

Politically Correct English in B&H: Perceptions and Experiences of Students and Educators

Berina Sulić

Faculty of Education and Humanities
International Burch University
berina.sijerkic@gmail.com

Elma Dedović-Atilla

Faculty of Education and Humanities
International Burch University
elma.dedovic-atilla@ibu.edu.ba

Nizama Spahić

Faculty of Education and Humanities
International Burch University
nizama.spahich@gmail.com

Abstract: *This paper investigates perceptions and experiences surrounding the politically correct (PC) English in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina's high schools and universities. While earlier research has extensively investigated the PC English language, mostly in Global North contexts and to a lesser extent in Global South contexts, this study fills a significant gap in the latter, focusing solely on Bosnia and Herzegovina's population. The research employed a quantitative approach, i.e., a questionnaire, to explore attitudes and experiences linked to PC English among 150 international high school and university educators and international university students in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study found that Bosnian students and educators hold positive perceptions of PC English language, particularly in formal settings, but their personal experiences with it are rather limited. To analyze these patterns, the study applied Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), examining the textual, discursive, and social practice dimensions of PC English. The relevance of this study lies primarily within the academic sphere, encompassing educators and educational institutions, as well as ministries and governmental bodies. Its findings are expected to inform curriculum development and pedagogical practices, facilitate discussions on current challenges, and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and responsive educational environment.*

Keywords: *English Language, Politically Correct language, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Perceptions, Experiences, Education*

JEL Classification: *I20*

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 11 June 2025

Accepted: 11 July 2025

INTRODUCTION

Awareness surrounding political correctness (PC) and the use of politically correct language has considerably increased over the last decades across linguistic and cultural contexts. Consequently, academic interest in the phenomenon has likewise expanded. A large pool of the existing literature originates from the Global North, particularly the United States, where the conceptual roots of political correctness are most deeply embedded. Naturally, research has predominantly focused on investigating politically (in)correct English, often within academic, media, and institutional environments of Anglophone countries.

The implementation of politically correct language has also been studied extensively around the world, including in the Balkans. In this region, the primary focus has been on the role of political correctness in the local languages: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian - with scholars examining it in relation to national identity, war discourse, and inclusive language reforms. However, PC English in the region, despite its undisputed significance and presence in various domains of life, including education, science, media, entertainment, sports, and business, is still largely underexplored. This gap is especially notable considering that English is employed as both the first foreign language and the main medium of instruction in numerous educational institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Therefore, this study aims to address this research gap by investigating attitudes towards politically correct English in the context of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specifically, the study examines the perceptions and experiences of university students and high school and university educators who engage with English in academic environments, particularly within English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) programs. These kinds of participants represent a highly relevant and insightful population in terms of gauging how Bosnians involved in education understand and experience politically correct English, as a language they consume regularly in different walks of life.

To reach this aim, a total of 150 participants, comprising both university students and high school and university educators, were included in the study. The selection of participants from EMI settings was intentional, as their everyday linguistic practices in English provide a natural context for observing politically correct language use. The study employed a quantitative approach to collect data on participants' attitudes and personal experiences related to political correctness in English, leaving space for participants to include their additional comments.

We hope that this study will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of political correctness in English as used in non-Anglophone, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts and that it will offer more empirical insights and information that will be relevant not only for scholars of sociology, applied linguistics and English language education, but also for curriculum developers, institutional policymakers, and educators working in internationalized academic environments.

Literature Review

The phrase "political correctness" is often deemed to have been coined in the 1930s by Stalinists and used in the Soviet Union and by communists in Western countries (Kohl, 1992). The term had a negative connotation and was critically and satirically used to describe party members who rigidly followed the official ideological line and were unwilling to engage in more nuanced or independent critical thought.

The term was revived (in its more modern usage) by feminist groups in the 1960s and 1970s in the USA, with an initial attempt to eliminate potential discrimination and prejudice against women in industry, religion, government, education, medicine, law, and labor unions. Later, it was also used in the civil rights movement context as „it started to be used to describe language and policies that intended to help fight for civil rights and avoid the possibility of offending members of particular societal groups“ (Zhou, 2018, p.66).

Thus, it seems that the PC emerged as a highly needed response to societal needs for respect towards diverse groups and inclusivity and to emphasize sensitivity in language and language users' behavior. The emergence of the PC English language's main point was to address and revise injustices and discrimination from the past, especially in academic and political discourse (Frazer, 1994). However, political correctness expanded beyond its original scope over time and influenced many social sectors, particularly media, education, and other corporate environments, and today, it is defined as “avoiding language or behavior that any particular group of people might feel is unkind or offensive” (Cambridge Dictionary). This expansion of PC led to various debates regarding the balance between advocates highlighting respect for diversity (e.g., Allan & Burrige, 2006; Andary-Brophy, 2015; Cameron, 1995; Curzan, 2014; Feldstein, 1997; Lakoff, 2000; Maass, Suitner & Merkel, 2013; Simmons, 2008) and critics who argued that PC can sometimes suppress free speech and intellectual exchange (e.g., Drury, 1996; D'Souza, 1991; Hughes, 1993, 2010; Kimball, 2016; Woodward, 1992).

However, a considerable number of researchers, especially nowadays when PC language usage is established as a societal norm in many parts of the world, holds a balanced stance towards PC English language. They examine both positive and negative sides of PC English language, acknowledging its role in promoting inclusiveness, but also address concerns about its potential to limit free speech (Dzenis et al., 2020; Ely et al., 2006; Marques, 2009; Matsuda et al, 1993; Matsuda, 2018; Moller, 2016; Talbot, 2007).

Many academic disciplines focused on evaluating the very complex idea of the expanding phenomenon of political correctness, at the same time providing distinctive perspectives on PC's implications and uses. Thus, Hillman (1998) analyzed PC within the context of political economy; Sgorbati (2021) explored the impact of political correctness on the legal sector; Reinelt (2011) probed a connection between PCs and cultural performances; Pop & Sim (2021) explored the concept within business communication; Lizatović (2021) provided valuable insights into the ways political correctness impacted film industries. Naturally, the PC language in language and applied linguistics studies is present as well (e.g., Andary-Brophy, 2015; Freeborn et al., 1993; Granath & Ullen, 2017). The interaction of all these disciplines with PC offers a range of viewpoints on how it affects the individual, institutional, and social levels.

In general, research on political correctness and the politically correct English language has been extensively conducted in the Global North, specifically in countries like the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. This extensive work has contributed to a better understanding of the way politically correct language shapes societal norms and promotes inclusivity in these areas. Conversely, the Global South area lacks an equivalent depth of research on this topic.

In terms of research on PC in educational settings specifically (as this is the setting of this research), studies have shown that the perceptions of PC language among educators and students vary widely, reflecting a complex interplay of personal experiences, educational environments, and broader societal attitudes toward race and gender issues.

As early as the 1990s, Kohl (1992) observed a generally good acceptance and incorporation of PC language in public schools, owing to their accountability to a diverse range of community stakeholders. In his well-known study, Gastil (1990) tested whether the supposedly generic masculine pronoun “he” in fact evokes male-specific imagery, finding evidence of male bias. Hayes and Colin's research (1994) from the same period showed that students and educators have mixed reactions towards the use of PC terminology in educational contexts, mainly because of the challenges due to traditional standards and the discomfort which is associated with personal and institutional prejudice.

Furthermore, the use of PC language in TEIL (Teaching English as an International Language) contexts has a substantial impact on attitudes among educators and students, resulting in a more inclusive and respectful learning environment, as Matsuda (2018) highlights - TEIL helps to reduce native speakers by respecting non-native variants of English and acknowledging the contributions of all English users, regardless of linguistic origin.

Phumsiri & Tangkiengsirisin (2018) also investigated attitudes and competence of Thai graduate students toward politically correct English. Tsehelska (2006) focused on integrating PC into EFL instruction, including vocabulary awareness and cultural sensitivity. Taheri (2020) reviewed PC and inclusive language concepts, offering awareness strategies for STEM instructors. Avery and Steingard (2008) also explored ways to change educators' and students' views of PC terminology through the deployment of political correctness. Moreover, Bolshak and Voloshina (2021) investigated how to apply politically correct lexicon in the English classroom, presenting approaches for introducing PC vocabulary in ESL settings, highlighting categories like disability, socioeconomics, and diplomacy. According to Stempleski (2003), the significance of teaching politically correct English to EFL students is no longer disputed, as politically correct English presents contemporary language models and thus appeals to both English language learners and educators. English performs the role of the global language of communication; hence, it has to assume the responsibility to sound politically correct and presuppose an adequate understanding of communicants belonging to different national cultures for intercultural communication. Additionally, Baird et al. (2022), who investigated educators' and students' perceptions of PC terminology, found that educational level had no discernible impact on mitigating the negative impacts of racial resentment or white guilt on anti-PC sentiments. Therefore, this suggests that regardless of educational level, instructors and students may have similar opinions on political correctness, which is influenced more by their racial attitudes than by their educational experiences.

Overall, the importance of PC language has long been established in the English-speaking countries (as the timeframe of the studies suggest). In terms of the Balkans region and Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian Language, most studies focus on PC in local languages (e.g. Ćulakova, 2016; Lizatović, 2021; Opačić, 2010; Višić, Muller & Kovač, 2023) and more specifically on gendered communication (e.g., Zlotrg, 2019.; Zlotrg, 2023; Šehović, 2003).

Research on English PC language in our region is very scarce (e.g., Sulić & Dedovic-Atilla, 2024), and often focuses on international contexts (e.g. Zukić & Pustahija, 2024). Therefore, we hope that this study will contribute to this under-researched topic in this region.

Aim, Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how politically correct (PC) English is perceived and experienced by international school educators and university students in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study seeks to understand the extent to which PC English is accepted, applied, or resisted in both formal

and informal communication contexts. In doing so, it addresses a significant gap in the literature, as most research on PC language has been centered in Anglophone or Global North settings, with minimal focus on the Global South and transitional contexts such as Bosnia and Herzegovina. By gathering data on perceptions and lived experiences with PC English, this study aims to provide insights relevant for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to align language education with contemporary standards of inclusion and sensitivity.

This research is grounded in Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which examines discourse at three interrelated levels: (1) textual practice (the actual language used), (2) discursive practice (how texts are produced, distributed, and interpreted), and (3) social practice (the broader sociocultural and ideological context). Fairclough's model is particularly suitable for this study, as it allows for an exploration of how global discourses—such as those promoting political correctness—are localized, negotiated, or resisted in non-native English contexts like Bosnia and Herzegovina. The framework also supports a deeper analysis of how PC English functions ideologically in shaping social identities and power relations within educational environments. Through this lens, the study not only examines surface-level attitudes and behaviors, but also uncovers the socio-political forces that influence language use and norms in transitional post-socialist societies.

This study utilizes a quantitative research design complemented by a critical discourse analytical lens to explore attitudes and experiences related to PC English. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 150 participants, including international school educators and international university students within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections: one measuring perceptions of PC English (using a five-point Likert scale) and another assessing personal experiences with it. While the data were analyzed statistically using SPSS v22 to identify trends in mean scores and standard deviations, the interpretation of results was guided by Fairclough's CDA model. This allowed the research to move beyond numerical patterns and engage with the socio-discursive meanings underlying participant responses. Optional open-ended responses added depth by providing illustrative examples of how PC English is understood or applied in everyday communication. Overall, the combination of empirical data and critical interpretation offers a multi-dimensional insight into the role of PC English in Bosnian educational settings.

Participants

The sampling size comprised 150 international university students and educators teaching in international high schools and universities from Bosnia and Herzegovina, out of which 64 were educators (42.6%) and 86 students (57.3%). Out of these, 64% were female, and 36% were male (see Table 1). Participants also reported on their age, and their responses were divided into four age groups: 20–24 accounts for 53.3% of the total respondents, i.e., more than half of all respondents (see Table 1). Besides this group, 32% of all participants were in the 25–34 age range. This group is followed by 35–44-year-olds (11.3%) and 45+ (3.3%). As shown in Table 1, 66% of respondents have been learning/using the language for more than ten years, and 26% of respondents said they have been learning/using English for six to ten years, strengthening their comments' relevance. Only 5.3% of participants indicated that they have been using English for three to five years, 2% for one to two years, and 0.7% for less than a year.

Table 1:
Group descriptives regarding respondents' demographic information

AGE		
VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
20-24	80	53.3
25-34	48	32
35-44	17	11.3
45+	5	3.3
STATUS		
VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
EDUCATOR	64	42.7
STUDENT	86	57.3
GENDER		
VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
FEMALE	96	64.0
MALE	54	36.0
EDUCATIONAL DEGREE		
VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
HIGH SCHOOL	74	49.3
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	38	25.3
MASTER'S DEGREE	30	20.0
DOCTORAL DEGREE	8	5.3
TIME USING ENGLISH		
VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1	0.7
1-2 YEARS	3	2.0
3-5 YEARS	8	5.3
6-10 YEARS	39	26.0
MORE THAN 10 YEARS	99	66.0
ENGLISH LEVEL		
VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
POOR	2	1.3
FAIR	6	4.0
GOOD	17	11.3
VERY GOOD	55	36.7
EXCELLENT	70	46.7

Among the students who took part in the study (Table 1), 24,7% had a bachelor's degree, 20% had finished a master's degree, 5.3% had completed PhD studies, 0.7% had a higher educational degree, and 49,3% had completed high school education (university students). Regarding participants' level of English language knowledge, 94.7% of respondents reported to have solid English language proficiency, i.e. good (11.3%), very good (36.7%), or outstanding (46.7%) mastery of English language, whereas mere 5.3% of participants self-assessed their knowledge as poor (1.3%) or fair (4.0%).

Research Questions

To fulfill the aims of the study and shed light on the PC English language in B&H, following questions were formulated:

RQ1 What are Bosnian students' and educators' perceptions of the use of the politically correct English language?

RQ2 What are Bosnian students' and educators' experiences with the use of politically correct English language?

Instrument

This study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing a survey composed of three sections (see Appendix 1). The first part of the questionnaire, demographic information, consisted of five questions where participants were required to provide information regarding their age, gender, socioeconomic background, occupation, level of education, and proficiency level in English. Another section was specifically designed to assess the extent to which participants are familiar with PC English and their attitudes towards it. Respondents were asked to state their opinions on the need to adopt PC English in various societal contexts to enhance the level of inclusivity, the influence of language on society's perspectives, and whether they find it easy to use these phrases in their daily conversation. The final section pertains to participants' experiences with the PC English language in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The development of the survey questionnaire relied on a case study from Thailand, where Phumsiri and Tangkiengsirisin (2018) analyzed the use of English with political correctness. Based on this case study, the survey adapted and expanded some questions to better align with the present research objectives. In addition, reliability and validity tests were performed before the survey was circulated to the respondents (see Tables 2 and 3 below).

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha overall reliability statistics

FREQUENTIST SCALE RELIABILITY STATISTICS					
ESTIMATE		CRONBACH'S A		MEAN	
POINT ESTIMATE		0.796		2.981	
				0.318	

Table 3: Reliability and normality of survey scales

	N OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	SKEWNESS	KURTOSIS
PERCEPTIONS	7	0.79	-1.11	2.00
EXPERIENCES	9	0.72	.07	.02

The study of the normality distribution revealed that all the variables' skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range of -2 to $+2$.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed online and aimed to collect data on PC English language usage targeting teachers and students at international schools, as these schools are immersed in EMI programs and use English daily. The deliberate, intentional stratification among participants had as a goal enhancing this study's findings by ensuring a comprehensive understanding of perceptions across academic hierarchies. The distribution of this online survey was scheduled to be executed at the end of the academic year to maximize relevance and response. This timing not only fits with the academic calendar but also with the specific time of year when respondents are most likely to reflect on their yearly experiences in depth and provide insightful, contextualized answers.

The survey was distributed to participants via institutional e-mails or institutional community groups. Participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study objectives, and the participation was voluntary, with participants being informed of the approximate time expected to complete the survey. Every response was anonymized to ensure confidentiality, and any identifying information was kept private.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, v. 25) was used to analyze the collected data, i.e., descriptive statistics was utilized.

Results

This section presents the research findings, structured around the two research questions. The data were analyzed using SPSS v22, and the results are interpreted through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly drawing on Fairclough's three-dimensional model (textual, discursive, and social practice levels). This framework enables a deeper understanding of how politically correct (PC) English is perceived and experienced, particularly within the socio-cultural context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where English is a foreign language with strong global ideological implications.

Perceptions of Politically Correct English Language

The section measuring perceptions (PQ1–PQ7) used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The mean responses across these items clustered around 4, suggesting generally positive perceptions.

Table 4: Statistical Analysis of Mean values for respondents' perceptions of PC English language

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS					
QUESTION	N	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
PQ1	150	1	5	3.987	0.955
PQ2	150	1	5	3.360	1.076
PQ3	150	1	5	4.067	0.864
PQ4	150	1	5	4.033	1.006
PQ5	150	1	5	3.973	0.976
PQ6	150	1	5	3.147	1.071
PQ7	150	1	5	3.587	0.943

The highest agreement was with PQ3 (“It is important to encourage and use the PC language in the workplace while interacting in English”; M = 4.067) and PQ4 (“It is important that PC English is used in the media”; M = 4.033), revealing the respondents' support for PC English within institutional settings. These results align with Fairclough’s textual level, indicating that respondents are familiar with and reproduce normative discourses that associate PC language with professionalism and inclusivity.

The very first question, PQ1, “It is important for individuals to be mindful of the language they use to avoid offending others when interacting in English,” was also among those questions that reflected a high level of agreement, with a mean of 3.987 (see 4). PQ5, “PC English should be taught in schools,” had a mean score of 3.973 (see 4), indicating a strong consensus on incorporating PC English language education in the academic curricula.

On the other hand, PQ2, “It is important to encourage and use Politically Correct (PC) language at home when interacting in English,” had a mean value of 3.360 (see 4), which shows mixed sentiments, highlighting the comparatively lower emphasis on the usage of PC English language at home. PQ7, which explored the belief that “using PC English contributes to fostering inclusivity and diversity in society,” had a mean of 3.587 (see 4), reflecting a positive yet slightly less enthusiastic stance on the broader societal benefits of the PC English language.

Interestingly, the lowest mean score was for PQ6, i.e., “The enforcement of PC English creates a barrier to open and honest communication,” with a mean of 3.147 (see Table 2). This further suggests that respondents are less enthusiastic about viewing PC language as an obstacle to transparent and honest communication.

The aforementioned mean scores of questions included in the second part of the questionnaire, “Perceptions of Politically Correct Language when interacting in English,” suggest that people have a generally positive attitude toward the PC English language, especially in formal settings and public spaces such as the workplace and media. They also acknowledge the significance of PC English language instruction and its role in promoting inclusion and diversity in society.

Experience with Politically Correct English Language

The following part of the survey included questions specifically designed to gather valuable information about participants' personal experiences with the PC English (in further text marked EQ, ranging from EQ1 to EQ9). A box for further explanation was provided for some of the questions. Respondents provided valuable insights, as can be seen in more detail in the Appendices (see Appendix B). They are

also further analyzed in the Discussion part. Thus, the survey was purposefully created in a way to provide participants with opportunities to write down their real-life situations regarding posed questions to obtain more in-depth and richer data. The Likert scale used with the following values: 1 - Never, 2 - Rarely, 3 - Sometimes, 4 - Often, 5 - Always.

Table 5: Statistical Analysis of Mean Values for respondents' Experiences with PC English language

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS					
QUESTION	N	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
EQ1	150	1	5	2.113	0.987
EQ2	150	1	5	1.860	0.912
EQ3	150	1	5	1.967	0.958
EQ4	150	1	5	2.053	1.002
EQ5	150	1	5	1.647	0.837
EQ6	150	1	5	3.640	1.260
EQ7	150	1	5	3.380	1.041
EQ8	150	1	5	2.273	0.955
EQ9	150	1	5	2.900	1.230

The analysis of mean scores for the third part of the survey, named “Experience with Politically Correct Language when interacting in English,” reveals variations in responses among the participants. The first question, EQ1, “I have witnessed someone being publicly criticized or shamed for using politically incorrect language while interacting in English,” had a mean of 2.113 (see 5), indicating that such occurrences were relatively uncommon.

Similarly, EQ2, “I have felt pressured to use PC English, even when I personally disagreed with it,” had a mean value of 1.860 (see Table 3), suggesting that our participants did not feel significant pressure to conform to PC English language in general.

EQ3, which asked participants to indicate their position on a scale from 1 to 5 with the statement “I have been corrected by someone for using English expressions they deemed politically incorrect,” had a mean of 1.967 (see Table 3), also indicating that such occurrences were rare. However, for EQ4, “I have refrained from expressing my true opinions or feelings due to fear of being criticized for using politically incorrect language in communication in English,” the mean value was 2.053 (see Table 5), reflecting somewhat moderate concern among respondents about potential criticism they might face.

EQ5, “I have experienced backlash or negative consequences for unintentionally using politically incorrect language in communication in English,” had the lowest mean score of 1.647 (see Table 3), suggesting that negative repercussions for such incidents were rare.

Interestingly, EQ6, “I appreciate it and respond positively when someone corrects my language for being politically incorrect (when communicating in English),” had a mean of 3.640, indicating a positive reception towards correction. At the same time, this is the highest mean score among all M scores in the section (see 5). Speaking about positive experiences with PC English, similar to EQ6, EQ7, “I noticed that PC language positively affects my workplace or academic environment (when communicating in English),” had a mean of 3.380 (see Table 3), also suggesting a recognition of the beneficial impact PC English language has on formal settings.

The last two questions of the section, which included additional space for an explanation, were EQ8 and EQ9. EQ8, “I have found myself in a situation where I intentionally used PC language when communicating in English even though it felt unnatural or awkward to me,” had a mean of 2.273 (see Table 3), indicating somewhat occasional discomfort with using the PC English language. Some of the most interesting and meaningful explanations will be analyzed in the Discussion part.

Finally, the last question of this part, EQ9, i.e. “In situations where I am engaged in a heated argument or disagreement (when communicating in English), I prioritize using politically correct language,” had a mean score of 2.900 (see Table 3), showing a moderate tendency to prioritize PC English language when involved in conflicts. This question was, at the same time, the one with the highest number of inputs of additional explanations, which can be found in Appendix B.

Overall, applying CDA to the results shows that PC English in Bosnia and Herzegovina is situated at a discursive crossroads: globally endorsed but locally emergent. Participants demonstrate symbolic adherence to its values while having limited lived experience with its enforcement, negotiation, or challenge. This highlights the ideological influence of Anglophone norms in shaping English use in non-native contexts, and reveals how global discourses of language and inclusion are received, reinterpreted, and sometimes resisted in local cultural landscapes.

In the next section, further in-depth explanations of the above-stated inputs and results will be provided. Overall, these mean scores we analyzed serve as a reflection of a diverse scope of experiences and attitudes towards the PC English language in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with respondents generally experiencing low levels of pressure with the usage of PC English language and negative consequences after using it, while also recognizing and highlighting the positive effects of PC language in certain contexts.

Discussion

The exploration of the research findings and results will be discussed in more detail in this chapter, once again organized around research questions.

RQ1 Bosnian students' and educators' perceptions of the use of the politically correct English

The study's findings show that Bosnian educators and students have rather positive views regarding the use of the PC English language. This fact is further supported by the overall mean score for all perception-related questions, which was 3.736, with 1 denoting the least degree of agreement and five the greatest. This number suggests that the respondents agree that using PC English is both beneficial and of high importance in different contexts. According to these results, both groups, educators and students, appear to understand the importance of PC English in promoting respectful and inclusive communication, which is also consistent with broader social trends towards both increased sensitivity and awareness in language use.

Specifically, PQ3, “It is important to encourage and use the PC language in the workplace while interacting in English.”, and PQ4, “It is important that PC English is used in the media.” stand out with means exceeding 4 (see Table 2). In terms of appropriateness and acceptance of PC language rules in English communication, statements PQ3 and PQ4 show considerable support. This could be further linked to respondents' detailed explanations and comments provided (see Appendix B), where many participants stated they perceive the usage of PC English language to be highly important, especially in

formal environments. They stated that they would not like to offend anyone, be rude to anyone, or not show respect towards people from different backgrounds, thus corroborating the scarce research on PC language in the region, albeit more related to the local language (e.g., Müller, Višić, & Kovač, 2023).

If we look at the second question with the highest mean of all other questions, PQ4 - "It is important that PC English is used in the media" we can conclude that participants reportedly recognized that media has a significant influence on public perceptions and attitudes, and with that, see the use of PC English language as a possible way to create space to promote fairness and prevent the occurrence of possible stereotypes and biases in society. The responses that indicate the high mean also reflect broader changes in society and an increasing awareness of issues concerning social justice, where there is growing recognition of the power of language in shaping attitudes and behaviors.

As we have already analyzed, most respondents reported good or extremely positive perceptions of the usage of the PC English language in formal settings, like work and school. It is interesting, however, that PQ2 - "It is important to encourage and use Politically Correct (PC) language at home when interacting in English" has a rather smaller mean score ($M=3.360$). It implies that when it comes to using PC English at home, opinions vary. A large number of participants stated that they did not think it was as crucial to insist on using PC English in their relationships with friends and family. To support this interpretation, there were a couple of responses (see Appendix B) where people explained that they prefer using the PC English language in formal situations or when they do not know someone very well, especially if they come from different backgrounds:

- *At work, or with my international friends, I did not want to sound offensive, especially when making jokes;*
- *I just want to clarify in my cases, I'm prone to be politically correct in public, but I don't mind using politically incorrect language in a close group of people*

This variation reveals a more nuanced perspective among respondents, who feel freer and more relaxed in private, informal situations, yet acknowledge the nature of the formal requirement of PC language in public and institutional circumstances.

Overall, the findings are interesting, considering that some earlier research showed that the youth favor traditional authorities and hold rather negative views on marginalized groups, euthanasia, LGBTQ rights, and gender equality (Bajović, 2013; Friedrich et al., 2009; Taleski & Hoppe, 2015; Turjačanin, 2011) as well as Majstorović and Turjačanin (2013) study which showed that among the youth, the highest attachment was attributed to religious affiliation, followed by attachment to the ethnic group. As many of these are social categories and issues which have traditionally often involved (un)subtle sensitivities around the use of appropriate language and terminology, and biased versus bias-free language dichotomy, this might indicate that more traditional or conservative sentiments have gradually been shifting towards more liberal views in terms of the ways we address social diversity

RQ2 Bosnian students' and educators' experiences with the use of politically correct English

Regarding the next part of the questionnaire, which is connected to respondents' experiences with the PC English language, the results are notably different from those in the previous sections. The overall analysis of mean scores reveals a notable difference between respondents' perceptions and experiences with the PC English language. The mean score for all perception-related questions was $M=3.736$, indicating positive perceptions towards PC English in general, as it was discussed previously. However, the mean score for experience-related questions was significantly lower, specifically at $M=2.425$. Based

on this divergence, it can be concluded that while respondents expressed the importance and benefits of positive perceptions of the PC English language, they did not have frequent practical experiences with it, either positive or negative (although they do spend a considerable daily amount of time in schools and universities in English-speaking environments).

This discrepancy can be attributed to various factors. It is quite possible that PC English language practices have not been fully adopted or integrated into people's daily interactions while using English, as they have in Western contexts from where PC English language norms actually originated. Thus, this initial lack of exposure to the PC English language and its practice could further explain the lower mean scores in the experience-related questions. However, it is more likely that participants are simply not exposed to everyday English-speaking environments outside educational institutions, and that even there, they are likely to switch to the local language outside classes, reducing the opportunities to experience the phenomenon (either in a positive or a negative manner).

However, some respondents did share some interesting comments. For instance, in the very first question, EQ1 - "I have witnessed someone being publicly criticized or shamed for using politically incorrect language while interacting in English" respondents shared comments such as these (see Appendix B):

- *When I watch American shows and I guess that's because they pay too much attention to it.*
- *Spending time on the internet with friends, someone would in public chats say something politically incorrect and people would react to it negatively (the chats are worldwide not local).*
-

Interestingly, the keywords in situations respondents provided, such as '*American shows*' and '*worldwide chats*,' are all related to international settings rather than local ones, which seems natural considering the role of English in these settings.

Some comments indicate a cultural lag where the positive perceptions as shown above are far ahead of actual experiences, as we noted earlier:

- *Interesting topic, however our country is not 'ready' to this I would say. Our tradition and culture are not that 'free' and 'open', so I think that people might find it awkward.*
- *Interesting, I never thought about this before and how our language and country is not a 'place' for it. I don't know how to explain but this is 'too American' for me, honestly.*

When asked whether they have found themselves in a situation where they intentionally used PC language in English even though it felt unnatural or awkward to them (EQ8, see Appendix A), respondents indicated that they almost always do so in formal contexts. This also aligns with previously presented findings regarding perceptions of the PC English language, where respondents emphasized the importance of teaching PC English in schools and using it at workplaces. To support this stance, here are some comments provided by respondents:

- *I cannot remember the exact situation but probably when communicating with people from different backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities that I do not know a lot about so I tried to be as 'neutral' as possible.*
- *Sometimes in school in communication between students we have to use some terms which I personally usually wouldn't use. Mostly when speaking about gender.*
- *Again, with my friends or at UNI, with professors, not to be offensive to anyone.*
- *Again, when communicating with parents, professors and people from other cultures so I had to be extra careful since I do not want to offend anyone but at the same time, I do not know what might be offensive to some cultures.*

As can be seen in these responses, they indicate a strong need to express respect in formal circumstances and to be as neutral as possible. To further support the statement, here are listed some of the high number of respondents' inputs on the question, "In situations where I am engaged in a heated argument or disagreement (when communicating in English), I prioritize using politically correct language." (EQ9, see Appendix A) Comments for this question include:

- *In a situation where I am engaged in a heated argument, I try even harder to be politically correct and use the correct language in efforts not to offend anyone while trying to prove my point. I want to be correct and prove that, I don't want to be mean and 'win' by being petty and offensive.*
- *Because offending people is never the main goal of the argument.*

These kinds of sentiments expressed by some participants seem to confirm other scholarly work around the globe, which emphasize the positive societal and professional implications of using PC English (e.g., Goncalo et al, 2015; Ratanaphithayaporn & Rodrigo, 2020). This then indicates a wider cultural understanding that the usage of the PC English language in public spaces is a means of encouraging mutual respect, understanding, and improving communication in diverse settings.

Conclusion and Implications

In conclusion, this study aimed to fill a significant gap in the existing literature by investigating the status of PC English in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where such research is notably lacking. By focusing on respondents attending international schools and university programs within the country, the present research attempted to provide valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of the PC English language in this country's unique socio-cultural context.

The findings indicate that while students and educators generally hold positive perceptions of PC English, their actual use and lived experiences with it vary depending on context. This discrepancy between favorable attitudes and limited real-world engagement was illuminated through Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. At the textual level, participants often reproduced normative PC discourse, particularly in formal settings such as schools, media, and workplaces. However, at the discursive level, their interactions revealed that PC English remains a relatively passive, top-down discourse—acknowledged more than it is negotiated or actively reshaped. At the social practice level, the selective uptake of PC English underscores the global ideological flow from Anglophone norms and its partial localization within Bosnian communicative culture.

Participants' comments emphasized that PC English is used more frequently in institutional environments and less so in informal or private interactions. This suggests a symbolic alignment with global inclusivity discourses without full internalization into everyday communication practices. These dynamics point to the importance of educators leading by example and integrating PC English into curricula—not merely as linguistic instruction, but as a critical literacy practice that invites learners to reflect on language, power, and identity.

This survey's relevance, together with our earlier work (Sulić & Dedović-Atilla, 2024) extends beyond academic bounds to include educators, educational institutions, related ministries, and governmental organizations. By exploring the experiences and perspectives of this population in real life, and drawing to our previous work analyzing the actual usage and level of knowledge of PC English among Bosnians as exercised by the two genders across different categories (familiarity with the terminology related to

gender, work, disability, race, socio-economic status), teachers can engage in critical discussions and analyses of the issue and, consequently, improve their methods of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and other English-taught courses. Additionally, these studies can help policymakers make well-informed judgments on the creation of future curricula for language education.

We hope that the present research provides some insights into PC English in our region. However, it could be further expanded in the future by including participants from a wider range of educational backgrounds, such as public schools and vocational institutions, and other contexts, such as workplaces. This would provide a more in-depth insight into the way the PC English language is used in various Bosnian demographic and industry segments. To provide data across the board and to track potential shifts and changes in Bosnian and Herzegovinian respondents' perceptions of PC English over time, longitudinal studies might be conducted as well. Finally, to gather more information on the possible causes that have influenced the B&H population's perceptions of PC English, certain qualitative research techniques, such as focus groups and in-depth interviews, could be employed. This would also enable scholars to further expand on the groundwork established by these studies and aid in developing a more complex understanding of the ways PC English has influenced social dynamics and communication practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bibliography

- Allan, K., & Burrige, K. (2006). The language of political correctness. In *Forbidden words: Taboo and the censoring of language* (pp. 90–111). Cambridge University Press.
- Andary-Brophy, C. A. (2015). *Political correctness: Social-fiscal liberalism and left-wing authoritarianism* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto].
- Avery, D. R., & Steingard, D. S. (2008). Achieving political trans-correctness: Integrating sensitivity and authenticity in diversity management education. *Journal of Management Education*, 32(3), 269–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562907307634>
- Baird, A. F., Roos, J. M., & Carter, J. S. (2023). Understanding the rise of anti-political correctness sentiment: The curious role of education. *Humanity & Society*, 47(1), 95–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01605976221146365>
- Bolshak, A., & Voloshina, K. (2021). How to apply politically correct lexicon in English classroom. In *E3S Web of Conferences*, 273, 11003. EDP Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202127311003>
- Cameron, D. (1995). *Verbal hygiene*. Routledge.
- Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). *Political correctness*. In Cambridge.org dictionary. Retrieved June 9, 2025, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/politically-correct>
- Curzan, A. (2014). *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and language history*. Cambridge University Press.
- D'Souza, D. (1991). *Illiberal education: The politics of race and sex on campus*. Vintage Books.
- Drury, S. B. (1996). Political correctness and the neoconservative reaction. *Interchange*, 27, 161–172.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities. *Discourse & society*, 4(2).
- Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific. *Methods of critical discourse analysis*.
- Ely, R. J., Meyerson, D. E., & Davidson, M. N. (2006). Rethinking political correctness. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(9), 78–87.

- Feldstein, R. (1997). *Political correctness: A response from the cultural left* (Foreword by Teresa Brennan). University of Minnesota Press.
- Frazer, E. (1994). Politics and correctness. *Politics*, 14(1), 9–14.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9256.1994.tb00071.x>
- Freeborn, D., French, P., & Langford, D. (1993). Language and ‘politically correct’ usage. In *Varieties of English: An Introduction to the Study of Language* (pp. 234–254). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gastil, J. (1990). Generic pronouns and sexist language: The oxymoronic character of masculine generics. *Sex Roles*, 23(11–12), 629–643.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00289252>
- Goncalo, J. A., Chatman, J. A., Duguid, M. M., & Kennedy, J. A. (2015). Creativity from constraint? How the political correctness norm influences creativity in mixed-sex work groups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 60(1), 1–30.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839214563975>
- Granath, S., & Ullén, M. (2017). ‘The elevation of sensitivity over truth’: Political correctness and related phrases in the Time Magazine Corpus. *Applied Linguistics*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amx019>
- Hayes, E., & Colin, S. A. J., III (Eds.). (1994). *Confronting racism and sexism* (New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 61). Jossey-Bass.
- Hillman, A. L. (1998). Political economy and political correctness. *Public Choice*, 96(3–4), 219–239. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005046122635>
- Hughes, G. (2010). *Political correctness: A history of semantics and culture*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hughes, R. (1993). *Culture of complaint: The fraying of America*. Oxford University Press.
- Kimball, R. (1990). *Tenured radicals: How politics has corrupted our higher education*. Harper & Row.
- Kohl, H. (1992). Uncommon differences: On political correctness, core curriculum and democracy in education. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 16(1), 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/uni.0.0284>
- Lakoff, R. T. (2000). *The language war*. University of California Press.

Lizatović, F. A. (2021). *Politička korektnost u Hollywoodu: 1980–2010* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Zagreb].

Maass, A., Suitner, C., & Merkel, E. (2013). Does political correctness make (social) sense? In J. P. Forgas, O. Vincze, & J. László (Eds.), *Social cognition and communication* (pp. 331–345). Psychology Press.

Marques, J. F. (2009). How politically correct is political correctness? A SWOT analysis of this phenomenon. *Business & Society*, 48(2), 257–266.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650309334635>

Matsuda, A. (2018). Is teaching English as an international language all about being politically correct? *RELC Journal*, 49(1), 24–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688217750642>

Matsuda, M. J., Lawrence, C. R. III, Delgado, R., & Crenshaw, K. W. (1993). *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech, and the First Amendment*. Westview Press.

Moller, D. (2016). Dilemmas of political correctness. *Journal of Practical Ethics*, 4(1), 1–28.

Phumsiri, N., & Tangkiengsirisin, S. (2018). An analysis of the use of English with political correctness: A case study of graduate students in Thailand. *Arab World English Journal*, 9(4), 447–463. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no4.30>

Pop, A., & Sim, M. A. (2021). Political correctness in business communication. *The Annals of the University of Oradea. Economic Sciences*.

Taheri, P. (2020). Using inclusive language in the applied science academic environments. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 9, 151–162.
<https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v9i1.1105>

Ratanaphithayaporn, J., & Rodrigo, R. (2020). Gender inclusive language impacts on international university students' perception of how involved they are in society. In *The 5th National Undergraduate Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences* (pp. 72–86).

Reinelt, J. (2011). The performance of political correctness. *Theatre Research International*, 36(2), 134–147. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0307883311000043>

Sgorbati, B. (2021). Political correctness and the law. *Undecidabilities and Law*, (1), 147–160.

Simmons, S. (2008, July). Ascriptive justice: The prevalence, distribution, and consequences of political correctness in the academy. *The Forum*, 6(2), Article 6. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1540-8884.1248>

Sulić, B., & Dedović-Atilla, E. . (2024). Politically Correct English Language and Gender in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *MAP Education and Humanities*, 5, 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.53880/2744-2373.2024.5.81>

Talbot, M. (2007). Political correctness and freedom of speech. In M. Hellinger & A. Pauwels (Eds.), *Handbook of language and communication: Diversity and change* (pp. 751–774). Mouton de Gruyter.

Tsehelska, M. (2006). Teaching politically correct language. *English Teaching Forum*, 44(1), 20–23.

Višić, M., Muller, M., & Kovač, M. M. (2023). Perception and attitudes of students about politically correct speech: A case study from the spectrum of diversity education. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 5(2).

Woodward, C. V. (1992). Freedom at the universities. In P. Aufderheide (Ed.), *Beyond PC: Toward a politics of understanding* (pp. 27–49). Graywolf Press.

Zhou, L. (2018). Political correctness in American English and its implication in TEFL. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(2), 105–111. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v8n2p105>

Zukić, M., & Pustahija, A. (2024). The use of politically correct speech in media. Published September 12, 2024.

APPENDIX A (SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE)

Welcome to our survey on perceptions and attitudes towards politically correct (PC) English language in educational settings. This survey aims to gather insights from students and educators about their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding the use of politically correct language in our diverse educational environments.

What is a Politically Correct Language?

Politically Correct Language refers to a way of communicating that aims to avoid offending or marginalizing specific groups of people (e.g. based on sex, race, religion, appearance, disabilities etc.). It emphasizes sensitivity, inclusivity, and respectful expression and it has both proponents and critics globally.

Your Participation Matters

Your participation in this survey is valuable and will help us better understand the role of politically correct English language in our educational environments. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important survey.

Demographic Information:

Age: _____

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Nationality: _____

What is your current status?

- Student
- Professor/Teacher/Educator

Which city are you currently located in? _____

Completed educational degree:

- High school
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other (Please specify): _____

How would you rate your English Language skills?

- Poor - Your English skills are very limited, with minimal understanding and ability to communicate.
- Fair - Your English skills are basic; you can understand and communicate simple ideas but struggle with more complex language.
- Good - Your English skills are competent for everyday use and most professional contexts, though you may occasionally face difficulties with complex structures or expressions.
- Very Good - Your English skills are strong; you can understand and communicate effectively in almost all situations, with only occasional errors or misunderstandings.
- Excellent - Your English skills are exceptional; you have a mastery over the language, including nuanced understanding and the ability to communicate complex and detailed information flawlessly.

Perceptions of Politically Correct Language when interacting in English:

In the following section, you will be presented with a series of statements. **All of them relate only to your communication in English, not in your mother tongue and(or) other languages.** Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale:

5 - Strongly agree

4 - Agree

- 3 - Neutral
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly disagree

It is important for individuals to be mindful of the language they use to avoid offending others when interacting in English. **PQ1**

- Strongly agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

It is important to encourage and use Politically Correct (PC) language at home when interacting in English. **PQ2**

- Strongly agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

It is important to encourage and use the PC language in the workplace while interacting in English. **PQ3**

- Strongly agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

It is important that PC English is used in the media. **PQ4**

- Strongly agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

PC English should be taught in schools. **PQ5**

- Strongly agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

The enforcement of PC English creates a barrier to open and honest communication. **PQ6**

- Strongly agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Using PC English contributes to fostering inclusivity and diversity in society. **PQ7**

- Strongly agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Experience with Politically Correct English Language:

In this section of the questionnaire, you will be presented a series of statements regarding your experience with PC English language. **All of them relate only to your communication in English, not in your mother tongue and(or) other languages.** Please read each statement carefully and indicate the frequency with which you have encountered or engaged with these scenarios by selecting one of the following responses: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always.

I have witnessed someone being publicly criticized or shamed for using politically incorrect language while interacting in English. **EQ1**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

If you answered strongly agree or agree, provide an example of a named situation:

I have felt pressured to use PC English, even when I personally disagreed with it. **EQ2**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

If you answered sometimes, often or always, provide an example of a named situation:

I have been corrected by someone for using English expressions they deemed politically incorrect. **EQ3**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

I have refrained from expressing my true opinions or feelings due to fear of being criticized for using politically incorrect language in communication in English. **EQ4**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

I have experienced backlash or negative consequences for unintentionally using politically incorrect language in communication in English. **EQ5**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often

- Always

If you answered sometimes, often or always, please explain what the negative consequences were:

I appreciate it and respond positively when someone corrects my language for being politically incorrect (when communicating in English). **EQ6**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

I noticed that PC language positively affects my workplace or academic environment (when communicating in English). **EQ7**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

I have found myself in a situation where I intentionally used PC language when communicating in English even though it felt unnatural or awkward to me. **EQ8**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

If you answered sometimes, often or always, provide an example of a named situation:

In situations where I am engaged in a heated argument or disagreement (when communicating in English), I prioritize using politically correct language. **EQ9**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Explain the reasons:

APPENDIX B (RESPONDENTS' ADDITIONAL COMMENTS)

Respondents' statements EQ1 - *I have witnessed someone being publicly criticized or shamed for using politically incorrect language while interacting in English.*

- "Often when I was still in Luxembourg, some students were criticized for their poor knowledge of English. According to today's youth, almost everyone should have a basic knowledge of English, as it is mostly learned through social media."
- "When I watch American shows and I guess that's because they pay too much attention to it"
- "Spending time on the internet with friends, someone would in public chats say something politically incorrect and people would react to it negatively (the chats are worldwide not local)"
- "I saw it on our online news portal Radio Sarajevo, after Nemo won the 1st place in Eurovision Songcontest. Some people were correcting the pronouns that have been used for them. I have to mention that Radio Sarajevo used correct pronouns but people in the comments not."

Respondents' statements EQ2 - *I have felt pressured to use PC English, even when I personally disagreed with it.*

- "At my work, when communicating with parents of my students"
- "At work, or with my international friends, I did not want to sound offensive, especially when making jokes"
- "Mostly in educational institutions mainly since individuals felt offended if I did not use it"
- "Professional/work situations"
- "Not to offend anyone"

Respondents' statements EQ5 - *I have experienced backlash or negative consequences for unintentionally using politically incorrect language in communication in English.*

- Because I know many languages that are standard in Luxembourg, I often use the German language and the friendliness of the French language, which influences my English. The sentence structure is correct, but it comes across differently. I realized this at the interview and at work in a call center. There are many words that express something differently in many languages, not to mention Bosnian :)
- The inability to think of a politically correct word over a term that's more widespread and used in daily life

Respondents' statements EQ8 - *I have found myself in a situation where I intentionally used PC language when communicating in English even though it felt unnatural or awkward to me.*

- "In formal circumstances"
- "When talking about inclusion of individuals with different ancestral backgrounds in scientific studies"
- "I had a discussion where I used PC language to better explain the situation."
- "When I find myself in a formal environment; international colleagues, professors, kid's parents"
- "As a pressure because I work at the international school and I need to respect the institution I work at, even though I would rather say things as they really are, no covering trails."
- "In order not to offend anyone, minding my words"
- "I cannot remember the exact situation but probably when communicating with people from different backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities that I do not know a lot about so I tried to be as 'neutral' as possible",
- "Group projects and similar"
- "When interacting with parents of my students, I have a diverse class so I had to be extra careful in order not to be considered politically incorrect"
- "I often speak English in casual situations, and my friends, being die-hard Balkan people, find it corny that I refrain from using pronouns or correct myself on the use of pronouns or using "his or her" instead of theirs"
- "Sometimes in school in communication between students we have to use some terms which I personally usually wouldn't use. Mostly when speaking about gender."
- "Again, with my friends or at UNI, with professors, not to be offensive to anyone"

- “Again, when communicating with parents, professors and people from other cultures so I had to be extra careful since I do not want to offend anyone but in the same time I do not know what might be offensive to some cultures”

Respondents’ statements EQ9 - *In situations where I am engaged in a heated argument or disagreement (when communicating in English), I prioritize using politically correct language. I have found myself in a situation where I intentionally used PC language when communicating in English even though it felt unnatural or awkward to me.*

- “Because it is a correct way to avoid discrimination”,
- “The beef with my ex-partner. Arguments and confrontations arise, using a high vocabulary puts one (at least internally) in a superior position in this situation”,
- “In a situation where I am engaged in a heated argument, I try even harder to be politically correct and use the correct language in efforts not to offend anyone while trying to prove my point. I want to be correct and prove that, I don't want to be mean and "win" by being petty and offensive.”,
- “Even though it's a heated argument, it's unnecessary making the other person uncomfortable by not using appropriate language.”,
- “I don't want anyone to hold it against me later”,
- “I do not like being incorrect, and there is no reason to offend anyone even though we are going through a disagreement”
- “To respect the flow of communication and the person towards me”,
- “because your words can be used against you,”
- “PC can be difficult for others to fully comprehend.”
- “Because offending people is never the main goal of the argument.”
- “I tend to fair argument with less probability to insult someone.”,
- “because i think its important to stay respectful and use pc language”,
- “couse i seem smarter”,
- “I don't have any experience of heated arguments in the workplace.”,
- “In an argument it is hard to use PC English language.”,
- “As a way of keeping myself 'clean' and I don't want anyone to have anything to tell me after the 'fight'. I want to stay 'polite' ”,
- “If the argument is already heated there is no reason to use pc language, what matters is getting the point through by using whichever words come first”,
- “Depends on who I am having a disagreement with”,
- “When I'm in a heated argument the only important thing is argue the point, there is no point in thinking about pc language”,
- “I think it is unnecessary and simply people exaggerate it”,
- “At the heat of the moment, I go with what is natural to me.”,
- “Because I'm in anger at that moment and use all the slang and bad words”
- “Even if the discussion is heated, I am careful not to allow the other side to use PC as an argument against me.”,
- “I am trying to run from the possibility to offend someone and give them reason to mention me in a negative context”,
- “Despite the argument, I feel as if using politically correct vocabulary takes priority”,
- “I don't care”,
- “When I am in argument most of the time I don't think of my language and just use the words which first come to my mind.”,
- “Because I do not want the argument to get even more heated”,
- “I believe using politically correct language is not productive”,
- “I want to minimise the possibility of offending someone unintentionally.”,
- “I try to be polite but honest, and don't allow PC language to dictate and change my thoughts”,
- “I believe that PC English kills the essence of words, semantically speaking, and I am a strong advocate for naming things by what they are and by their real names.”,

- “Although we are in an argument over a particular thing, I try to avoid offensive vocabulary based on differences in sex, race, cultural, etc.”,

Respondents’ feedback: *Do you wish to add anything else about your views and experiences in terms of politically correct English language?*

- No
- Thank you for pointing this out, this is a very interesting topic and I have rarely thought about it before
- I don't know if this belongs to this section, but it should be noted that our mindset and people are not used to this. Especially if we consider that Bosnian language doesn't have "mocijske parove". And also the phenomena of lower-income professions having female version and higher-income professions having the male version of the word. (If this make sense :))
- I'd be the happiest man on the planet if PC English becomes a thing of history.
- I think this is a topic which needs more attention in our country and that this topic should be taught in schools. Understanding and using politically correct language is essential for fostering inclusivity and respect in our diverse society. Additionally, promoting politically correct language in educational settings can contribute to a more respectful and understanding community, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.
- I believe that not all kinds of politically correct language expressions are equally unbiased or politically correct (they should not be under the same umbrella). Some are a direct consequence of a certain agenda (such as pronouns for non-binary persons), and I would not personally use them as they do not reflect scientific facts. Other kinds of politically correct language are sensible to me, and I try to use them, as they help in raising awareness of using sensitive, inoffensive language when talking about different groups.
- Thanx for pointing this out, this really is an issue with both, good and bad sides
- Binary is an underdeveloped concept that is used to abuse peoples resources for their personal benefit; and for their high position or provisinal possession in promotion.
- I believe that politically correct (English) language should be taught at school and required in all public institutions and spaces.
- Everyone should use he or she.
- i dont believe in pronouns such as they/them zer/zem etc. there is only she/him
- no
- Hhh
- I think it's important to use this language because we should respect each other.
- Thanks for asking about this gen, but I mostly don't pay attention unless it's straight up slurs
- I just want to clarify in my cases im prone to be politically correct in public but i dont mind using politically incorrect language in a close group of people
- INteresting topic, however our country is not 'ready' to this I would say. Our tradition and culture are not that 'free' and 'open' so I think that people might find it awkward
- Lot of the PC language is usually ideologically charged, but of course not all of it, where some of it has nothing to do with your worldview but rather reflects healthy interaction steategies; E.g. Calling an older person a senior just to make them less uncomfortable. However, where that language requires me to play along someone's personal beliefs that I completely disagree with, as in gender theory, feminism etc., I'll consciously and actively refuse to play along as it restricts my personal right to live by beliefs, e.g. that there are only two genders/sexes and that we are born with it. In short, the utility of PC language goes as far as it doesn't restrict my ability to express my views of reality in communication.
- INteresting, I never thought about this before and how our language and country is not a 'place' for it. I dont know how to explain but this is 'too American' for me, honestly.
- I just realized that I clicked on 'garbage MAN' and 'cleaning LADY' because here, where we live, it is always men who do that joob and women who do cleaning. It is shame for a man to clean and for a woman to be 'garbage lady'