audience adaptation? Isn't that part of the rhetorical canon?"

So before I continue with my presentation, I'd like to try to clarify what is meant by "political correctness." As I proceed, you will probably agree that it is one of those Alice in Wonderland terms that can mean whatever you want it to mean. Moreover,

it is a term that is usually used sarcastically by opponents of a variety of causes including multiculturalism, affirmative action, curriculum revision, and incorporating racial, gender, ethnic and other sensitivities into everyday language use.[1] As a matter of fact, "PC" and "politically correct" have become "god terms" used preemptively to silence criticism before it is voiced, to deride positions, and to defend the stating of views on the basis that they are honest, truthful, and correct--even if they are biased. The tactic of using this label of opprobrium to intimidate makes debate difficult if not impossible. Even George Bush used "politically correct" to stigmatize those opposed to his candidacy in the 1992 presidential election. Recent, 1994, examples of when "PC" has been used to deflect criticism, tar opponents, or put down ideas are legion, and I will cite only a few.

Ralph Reed, the political strategist who is often credited with the Christian Coalition's stunning growth and with the mobilization of the Christian right,[2] defiantly titled his new book, Politically Incorrect: The Emerging Faith Factor in American Politics. To fend off criticisms of the authenticity and dramatic quality of the new television sitcom about a Korean American, "All American Girl," the creator and executive producer of the show stated, "I think people should be uniting behind a show where the people are not sprouting fortune cookie wisdom. I find it disturbing that political correctness has taken us to this point."[3] Finally, Calvin Trillin reported in the New Yorker that a representative of the tobacco industry appearing on the "Today"

show rebutted the government's linkage of secondhand smoke and cancer by saying that the Environmental Protection Agency was being "politically correct."[4]

In short, PC and political correctness have become terms that are always negative and that are always used as a means of warning against some supposed orthodoxy, usually liberal. In fact, the term has become one of abuse that means little more than a view with which I disagree. And the concern is very much with us. Witness the coverage of the opening of a not very good and not very popular minor film, "P.C.U.,"[5] by the national press and the debate provoked by Roger Kimball's review of William A. Henry 3d's book, In Defense of Elitism," in the October 9, 1994 New York Times.[6] Although "political correctness" has become a catchall term, I will try to explain the historical development of the term and how it became linked with affirmative action, multiculturalism, and curriculum revision as well as with sensitized language use. After defining "political correctness," I will identify the issues in the debate on "PC," explain specific guidelines for language use, and explore the impact of these guidelines on writers and publishers.

ORIGINS OF "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS"

From a historical perspective, "political correctness" originally was a term of approval conferred by Leninists upon those who faithfully followed the party line. However, its

meaning evolved into an implicit criticism of those who unthinkingly adhered to official positions.[7] When "political correctness" was first used in the United States in the 1980's, it identified those who adhered to liberal left ideas at a time when those ideas had been repudiated by Republican landslides,[8] and its use was humorous and/or affectionate. It was used "to identify a minority cultural/political position with which they identified and which they positioned in opposition to the larger culture of American life and even of the university . . . ."[9] By the 1990's, the term had become ominous and derisive as in Richard Bernstein's October 28, 1990 New York Times article, "The Rising Hegemony of the Politically Correct,"[10] and the Newsweek cover story, "Thought Police: There's a Politically Correct Way to Talk about Race, Sex, and Ideas. Is This the New Enlightenment --or the New McCarthyism?"[11]

Whitney and Wartella summarize the state of "political correctness" in 1990 as referring to

> "a host of campus attempts to deal with a wide range of issues including the development of a multicultural student body (multiculturalism); attempts to achieve a multicultural university faculty through affirmative action . . . the development of sanctions against 'hate speech' . . . changes in undergraduate curricula . . . often referred to as 'canon busting' . . . and a host of issues regarding critiques of the culture and university from the quarters of feminist, gay and lesbian, and various ethnic and racial minority theoretical positions . . . a movement to forward a Left/liberal political agenda on university campuses which marginalized mainstream, white, male-dominant rule in favor of minority, multicultural, feminist subcultural groups.[12]

What gave rise to this evolution? In Paris during the 1960's

the efficacy of rationalism and liberal humanism was questioned, and it was argued that giant, hidden, impersonal structures permeate the world.[13] These include the tradition of Western thought in philosophy, language, and literature (Derrida), the will to power (Foucault), the unconscious (Lacan), and economic structures (Paris Marxists).[14] Underlying all is the structure of language (DeSaussure) which conceals hidden power relations between women and men or between different classes and ethnic groups.[15] Because of these structures, people are not free to make their own decisions, and those in power utilize these structures to maintain a privileged position.

At the same time in the United States, there developed an "identity poitics," the movements for women's rights, for gay and lesbian liberation, for ethnic revival, and for black nationalism.[16] While this was taking place, the Paris ideas were also seen as gaining footholds in the humanities departments of major universities and, thus, as influencing higher education in the United States.[17]

Berman identifies the significance of Derrida and the linguists' analogy between identity politics and linguistic analysis: Since culture and language are the giant hidden structures that permeate life, and since culture and language reflect various social groups which are defined by race, gender, and sexual orientation, they are the vehicles of power and domination. Moreover, the culture that had dominated was that of Dead White European Males (DWEMs) who had used appeals to

rationalism, humanism, universality, and literary merit to ratify their superiority.[18] Those seeking to redress the domination held that

> By teaching everyone to appreciate the culture of all groups in equal measure and by discouraging the use of certain common phrases that convey racial and gender hierarchies, in short by altering the literature and the language, we will bring an end to the domination by one small group. The name of this domination, "Eurocentrism" evokes . . . "ethnocentrism" . . . .[19]

Thus, out of race/class/gender-ism and a desire to combat bigotry and smallmindedness in the central culture, there developed the idea of multiculturalism as a way to strengthen that culture. By getting hold of the dominating verbal structures, the school curriculum, and the literary canon, we could "get everyone to abandon certain previously unanalyzed phrases that contain the entire structure of oppressive social domination . . . ."[20]

For those of us in Speech Communication, this approach to language is not a completely heretical position. Speech Communication has long accepted that naming defines people and influences communication responses. Bosmajian tells us,

> The power which comes from names and naming is related directly to the power to define others -- individuals races, sexes, ethnic groups. Our identities, who and what we are, how others see us, are greatly affected by the names we are called and by the words with which we are labelled. The names, labels, and phrases employed to 'identify' a people may in the end determine their survival.[21]

Indeed, semanticists contend that there is a connection between language and self-perception and self-esteem as well as between language and actions and behavior.[22]

The psychologist, Gordon Allport, notes that some labels classify people into groups and are "labels of primary potency," that is, they are extremely salient and powerful while tending to prevent an alternative classification. He states,

> Ethnic labels . . . often . . . refer to some highly visible feature, e.g., Negro, Oriental . . . [or] some outstanding incapacity--feeble-minded, cripple, blind man . . . These symbols act like shrieking sirens, deafening us to all finer distinctions that we might otherwise perceive. 23

In short,,, as Farb observes, "[E]ach community conveys to its children . . . a value system for the use of its language."[24] That is, there are social and cultural assumptions in the use of language, and these impart an interpretation of a reality. In a reflexive way, these assumptions are reflected and reinforced in language, and language thus creates and preserves a social reality. Ideally, advocates of bias-free language hoped that by sensitizing people to the bias and impact of language, they would increase sensitivity to others, eliminate the suppressive role of language, and promote full participation in society for all.[25]

However, when colleges and universities attempted to institutionalize these ideas by establishing hate-speech codes, revising the curriculum, and initiating affirmative action programs, they were assailed as a threat to academic freedom and to the foundations of United States democracy. All of the issues became linked by opponents under the rubric of "political correctness." One commentator stated that, "It ["political correctness"] was "constructed by a handful of largely right -wing

intellectuals writing their own books and contributing summary essays in specialized political journals, whereupon it attracted the attention of first the 'class,' and shortly thereafter the mass, media."[26] In short, "political correctness" became the weapon of choice for those seeking to reverse the social change begun in the 1960's by those seeking the redistribution of social and cultural capital.[27]

DEVELOPMENT OF "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS" AS A PERJORATIVE TERM

In a speech in Rochester, New York, the president of the State University of New York at Brockport, John Van De Wetering, observed

> Political correctness is a perjorative term . . . to be politically correct is to slavishly adhere to language that is neutral of any sexist, racist, ageist, or any other "ist" connotations . . . . And the correct speech is very specific . . . and to fail to use it is to be a bigot. The definition of the politically correct is meant to be absurd; it is meant to carry with it the baggage of unwarranted and excessive sensitivity. It also bears with it the suggestion of sanctimoniousness and smug self-righteousness . . . it is itself an epithet of conformity . . . a mockery of certain constricted behavior, usually by people who are perceived to be the most knee-jerk of liberals . . . [It] is more specifically an attack upon certain campus policies of civil intercourse [campus hate-speech codes]. [28]

Van De Wetering went on to state that the term "politically correct" was expanded to accommodate objections to affirmative action programs, multiculturalism, and curricular changes as well as to campus speech codes. Saul Bellow complained that liberalism and "political correctness" had become mindless, a

cover for "a great deal of resentment and hatred . . . outbursts from people whose principles are affronted when you disagree with them . . . P.C. is really a serious threat to political health, because where there is free speech without any debate what you have is a corruption of free speech which very quickly becomes demagogy,"[29]

Roger Kimball, author of Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education, criticized "tenured academic elites"[30] who view teaching as a species of intellectual activism. He characterized them as "radical feminists," "champions of ethnic and homosexual studies," and "deconstructionists," who lack scholarly disinterestedness and who are hostile to the achievements and values of Western culture.[31] Kimball further contended that the revisions proposed by these radicals would destroy the foundation of the United States. He stated that

> They seek to destroy the fundamental premises that underlie . . . liberal education and a liberal polity. Respect for rationality and the rights of the individual, a commitment to the ideals of disinterested criticism, color-blind justice, and advancement according to merit, not according to sex, race, or ethnic origin . . . . These quintessentially Western ideas are bedrocks of our political as well as our educational system. And they are precisely the ideas that are now under attack.[32]

When Catherine Stimpson, president of the Modern Language Association in 1990 suggested that we can be students of Western culture and of multiculturalism at the same time,[33] Kimball responded that it would be impossible because the idea of being students of Western culture and multiculturalism at the same time "is either

an empty rhetorical gesture or a contradiction in terms."[34]

REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS" ATTACKS

There are two reasons why accusations of "political correctness were given credence: the public was angry with higher education, and some advocates of change engaged in excesses which were presented as typical of advocates for change.

According to James W. Carey, dean of the College of Communications at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana,

> Political correctness is an effective political attack because it acts as a condensation symbol that names and coalesces growing resentment against higher education and the academic establishment . . . [which has] tolerated practices that actively contribute to the ignorance of students and fail the most decent expectations of the public. [35]

Secondly, although by 1991, only nine American Universities had Hate-Speech Codes,[36] Stanford curriculum revison only extended to one section of one course,[37] and a minority of university faculty were hired as a result of affirmative action programs, there were sufficient excesses that received media play so that the entire movement became tarnished.

There were times when the positions of the proponents of change did lend themselves to ridicule and to the charge that there was a "new veritas--political correctness" which silenced through intimidation and the power of radical gay, feminist, and minority rights factions.[38] Examples cited include the University of Cincinnati's official administration handbook which stated that

only whites can be racist, a Penn State English instructor's claim to be sexually harrassed by Goya's painting, "Naked Maja," a SUNY Binghampton student who was charged with lewd and indecent behavior because he posted two Penthouse centerfolds on his dormitory door, the harrassment of a speaker as a "white dork devil" by 200 students at what was thought to be a white supremacist rally, but that was a speech on conditions in Berlin,[39] and the suggestion of such terms as "nonliving person" for corpse,[40] "waitron or waitperson" for waiter, or "ovarimony" for testimony.[41]

Similarly, the validity of the accusations of intolerance and McCarthyism were bolstered by tenuous claims printed in the Harvard Crimson that two tenured Harvard professors were racially insensitive in their course on the history of race relations, "Peopling of America." The result was that instead of enduring repeated denunciations as they walked across campus and harrangues in the Crimson,[42] the two professors stopped teaching the course.

Examples such as these played into the hands of opponents of multiculturalism, curriculum revision, affirmative action, and the use of culturally sensitive language. The excesses became examples of the new "politically correct" tyranny, and distractions which obscured the issues in the debate so that it was difficult to engage in sustained and issue centered debate.

HAS "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS" CONTAMINATED SPEECH COMMUNICATION?

It is an interesting sidelight to note that there have been accusations of "political correctness" against the Speech

Communication discipline. Burgoon and Bailey state that "the discipline of speech communication has . . . been proactive in its efforts to become a paradigmatic instantiation of PC."[44] They claim that there are limitations on what is acceptable for scrutiny so that we preclude certain lines of inquiry. They charge that Speech Communication has "embraced a Marxist orientation that glorifies the collective while diminishing the importance of the individual."[45] An example is interpersonal communication and its valuing of a human relations approach and prosocial behaviors as overriding the concerns of the individual, and this is especially insidious because it is postulated without sufficient empirical data.[46] They contend this has infiltrated both the organizational communication context in ways that echo Marxist interpretations of managers and employees' rights and the health communication context in ways that are actually harmful to patients' welfare.[47]

GUIDELINES FOR BIAS-FREE USAGE

Now I'd like to return to my original, simple intent: to identify the state of guidelines for bias-free usage and to examine their impact.

The Evolution of Trends in Academic Discourse

In the early 1970's, textbook publishers and professional associations became concerned with the need for bias free language, and the 1970's and 1980's brought increased accuracy, proportionality, and sensitivity to women, minorities,

and other marginalized groups. The original concentration was on gender-free usage, and, although there has been a broadening of focus to include other groups, the preponderance of published guidelines deal with sexism. Among the organizations that published guidelines on gender-free use of language were the National Council of Teachers of English (1975, revised in 1985), the American Society for Public Administration (1979, revised 1985), the American Philosophical Association (1987), the American Psychological Association (1978, 1987), the society for Biblical Literature (1989), the Association of American Publishers (1976), the Association of American Geographers, The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, The American Sociological Association (1986), the Society for Music Theory (1987?, 1988?), the American Bar Association (1989), the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (1990), The American Speech and Hearing Association (1980), the National Education Association, (1990), the Linguistic Society of America, and the Eastern Communication Association (1990). (Where no dates are given, I was unable to determine the date from the written material.)

It should be noted that there was wide variation in the comprehensiveness of the guidance furnished. Moreover, some guidelines on sexist language offhandedly included single sentence advice on avoiding ethnic stereotypes as well or single sentence statements that Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities

should be mentioned throughout a text and included in pictures to insure diversity. However, the guidelines provided by the American Psychological Association are the most comprehensive with respect to references to gender, race, persons with disabilities, and lesbians and gay males. It should also be noted that the APA Publication Manual sets editorial style for hundreds of scientific journals and many major book publishers.[49]

There are presently many comprehensive guides on bias-free usage, and samplings of these as well as of specific guidelines are included in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Publishers' Guidelines

To learn what guidelines publishers of Speech Communication texts provide for authors, I wrote to seventeen publishers of in the field and received responses from fourteen. Of these, eleven had specific guidelines on the treatment of women, ten on African Americans, three on religion, four on older people, two on lesbians and gay males, six on ethnic groups, and one on professional groups. Two publishers also stated that they use the APA Publication Manual, but it is not clear how its use is conveyed to authors or reviewers.

However, if we move beyond the simplistic, "avoid stereotypes," "don't use the generic he," and "avoid terms such as chairman" to practical resources for authors, the guidelines are woefully meager with three exceptions: Harper-Collins, Wadsworth, and McGraw-Hill. The former two developed guidelines on gender-free usage, and McGraw-Hill had a thirty-eight page booklet on

bias-free usage. McGraw-Hill's "Guidelines for Bias-Free Publishing" was the most practical, comprehensive, definitive, and stylistically felicitious, and it really was in a class by itself with respect to what publishers provided for authors and reviewers. For the rest, guidelines sometimes ran one to two pages; most often they ran from a few sentences to a few pararaphs. Most respondents to my questionnaire either stated or implied that problems could best be taken care of at the editorial level and that they deal with it on a book by book basis.

Scholarly Presses

I wrote to twelve scholarly presses and received responses from five; only two indicated that they did have guidelines. However, the American Association of University Presses (AAUP) has been in the forefront of identifying what could fairly be called biased language and in assembling guidelines for bias-free usage. In 1988 the AAUP conducted a survey of gender-biased language in university press publications and public documents and received responses from two-hundred representatives of sixty-nine Presses and public institutions.[50] In 1990, the AAUP's Task Force on Bias-Free Language conducted a survey of freelance copyeditors then editing for AAUP member presses.[51] In 1991, the Task Force produced a draft of guidelines which were published in 1992.

Scholarly Journals in Speech Communication

I wrote to the editors of twenty-seven scholarly journals in the field of Speech Communication and received responses from

fifteen. The responses were often confusing. For example, some respondents indicated that there were no guidelines; yet the policy statements of the journals indicated that authors must follow the prescriptions of the APA Publication Manual. The ECA "Non-Sexist Research Guidelines" were cited as a resource by one editor. Two editors believed that their pool of revieweres are highly sensitized to the issue of bias-free language and do not need further guidance. Still other editors maintained that, because theirs were technical journals, the problem did not arise. The SCA "Publications Manual, Revised 1991," makes no reference to language useage.

The attitudes of editors toward the establishment of guidelines ranged from openly hostile to warmly supportive. The following are a few examples of editors' responses:

> Articles in major, scholarly journals are typically "blind"/peer-reviewed which (rightfully) precludes such criteria as indicated above. Not only would I not edit on the basis of anything but (assessed) merit, but I would not publish in a journal employing demographic acceptance criteria.

Another editor stated, "a scholarly journal must be expressed objectively and dispassionately. There is no place for sexism or racism." However, he also said,

> There is, however, another issue. Too many groups are trying to make professional journals politically correct. The PC syndrome, while attractive to some, is insidious and contrary to the goals of research, science, and open-mindedness . . . to denounce research that reveals or depicts or uncovers something unflattering to a group--minority or otherwise --constitutes the thinking of frightened bubbleheads.

On the other hand, the following views were also expressed:

I edit, so . . . offensive language will be edited out.

I would rely heavily on the good judgments of the journal's associate editors and my own sensitivities in catching phraseology which might be offensive and suggesting alternative wording to authors.

Associate editors and readers have been very sensitive to sexist language etc. and comment to authors about such practices.

The editors would not allow manuscripts exhibiting group-biased language to be published, and this has been the case since the journal's inception.

As with publishers' guidelines, there is not a clearly articulated reference of guidelines; editors relied on sensitive authors and reviewers to edit out offensive language.

AUTHORS' EXPERIENCES WITH BIAS-FREE USAGE

To ascertain the effects of guidelines on authors, I wrote to thirty authors of the most widely used basic texts in public speaking, interpersonal communication, and group communication. Twenty-eight responded, and their responses are summarized below:

1. Does your publisher have guidelines for the presentation of

	Yes	No
a. Women	15	7
b. African-Americans	12	7
c. Other Groups	11	7

2. If yes, how long has the publisher had the guideline?

	Women	African Americans	Others
a. the past 3 years	1	2	2
b. the past 5 years	1	1	1
c. the past 10 years	5	5	3
d. the past 15 years	7	4	1

3. a. Have you recognized diversity in your text? Yes 23 No 0

b. If yes, how do you achieve this?

1) Variety in names	23
2) Place people or groups in non-traditional roles	26
3) Pictures	22
4) Refer to other cultures or co-cultures	21
5) Avoid stereotyping on basis of age or national origin	22
6) Other (Examples follow on next page).	

4. Which of the following do you use to achieve your publisher's goals?

a. Present alternative or non-traditional lifestyles	10
b. Present men and women in home-maintenance activities	9
c. Present men and women as having the same play and career options; avoid job stereotypes	19
d. Present all groups as having the same play and career options	15
e. Present men and women as having the same interests, abilities, and ambitions	18
f. Present all groups as having the same interests, abilities, ambitions, and values	15

5. a. Constructions such as he/she, him/her, her/his are stylistically acceptable 11 unacceptable 10.

b. If unacceptable: I avoid this usage by

a. Rewording to eliminate unnecessary gender pronouns	16
b. Recasting into the plural	16
c. Replacing a masculine pronoun with "one," "you"	12
d. Alternating male and female expressions and examples	13
e. Using "he," "him," and "his"	1

6. Guidelines covering minority or gender language have had Positive 11 Negative 2 No 2 effect on my style.

Two authors said that they did not know whether their publishers had guidlines; of those who said their publishers did have guidelines, three stated that they did not know how long they had been in existence. In two instances where there were co-authors, one author said the publisher had guidelines, the other said that the company did not. Some respondents also objected to the phrasing of the alternatives in question three. For instance, they objected that men and women do not have the same career and

play options and that some groups also do not have the same career and play options because of obstacles that exist in society. That's a fair objection.

My summary above is rough; it does not show that while some authors indicated use of all methods itemized in order to eliminate bias or awkward phrasing, they also indicated that they used some methods more frequently than others. Most authors indicated that they were more sensitive to nuances of bias than their editors and publishers and that, when publishers were not concerned, they took the responsibility upon themselves. Finally, most authors indicated that guidance with respect to bias-free usage came through editorial consultation, a finding also indicated by publishers.

Authors indicated the following additional methods that they used to avoid bias:

1. provide speech examples from international students, women, African Americans, and use names that reflect ethnicity.
2. avoid placing people in traditional roles; avoid heterosexism by not using all examples of female/male relationships
3. discussing the valuing of diversity
4. explicit sections (2) reviewing research and giving students advice on cross-gender and cross-ethnic communication
5. included a chapter on intercultural communication and sections on racist, sexist language and on gender as an influence in communication
6. examples and role-playing assignments include a diversity of personal/ethnic/etc. characteristics
7. highlight differences in communication behaviors, norms definitions of competency in various cultures; highlight gender differences in communication behavior

I was pleased by the large number of author responses and by the concern with the issue expressed by every author who answered. Most

believe that they are ahead of the guidelines, and several noted that theirs had been the "first" text to address the issue of sexist usage. The strong impression I received as a result of reading mostly thoughtful, caring responses to my questionnaire was of a community with a keen awareness of the need for sensitivity and a genuine passion to be both model and leader. If that seems overstated, the following responses are typical:

> "Contemporary writing needs to reflect the realities of a diverse audience."
>
> "Each year the issue becomes more central."
>
> "As a result of my own attempts, I have become much more aware of how language usage helps perpetuate stereotypes."
>
> "My personal determination to avoid gender stereotyping led me to "he or she" as the most felicitious alternative to the generic "he" . . . I also sought, from the beginning, to find ways--verbally and visually--to communicate the message that public speaking is a matter of importance for all groups in our society."
>
> "The most difficult writing decision that faced us as authors of a beginning level text was how to handle audience demographic analysis, where the research does support generalizations about gender differences. How can we write about differences without stereotyping? A tough question that demanded careful statement.
>
> "Yes, I think sensitivity to language affects one's writing style, but it works the other way--once one learns to write with an eye for these matters, it affects one's attitudes and values as well . . . which in turn affect your writing, etc.

There was only a slight demur from two authors, both of whom are models of bias-free usage. One regretted that even the most positive references to some marginalized groups are considered objectionable because the group is singled out. He believed that this increased the

"invisibility problem." Another author believed that sometimes "political correctness" goes too far. He has reviewed texts in which all or most of the bad guys are white males and all of the problem-solvers and professionals are "other." He said, "I do not have any trouble with rectifying the past, but I do not think a text should get into white male bashing, whether intentionally or unintentionally."

THE IMPACT OF THE MOVEMENT FOR BIAS-FREE USAGE ON NEWSPAPERS

We have been examining the impact of concern for appropriate usage in the Speech Communication discipline, but it might also be instructive to turn for a minute to its impact on one of the media, newspapers. It seems not to be disputed that, at least in major newspapers, "the operative rule today in at least some newspaper style books, is that any colloquial, ethnic reference is taboo."[52] Indeed, the Los Angeles Times recently published a bias-free usage guide for its staff as an attempt to codify changing usage.[53] Editor of the Louisville, Kentucky Courier-Journal, David Hawpe, stated in a debate at the 1993 Associated Press Managing Editors convention that,

> PC does influence our newsrooms . . . There is an orthodoxy on a whole range of issues . . . [including] gender, sexual orientation, abortion, religious fundamentalism . . . . This mindset affects not only how these issues are covered but even how words are used in the most innocuous of contexts. . . . I have every reason to believe that copy editors --especially women copy editors who have their consciousness raised -- are editing out physical descriptions of women. [54]

It should be noted that Hawpe also said, "I"m politically correct

and I ought to be."[55] Similarly, National Public Radio reported that a male reporter wrote a story about a female business leader and stated that she didn't take short cuts in her work or in the kitchen. He also mentioned that she makes her own pasta from scratch.[56] Those parts of the story were deleted. Finally, that intrepid commentator, Andy Rooney, intended to do a piece on a $50-million dollar donation to the United Negro College Fund. He said, he believed that Black colleges seem to be an unnecessary relic of segregation.. However, Rooney did not do the story. He stated, "I just decided it was too touchy, I'd better not do it."[57]

Howard Kurtz, columnist for the Washington Post, summarizes the problem when he asks whether it is still possible "to candidly explore questions of race, crime, abortion, homosexuality without triggering a firestorm of protest."[58] Kurtz went on to state that some Black reporters and columnists are branded disloyal for critical articles about Black leaders and that an editorial page writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer was pilloried for allowing an editorial that suggested that "reducing the underclass" might be one effect of encouraging poor Black women to use the implanted contraceptive Norplant.[59] In a survey by Robert Haiman, president of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies of more than fifty editors nationwide, forty one said they consider "political correctness" a problem in their newsrooms. However, only two were willing to be quoted on the record.[60]

The author, Ismael Reed, claims that "political correctness"

has been used to push back the ideas of feminists and Latinos and to cut off debate and points to the dismissive reaction to Latinos attempts to take a fresh look at the Alamo. Some Latinos present the siege of the Alamo as an insurrection by White Southerners who took up arms against the provision of the Mexican Constitution banning slavery. Reed states that, "the PC put down serves as a clever way of disposing of the question without ever examining the merits of the issue."[61]

Now, just what constitutes a "problem," and whether references to women's appearance or domestic abilities are appropriately edited out is one question, and I think we all probably agree that they should be. We might also dispute some or all of the positions that were found offensive to some people. That is not Kurtz's point. His point is that if we choke off debate, do we also limit our ability to analyze, evaluate, and discover creative solutions to problems? And, in all fairness to my friend whom I mentioned earlier, the one who had to be careful how he worded his attack on "political correctness," this may have been his point also.

CONCLUSION

Where does that leave us with respect to appropriate usage?

1. At the moment there is only one publisher that provides fairly comprehensive and specific guidelines to authors and reviewers. Even that guide is incomplete. Yet, all publishers are concerned with bias-free usage.

2. Informal editor-author consultation is the primary method of dealing with bias-free usage.
3. There are useful reference materials available, and a selective list is included in apppendix B.
4. The most widely used style guide, the APA Publication Manual, provides advice on gender-free usage and, less extensively, on other bias-free usage. The Guide published by the Association of University Presses is the most comprehensive, stylistically felicitious, and sensible of the guides avaialable.
5. Journal editors rely on reviewers and associate editors to deal with instances of bias and insensitivity, but they do not provide reviewers with any real guidelines.
6. In addition to concern for sexism, concern for bias-free usage now includes ageism, racism, ethnic, religious, and national slurs, and bias against persons with disabilities and bias against lesbians and gay males.
7. Many authors welcome the trend to diversity and more sensitive use of language because they perceive it as reflecting both a cultural reality and a personal mission.
8. Bias-free usage is a concern for newspapers also, but there is equal concern that the desire to be inoffensive has limited needed debate of issues and problems.
9. Some practitioners in the Speech Communication discipline believe that there is an orthodoxy in the field that has cut off major lines of inquiry and research.

Therefore, it seems that with respect to usage, practice pre-

cedes policy; that is, we have incorporated bias-free usage into our publications without there being any central reference guide. At the same time, there is concern that attempts to eliminate biased language reflect a "mission to police intellectual error."[62] There is also an attitude that dealing with language use is trivial: "Why should we occupy ourselves with inconsequential minutia like the use of he when there are very large and important issues concerning sexism that cry for attention and remedy."[63] However, the AAUP Draft Guidelines on Bias-Free Usage noted that of the two hundred respondents to its 1988 survey of university presses, 85 percent felt that gender-biased language occurs in scholarly publishing, and about 70 percent believed it was a problem.[64]

One major question is: If we get rid of some sexist, racist, homophobic language, will we do something about the underlying attitudes? And if some of the usages are so subtle that they are not likely to be recognized as being biased because they appeal to firmly embedded and socially supported values and beliefs, will we be able to change these beliefs through editing? According to Steven Pinker, professor of brain and cognitive sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "It's a fallacy to say that language determines thought. In order for words to have that kind of power, the mind would have to be malleable like putty, with no predelictions of its own."[65] He goes on to say,

> People invent new "polite" words to refer to emotionally laden or distasteful things, but the euphemism becomes tainted by association and the new one that

must be found acquires its own negative connotations . . . . the name becomes colored by the concept; the concept does not become freshened by the name. [66]

Authors of textbooks in Speech Communication suggest that it is through experiences (even vicarious ones such as role-playing), that include a variety of characters and ethnicities, discussions valuing diversity, explorations of the impact of biased language and gender on communication, and the highlighting of differences in communicative behaviors, norms, and definitions of competency that people will gain insight into bias. In short, it is through personal encounters with bias that our perceptions are changed.

A second major question is: To what exent is our new-found sensitivity limiting necessary discussion and debate of major issues? There do not seem to be any studies that statistically support the belief that discussion of ideas has been curtailed because of "political correctness" and concerns about usage. The debate over "political correctness" itself may give the lie to the charge. "Political correctness is a popular topic. In 1981, a Nexis search of "multicultural" and "multiculturalism" found only 40 entries, while in 1992 there were over 2000.[67] A Dialog search in 1988 of 33 major metropolitan newspapers (not including the New York Times) found only 101 entries in which political and correct were linked.[68] By 1991, that number had risen to 3,877. What does seem to be very clear is that advocates in all shades of the political spectrum, liberal and conservative, left and right, wield the label "politically correct" as a club with which to silence dispute.

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APPENDIX A

Specific Guidelines Presented by Publishers

The changes in suggestions for bias-free usage lie in the new groups and concerns that are addressed. Thus there is now concern for ageism, stigmatization of persons with disabilities, previously unrecognized ethnic slurs, stigmatization of lesbians and gay males, religious slurs, demeaning of nationality, and the more subtle forms of bias that are obscured by our habitual use of language so that they are not even recognized as biased. A comprehensive listing of preferred usages would make this paper into a book, and insightful reference works are available for dealing with gender-free usage. Therefore, I will include only a listing of selected formulations for areas other than gender-bias and examples of more subtle forms of bias that often go unrecognized. It should be noted that there is not always complete agreement by representatives of various groups as to what is the preferred designation. This listing does not pretend to be all inclusive.

Specific Terms with respect to Race, Ethnicity Citizenship and Nationality

African American. A currently preferred term referring to U.S. citizens of black African ancestry, though some people prefer Black.

America/American. Use United States, U.S., U.S. citizen, or citizen when the country is meant. Immigrant groups that have settled in the United States are called American: Chinese American, Polish American.

American Indian. This refers to indigenous peoples of North and South America and is preferred by some over Native American which is also accepted.

Asian. Used to refer to people of or from Asia, even where a specific nationality would be more precise, e.g., Southeast Asian, Vietnamese. Designation by skin color is highly offensive, and Oriental is undesirable usage.

Caucasian. Based on an outmoded theory of race. Not recommended.

Chicana/Chicano. Widely used in the 1960s and 1970's, it is in disfavor among some Mexican Americans who prefer the latter designation.

coolie. Perjorative. Use laborer, worker, porter.

Cosa Nostra. Discriminatory against Italians unless used in a precise, historic sense. Use organized crime.

Eskimo. The term Innuk, plural Innuit is recommended.

ghetto. The term is loaded with negative connotations; use community, neighborhood.

Hispanic. There is debate as to whether this is an accepted usage. Some object to using its noun forms. Greater specificity is recommended where possible.

illegal alien. Undocumented resident or worker is preferred.

Jew. Some people find the noun form offensive and recommend the adjectival inflection, a Jewish person.

Moslem. An older spelling. Use Muslim.

nonwhite. Objectionable because it makes white the standard by which individuals are classified. People of color is preferred.

pagan. Carries a perjorative connotation (as does heathen) of irreligious and hedonistic. Specify the belief system, e.g., animism, Hinduism, poytheism.

third world, developing, emerging, nonindustrialized, undeveloped. The terms carry an implicit derogatory meaning of comparision with rich, industrialized, highly technological nations. More precise, specific identification is preferred.

tribe/tribal. Considered imprecise and perjorative, nation or people is preferred.

Specific Designations for People with Disabilities

1. Generally put people first, not their disability. Thus person with a disability is preferred to disabled person.

2. Do not label people by their disability. Thus, it is indivioduals with epilepsy, not epileptics. The person is not the disability.

Specific Age Designations

1. older person is preferred for anyone beyond what is usually recognized as middle age. senior is not recommended.

2. boy, girl. These apply to individuals up to the age of thirteen or fourteen.

Specific Designations for Sexual Orientation

1. Sexual orientation is preferred to sexual preference. It avoids the implication of choice that is not necessarily reported by lesbians and gay men.

2. Lesbian and gay male are preferred to the word "homosexual" when used as an adjective referring to specific persons or groups. (There is some disagreement with this.)

3. Use "gender" instead of "sex." The term sex is often confused with sexual behavior, and this is troublesome when differentiating between sexual orientation and gender.

Less Often Recognized Examples of Bias

The following example reinforces stereotypes of minority groups and is taken from McGraw-Hill's Guidelines for Bias-Free Publishing.

> Poor diet can be injurious to the mother's health. . . Hispanic women, whose regular diet tends to have high starch content, do not receive enough vitamins or minerals.

The bias is observed because no identifiable purpose is served by the identification of "Hispanic women . . ." One can describe a starchy diet without reference to a given group at all.

The following is also an instance from the McGraw-Hill Guide: 1971 saw the most westernized of the middle eastern nations, Iran, experience a revolution and religious upheaval, which has resulted in a turning away from western values and a return to a more primitive style of living." The effect of the phrase, "primitive style of living," is to reinforce a stereotyped view of a particular group, and the term "primitive" itself is so value-laden that it precludes objectivity. "Primitive" by whose standards?

With respect to gender-bias, the AAUP Draft Guidelines discuss the problem of the default assumption and faulty parallelism. "Writers may unconsciously assume that the referent of a gender-neutral noun is male." In the following sentence, the default assumption is disclosed by faulty parallelism in which a gender-neutral term is paired with one marked as feminine: "An army doctor and a woman serving as a medical specialist were killed this morning by mines as they tried to assist in taking Iraqi prisoners." The writer assumes that the doctor is a male, although one might reasonably ask whether one women or two were killed.

A statement such as "We have tried to respond to the concerns and needs of our Black community," also is biased because it sets Black Americans apart from the larger community.

Finally, consider the following statement: Some homosexuals in long-term relationships establish relational networks beyond the individual couple that can approach the nature of real family ties. The implication is that lesbians and gay males only have short-term relationships, that these relationships are not real, that real families don't include gays, that heterosexual pairings are always long-term, and that lesbians and gay males are solitary.

APPENDIX B

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