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The debate on political correctness and its influence on
language use in print mass media: A corpus-based study

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Abstract

The debate on political correctness has caused many controversies, especially in the field of social studies, over the past years but it has rarely been an object of a linguistic research. Political correctness has been frequently defined as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that aims at shaping social attitudes by changing linguistic habits. This MA thesis attempts to examine the influence of political correctness on the written discourse between the 1960s and the 2000s. This time span is considered to be the period when the phenomenon of political correctness is believed to be the most influential and the most hotly discussed. This research is intended to be a corpus-based study in which quantitative methods are used to analyze data collected from the print mass media sub-corpus of the Corpus of Historical American English. It is designed to investigate how successful this phenomenon was in changing linguistic norms and behavior since it is often considered a form of censorship of language. This thesis attempts to answer three main research questions: did the debate on political correctness precipitate the use of politically correct labels, how did the debate influence the use of politically incorrect labels and was the phenomenon of political correctness successful in substituting the politically incorrect labels with the new, neutral ones. Examining features and aims of politically correct language as well as language policies and combining them with data retrieved from the sub-corpus revealed that political correctness has, in fact, influenced some of our linguistic choices. This study may be considered a framework for similar projects that will be conducted in the field of linguistics in the future. Since political correctness has received little attention in corpus-based linguistics, it would be worthwhile to conduct a more extensive research on its influence.

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1. Introduction

Yet it matters profoundly what we say. It is an advance that it is no longer possible to call blacks niggers and that sexist banter in the workplace is understood to be oppressive and abusive. It is right that the groups in society that used to be written off as mentally retarded are recognized as having special needs. And it is right that TV and radio take care how they describe terrorists and the al-Qaeda network in the middle of this 'war' against terrorism (Hutton 2001).

The idea of this study has originated as a result of personal interest in politics, linguistics and communication. Interest in politics resulted in choosing a rather controversial topic of political correctness as the object of the study. Interest in linguistics gave an idea of designing a corpus study that allows a close analysis of the influence of political correctness on language, language use and semantic changes of certain words and phrases. And finally, interest in the field of communication has resulted in choosing print mass media as the source of data for the study. Conducting preliminary literature research helped establishing that there is no similar study that would deal with political correctness from a linguistic point of view. Therefore, this study was designed to fill a gap in research rather than to aim to validate or dismiss a study that has already been conducted. This research aims to achieve a number of goals that will be presented in more detail in the following sections.

This study attempts to take a very detail route to analyze and subsequently answer three main research questions. The first research question is concerned with revealing whether the debate on political correctness precipitated the use of politically correct labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media. The second research question attempts to show how the debate influenced the use of politically incorrect labels in the sub-corpus. And finally, the last research question aims at establishing if the phenomenon of political correctness was successful in substituting politically incorrect labels with new neutral labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media. In order to approach these questions accurately and to present outcomes reliably, the research will present theoretical background needed for introducing and setting political correctness as a sociolinguistic phenomenon. It will also present reasons for choosing certain type of data and research method that might have an impact on the quality and accuracy of the results of the study. The next step crucial in answering the research questions is the presentation and discussion of results as well as the limitations of the study. Finally, after presenting the design and the results, the research questions can be answered.

This thesis attempts to investigate the topic of political correctness from the linguistic point of view. Having reviewed the literature on political correctness one can conclude that this topic received little attention in literature on linguistics. It has been extensively discussed as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that was intended to change linguistic habits but its actual influence on language use has not been closely researched. Therefore, this study has been designed to deal with political correctness as a linguistic phenomenon and investigate the real impact of the debate on political correctness on language use. Nevertheless, ignoring social aspects of the phenomenon of political correctness would result in presenting it in a rather distorted picture; therefore, some of its sociolinguistic features crucial to this MA thesis will be discussed. To approach the research questions more precisely, it has been crucial to examine the results of the study in relation to language policies that were introduced under the influence of the debate on political correctness.

Hughes (2010: 293) believes that assessing the influence of political correctness on language use can only be accurately performed after a certain period of time. Therefore, this research will reveal whether the influence on language may already be visible in the corpus and attempts to assess how successfully language of political correctness was adopted in popular use. The study is designed to cover a time span between the 1960s and the 2000s. Narrowing the time frame ensures that some patterns in language use and some changes can already be observed in the corpus. At the same time, this period is not too extensive and as a result the influence of other sociolinguistic phenomena on language and its use is limited.

What is more, the effectiveness of the use of quantitative methods of research in the corpus-based study on the influence of political correctness on language will be indirectly investigated. This study attempts to test whether combining quantitative methods with corpus-based study will bring desired results and whether this method of research can actually allow researchers to answer research questions that deal with examining the influence of certain social and linguistic phenomena on language use. Quantitative methods are well-set in the field of linguistics and corpus-based research; nevertheless, they have not yet been popularly used to investigate the relation between linguistic policies and frequencies of certain labels in the corpus. If the study proves successful, it may help researchers to examine the influence of linguistic phenomena and linguistic behavior in the future.

In addition, this MA thesis is meant to combine semantic knowledge concerning labels included in this study as suggested by Cameron (1994, 1995), Hughes (2010) and Maggio (1991) with guidelines for non-discriminatory language use (Maggio 1991, Schwartz 1995, The Equal Opportunity Unit 2005) and data obtained from the sub-corpus of print mass media. A similar research that would aim to reveal the influence of political correctness on language use has not yet been published therefore it might be considered exploratory and provide a framework for other studies. It will also try to assess how successful combining those fields into one project can prove to be. What is more, this study can also be developed into a bigger-scale project that will be able to closely examine every aspect of the phenomenon and, at the same time, reliably reveal how influential political correctness has really been.

At this point it is crucial to mention that this thesis is not concerned with exploring and examining stereotypes, that have been already closely analyzed in numerous studies (Anolli, Zurloni & Riva 2006, Fiedler, Semin & Finkenauer 1993, Hill 2008, Holtgraves 2002, Kashima, Fiedler & Freytag 2008, Macrae, Stangor & Hewstone 1996, Schanke & Ruscher 1998, Toggia & Battig 1987, among others) but it is designed to examine the influence of the phenomenon on the use of various labels that under the influence of political correctness became unacceptable. At the same time, it will analyze the guidelines for language that deal not only with stereotypical but also sexist, derogatory or discriminatory language use.

To sum up, this study attempts to answer three research questions. The route to answering these questions is presented and closely discussed in this research. The MA thesis can be divided into two parts, namely, background knowledge and empirical part. It consists of eight sections that describe in detail all steps of the research starting with aims of the project set out in this introduction, background information (see: section **2. Theoretical background**), data (see: section **3. Data**), research questions (see: section **4. Research questions**), research methods (see: section **5. Research methods**), analysis (see: section **6. Analysis**), conclusion (see: section **7. Conclusion**), in which research questions are answered, and it ends with listing the limitations of the study (see: section **8. Limitations**). Additionally, a collection of sources useful to this study is listed (see: section **9. References**) and a table in which all labels taken into consideration in this research are listed in particular decades (see: section 10.1 Table of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the study).

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Definition of political correctness

Unexpectedly, it has proven quite difficult to find a definition of terms *political correctness* and *politically (in)correct* that would be impartial, concise and at the same time include all fields of study in which political correctness could be present and on which it could have influence. According to Cameron (1995: 128), since the debate of political correctness became public, those terms drifted away from their original meanings (that denoted a connection with politics) and have become neologisms meanings of which are rather unclear to the audience and frequently are understood in a different way than some years ago. For the purposes of this study a collection of definitions of the above mentioned terms is presented in order to ensure that the overview of this phenomenon is described sufficiently and accurately.

First of all, according to Ayto (2007: 196), the term *political correctness* was first recorded in public discourse in 1970. As defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 1110), the term linguistically denotes “avoidance of forms of expressions or action that are perceived to exclude or insult groups of people”. *Political correctness* is not considered only as an avoidance of certain vocabulary and phrases but is also often defined as an “effort to be careful in our use of language” (Sparrow 2002: 119-120). This careful use of language is centered on including all social groups in the public life as well as on avoidance of “expressing disrespect, whether intentionally or unintentionally,” towards other people (Sparrow 2002: 119-120). Those definitions can be considered a starting point to a deeper and more concise examination of the term.

Cameron (1995: 117) describes *political correctness* in a slightly different light and claims that it is a phenomenon that “influences language use and focuses on substituting terms and labels that might be offensive to some groups of people”. However, Cameron (1995: 119) at the same time strongly underlines that there is more to it than just words since *political correctness* is not strictly linguistic. Despite the fact that this phenomenon is mostly connected with the use of language, its central focus is, in fact, placed on changing linguistic but, more importantly, social norms (Hughes 2010: 38). This change involves not only avoidance of discriminatory language but also, as claimed by Hughes (2010:8), “prejudicial

attitudes, and insulting behavior towards the marginalized”. Therefore, it can be assumed that through language *political correctness* aims at changing social attitudes and social conduct. Allan and Burrige (2006: 91) claim that this phenomenon originally was strictly linguistic and it involved designing and implementing policies and guidelines for non-discriminatory language use. By many it is believed to be only a “brainwashing programme” and “simple good manners” (Allan & Burrige 2006: 90). Nevertheless, this is a simplistic theory that does not cover all sociolinguistic aspects of the phenomenon of *political correctness* and social effects it certainly has.

More complex definition of *political correctness* and at the same time possibly more precise and useful to the study is offered by Hughes (2010: 3) who claims that

[a]s a concept it predates the debate and is a complex discontinuous, and protean phenomenon which has changed radically, even over the past two decades. During just that time it has ramified from its initial concerns with education and the curriculum into numerous agendas, reforms, and issues concerning race, culture, gender, disability, the environment and animal rights.

In other words, this phenomenon has been undergoing substantial changes in the past years and has been influencing different areas of social life. According to Fish (1994: 54), this term implies that politics is involved in the phenomenon that *political correctness* represents while it does not. Fish (1994: 54) believes that politics has actually little to do with the phenomenon referred to as *political correctness*. This point of view is shared by Rees (1993: 9) who indicates that the term *political correctness* used in reference to the phenomenon described above might be considered misleading because it is not concerned with politics but rather with social norms. Moreover, Rees (1993: 9) believes that calling it social correctness would be more accurate since it would imply that the phenomenon is closely connected with behaviors and manners and not with politics. Hughes (2010: 3) makes a similar observation and claims that the term has undergone a significant transition and its meaning changed, drifting away not only from politics but also away from correctness. Therefore, the meaning of this term understood literally might be rather deceptive and may imply connections with politics and correctness that are, according to Hughes (2010: 3), no longer proper.

The relation of the phenomenon of political correctness and social as well as cultural norms helps to impose manners and values that should be widely accepted in society (Sparrow 2002:

127). Political correctness became not only influential in shaping the use of language but also in changing social attitudes and actions. What is more, for some, political correctness has become important in shaping behavioral norms and its rejection would have serious effect. According to Sparrow (2002: 127), rejection of norms and values imposed by political correctness could result in “a society where anything was possible and nothing frowned upon, [...] a society without values”. This shows that political correctness as a phenomenon is believed to be an integral part of our society and became prominent in both linguistic and social fields.

Another term crucial to this paper and the study is *politically (in)correct*. According to Ayto (2007: 196), the term *politically correct* was first used in the U.S.A. in 1970. Its meaning can be described as “conforming to a body of liberal or radical opinion” (Ayto 2007: 196). This compliance manifests itself in avoidance of certain kinds of labels that might be considered derogatory, offensive or biased (Ayto 2007: 196). The term *politically correct* has been popularly abbreviated into “PC” and has been frequently used since 1986 (Ayto 2007: 196). The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 1110) defines the term *politically (in)correct* as representing or not representing values that are denoted by the term *political correctness*. Therefore, it might be assumed that *political correctness* and *politically (in)correct* are closely connected and defined in relation to each other. For example, Allan and Burridge (2006: 90) define both terms as related and claim that *political correctness* and *politically correct* can be defined as “a set of linguistic behaviours with no implied criticism, ridicule or abuse”. On the other hand, Beard and Cerf (1992: 87) describe the term *politically correct* in a rather sarcastic tone as “culturally sensitive; multiculturally unexceptionable; appropriately inclusive”. Ironically, Beard and Cerf (1992: 87) claim that being *politically correct* is a rather politically incorrect label since it has been abused and used to attack the debate on political correctness.

To sum up, we can assume that both terms are very closely related to each other. While *political correctness* is not only linguistic but also social phenomenon that involves changes in language and social behaviors, *politically (in)correct* describes an attitude that is either conforming or non-conforming to those social and linguistic norms. Additionally, it is also crucial to mention that the meaning of both terms has been evolving over the years and as a

result moved away from the original one that is no longer connected as closely with politics as it might have been defined in the past. Some also describe this phenomenon in an ironic tone since *political correctness* has frequently been an object of ridicule and the debate on the meanings of certain words and phrases has not been taken seriously by all (Beard & Cerf 1992: 87).

2.2. A short overview of the history of political correctness

It would probably be true to say that years before political correctness became a hotly discussed matter, many people had already recognized the importance of being polite to others and became aware of prejudicial terms and shared sensitivity concerning the use of offensive labels (Rees 1993: X-XVIII). Even though the phenomenon of political correctness is frequently associated with the last decades, its history is rooted in the 18th century (Hughes 2010: 61). However, for the purposes of this study instead of studying this phenomenon from its very origin it was crucial to study it from the 1960s onwards.

The 1960s started with the strong civil rights movement that resulted in making equality a legal act and in granting everyone with a right to equal treatment (Clack 2008: 52). This meant that all people gained the same rights despite race, color or gender and, in addition, racial segregation in public space, including work places and schools, became illegal (Clack 2008: 53-54). To ensure that civil rights legislation provides every citizen of the United States with equal rights, it became crucial to introduce the same voting rights for all Americans (Clack 2008: 58). According to Hall (2005: 1234), the civil rights movement empowered various social groups including students, feminists and the disabled to formulate their demands and to advocate for their rights. Since that time political correctness is frequently associated with the emergence of the New Left in the late 1960s in the U.S.A. (Cameron 1994: 18). Their movement was centered on attempts to abolish the government, promoting civil rights legislation and racial desegregation partly via changes in language use and in literature (Ayto 2007: 159). Some believed that actions of the New Left activists were rather restraining and limiting freedom of speech by “institutionalizing speech codes and codes of behaviour in order to eliminate racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.” (Annette 1994: 2). Cameron (1995: 127) claims, however, that this term was originally used by the New Left “to differentiate the New Left from the orthodox Marxism it had rejected” and, at the same, time

it was adopted as an in-group joke that poked at the notion of ‘correctness’ and of being ‘correct’.

In the late 1960s, the feminist movement became stronger and started to be more influential (Ayto 2007: 182). Many women believed that degradation of women is reflected not only in social behavior but also in language (Allan & BurrIDGE 2006: 141). Therefore, as the result of the feminist campaign against sexist language and attitudes, women were gaining rights and were treated more equally than ever before (Ayto 2007: 182). Under the influence of the feminist movement many private and public institutions passed non-sexist language policies that became widely accepted and adopted in everyday use (Cameron 1994: 21). The English language began to change and the vocabulary was adjusted to avoid the use of generic “man” and masculine pronouns and instead to use feminine endings that would recognize the presence of women in the public sphere and therefore acknowledge equality between men and women (Allan & BurrIDGE 2006: 141-142). However, despite the fact that, according to Ayto (2007: 182), the movement was successful and brought many social and linguistic changes, the criticism was very strong and claimed that “modifying pronouns would not get women equal pay” (Cameron 1994: 24). Additionally, in the 1970s gays and lesbians’ movement started to come out and claim their rights (Allan & BurrIDGE 2006: 155-156). Not only change in attitudes but also a transition from more to less homophobic language use was the main objective and the most important goal of this movement (Allan & BurrIDGE 2006: 155-156).

With the beginning of the 1980s, even more changes that should be introduced to language became covered by the debate on political correctness. At this time issues of sexist language, taboo topics and labels used in reference to mentally or physically ill people were hotly discussed (Ayto 2007: 206-207). Additionally, political correctness also became a publicly debated matter at American universities and campuses (Dunant 1994: VIII-IX). The discussions were successful and managed to insert changes into curricula and literary canons that at that time became more inclusive of different races and ethnicities (Dunant 1994: VIII-IX). The debate revisited once again the issue of racist language and resulted in introducing revised policies against racist language and behaviour not only at American universities but also in many countries in the world (Dunant 1994: IX). Therefore, around that time when the term *political correctness* was popularized it was closely connected with the issues of race

and discrimination discussed at universities and not necessarily with its broader concept in the current understanding (Cameron 1994: 21).

In the 1990s, when the consequences of the debate on political correctness were more visible than ever, many linguists and critics of the public sphere started to analyze the movement in more detail and therefore popularize this subject matter around the world (Cameron 1995; Fish 1994; Hughes 2010). Majority of writers focused not only on the political changes that were brought up by this phenomenon but also on the sociolinguistic consequences that those changes may possibly bring in the future.

To conclude this section, the term *political correctness* was introduced first in dictionaries in the current understanding in the late 1980s (Hughes 2010: 3). The history of the phenomenon of political correctness goes back to the 1960s when the importance of language in creating social attitudes was brought up by many social movements (Clack 2008: 52-58, Hall 2005: 1234). Since then political correctness has been mostly known for popularizing non-prejudicial and non-derogatory language use and social behavior. Nevertheless, the fact that cannot be ignored is that it has also played an important role in changing social attitudes, promoting equal treatment and equal rights for all social groups in spite of their nationality, gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

2.3. Characteristics of the politically correct language

Nowadays, when the debate on political correctness has become less controversial than some decades ago and analyzing language of political correctness has become an interest of linguists and sociolinguists, it seems more obvious than ever that the phenomenon of political correctness has indeed influenced the language and our linguistic choices. The debate on political correctness proved that “the political significance of language” is an important matter that generates intense discussions (Sparrow 2002: 126). The language of political correctness is meant to be essentially public because it is supposed to be used mainly in official discourse (Hughes 2010: 290). Politically correct language is often described as polite and euphemistic and characterized by the avoidance of offensive labels and avoidance of emotionally loaded vocabulary (Hughes 2010: 78). Furthermore, it was created to solve the “bullying problem” by introducing changes that were supposed to make language non-derogatory and non-

prejudicial (O'Neil 2011: 281). Changes that occurred in language under the influence of the debate on political correctness can be divided into semantic and lexical ones (Hughes 2010: 30). The following section will set out the most frequently discussed and analyzed characteristics of politically correct language.

First of all, Hughes (2010: 30) refers to language modifications that resulted from the phenomenon of political correctness as 'semantic engineering'. This process influences language in two ways: by "claiming of new meanings for established words and the creation of new lexical forms" (Hughes 2010: 30). Therefore, it can be assumed that there are two main changes that political correctness triggered in language: semantic and lexical. Semantic changes happen over time and alter the meaning of words while lexical changes introduce new labels hence the increased number of words in language (Hughes 2010: 26). By the reassignment of meanings for existing words, 'semantic engineering' aims at altering individual and common attitudes (Hughes 2010: 31). Despite Allan and Burridge's (2006: 90) claim that this goal has been successfully achieved and 'semantic engineering' succeeded in changing not only norms and habits in language but also meanings of words and phrases, many writers remain skeptical about the extent to which attitudes can be actually changed or influenced by language use.

Lexical changes brought a great amount of neologisms into language such as: compounds, coinages and respellings (Hughes 2010: 109-111). As stated by Hughes (2010: 109), over forty percent of neologisms created under the influence of the debate on political correctness are compounds such as: *hate crime*, *disadvantaged*, *disabled*, *homophobia* and *lookism*. Coinages and respellings such as *herstory* and *wigger* constitute a smaller percentage of new words introduced under the impact of the debate on political correctness (Hughes 2010: 110). What is also quite interesting is the extent of the transparency of meanings of new words or, as described by Hughes (2010: 110-111), "degrees of opacity". The main goal of politically correct language is to be "unfamiliar" therefore neologisms such as *challenged*, *friendly fire* or *significant other* have different extent of opacity and consequently their meaning is dependent on the context or it has to be decoded (Hughes 2010: 108-111). This may, on one hand, be useful while trying to introduce words that should be neutral and carry no negative connotations, on the other hand, it is quite clear that unfamiliar words may not be widely

accepted because their meaning remains too vague or too unclear to be popularly accepted and used.

To sum up, the debate on political correctness has resulted in some both semantic and lexical changes in language. It might be concluded that not just the meaning of certain labels changed but also many new words were introduced in the process of linguistic modifications of language. However, not all outcomes of the ‘semantic engineering’ process became widely adopted (Hughes 2010: 30). Some neologisms are considered too awkward or unnatural by language users to be widely used.

Euphemisms

O’Neil (2011: 286) claims that language of political correctness moves away from more descriptive and specific towards less accurate and faddish language full of euphemisms. Euphemism is a keyword in analyzing the influence of the debate of political correctness on language (Cameron 1994: 27). Euphemism is considered a “mild or less direct word substituted for one that is harsh or blunt” (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 492). Rees (1993: XII) claims that euphemisms help us to talk in a way that is more polite and less direct and therefore unlikely to insult anyone. In other words, thanks to euphemisms we are able to substitute labels or terms that may possibly offend someone with ones that are more polite and less likely to be offensive. Moreover, by making linguistic decision of using euphemistic terms instead of labels that carry a negative stigma of prejudicial stereotypes, euphemisms help to remove offensive or negative connotations (Allan & Burridge 2006: 97). Therefore, it can be assumed that political correctness attempts to create new, unfamiliar labels that help avoiding using derogatory labels and subsequently euphemisms may not only remove negative stigma but also have a chance to slightly alter prejudicial attitudes (Hughes 2010: 16).

Additionally, euphemisms generated under the influence of the debate on political correctness such as *physically challenged* are often referred to as “adverbial pre-modified adjectival units” (Rees 1993: XVI). They take two primary forms: first is a metaphor expression such as *pass water* instead of *pee*, second is a “polysyllabic abstract formulation using classical vocabulary” such as *pregnancy termination* instead of *abortion* (Hughes 2010: 18). Those

new expressions are claimed to be artificial and odd while their meaning is hard to denote without them being placed in context. Due to the fact that the language of political correctness often sounds unnatural and peculiar it started to be frequently compared to Newspeak. Newspeak is an artificial language that was invented and first used in George Orwell's book "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (Allan & Burridge 2006: 93). The characteristics of Newspeak and the language of political correctness as well as similarities and differences of both are presented in the *Newspeak* section on page 13.

The Euphemism Treadmill

Another interesting phenomenon that is connected with the influence of the debate of political correctness is "the euphemism treadmill" (Pinker 1994). This term was coined and first introduced by Pinker (1994) to describe a periodical label replacement strategy that has been attributed to tactics of political correctness. As O'Neil (2011: 282) describes:

[i]n this process, an initially neutral term (an orthophemism) gradually takes on negative connotations through its use as an insult and thereby becomes a malicious term (a dysphemism). It is then replaced with a politically correct term (a euphemism), which gradually comes into common use and is then seen as the appropriate neutral expression (even if its lexicographical characteristics make it nonneutral). This process repeats itself again and again [...]

In other words, labels that become tainted with negative connotations are replaced with more euphemistic ones but those over time become improper themselves. Subsequently, the process repeats itself as the new labels acquire offensive meanings. The problem that can be associated with this process is the fact that euphemistic labels rarely remain euphemisms (Hughes 2010: 18). The result of this is a growing list of labels and terms that often are used to insult somebody while they should be generally avoided. Therefore, O'Neil (2011: 283) may have a valid point while saying that this cyclical replacement of politically incorrect or offensive words with politically correct substitutions does not provide us with a solution to negative semantic change of labels that is noticeable in language. Moreover, it seems that labels that undergo the process of "the euphemism treadmill" and as a result start to carry a stigma are often used in an offensive way to bully other people (O'Neil 2011: 284-285). Due to the fact that many euphemisms are short-lived the ones that replace the negative ones fail to maintain the original meaning and as a result become vague and less precise (O'Neil 2011: 285).

However, O'Neil (2011: 285) suggests a long-term solution for this reoccurring process that produces many labels carrying negative connotations – to continue to use labels that acquire negative meaning in neutral contexts. In this way, the labels will not be used as offensive terms and may in the process regain their neutrality (O'Neil 2011: 285). In addition, most labels that should substitute the politically incorrect ones may be considered “unnatural for various reasons: they are abstract, imprecise and euphemistic” (Hughes 2010: 15). According to Rees (1993: X), new coinages are “dull, lifeless”, therefore, they are often described as lacking “vividness” and “descriptiveness”. Those might be the main reasons why new labels may not be popularly accepted or used.

Newspeak

The term was originally created by George Orwell in an attempt to reveal linguistic manipulations that were undertaken on language for the purposes of communist propaganda (Cameron 1995: 68). This imaginary language gained currency and is defined as an “ambiguous euphemistic language used chiefly in political propaganda” (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 964). As claimed by Hughes (2010: 27), it is an artificial, unnatural and imaginary language that generated new labels and imposed new meanings onto existing ones. The aim of Newspeak was to disconnect links that exist between words and meanings and create new ones that were often completely different from the well-known ones (Cameron 1995: 68). Newspeak was created to expose an ongoing modification of language and it still exists mostly in ironic and sarcastic contexts (Hughes 2010: 104). As a result of its unnaturalness and artificiality, Newspeak is frequently compared to language of political correctness also referred to as PC-speak (Hughes 2010: 104). Both languages are products of “semantic engineering” and were created for the purposes of propaganda to “disguise and redefine reality” (Hughes 2010: 30-31). Additionally, both of them rely on semantic and lexical modifications of language to impose new meanings either onto existing or new labels (Cameron 1995: 68-69). Both are also hotly discussed and often criticized for limiting freedom of thought and hindering communication (Cameron 1995: 149).

Creation of languages to “meet ideological needs” resulted in introducing languages that to some members of society sound strange and rather non-natural (Rees 1993: X). That is precisely why PC-speak and Newspeak are often compared to each other and are both treated

as manipulations of language that have ideological goals. Nevertheless, they are not exactly the same. The difference between both languages is that while the goal of Newspeak was to limit vocabulary and disable communication of free thought among society members, PC-speak, on the other hand, generates a growing number of labels for people to communicate without using possibly offensive or derogatory words or expressions (Rees 1993: X). Moreover, politically correct language, as opposed to Newspeak, is based on a belief that each label carries certain values, attitudes and possibly connotation which, to complicate the matter even more, depend on the speaker and the context (Dunant 1994: 27). Therefore, it might be assumed that PC-speak enables communication that should be based on mutual respect of the speaker while Newspeak restricts communication and freedom of expression by limiting the number of labels in language.

As discussed in this section, tempering with language may bring various results but in this case both languages change “word-to-word relationship on which linguistic communication depends” and therefore may hinder communication (Cameron 1995: 150). Additionally, Hughes (2010: 27) believes that those “Orwellian changes” that have been made to Newspeak as well as to PC-speak destroy the connection between language and reality and as a consequence make the language artificial and unnatural. However, it cannot be ignored that while those languages are similar on the surface, their goals are significantly different and they are designed to fulfill various purposes.

Doublespeak

Besides Newspeak there is another phenomenon often linked with PC-speak that is referred to as Doublespeak. This term was also coined by George Orwell in his “Nineteen Eighty-Four” book and refers to “deliberately ambiguous or obscure language” (Allan & Burridge 2006: 93, Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 429). Language filled with euphemisms generated under the influence of the debate on political correctness is believed not only to be similar but actually a form of Doublespeak (Carroll 2004: 30). As claimed by Carroll (2004: 31), politically correct euphemisms are frequently used to misinform the audience by using less emotive language and by presenting certain situations or issues in a better light. They are coined and used to deceive or misinform someone by using language that implies something false or language that hides harsh reality (Carroll 2004: 30). Using a phrase *unlawful deprivation of life* while in

fact referring to *killing* can be considered an example of Doublespeak (Allan & Burridge 2006: 98). Another instance of Doublespeak is calling *bombarding pacification* (Carroll 2004: 32). For many Doublespeak is one of many abuses of language that is politically and socially motivated and results in confusing the hearer (Carroll 2004: 37, Allan & Burridge 2006: 98). Since PC-speak and Doublespeak share some characteristic, PC-speak has often been described as a form of Doublespeak as invented by Orwell.

2.4. Aims of the politically correct language

Since the debate on political correctness has focused on those groups of people who might be prejudicially treated, it “prescribes and proscribes public language for ethnicity, race, gender, sexual preference, appearance, religion, (dis)ability and so on” (Allan & Burridge 2006: 105). It introduced changes to language that were described as a “slightly Puritanical intervention to sanitize language” and remove labels that may be offensive or carry negative connotations (Hughes 2010: 3). This sanitation was to be a symbol of new norms and values and at the same time a sign of moving away from the old cultural and social norms (Cameron 1995: 154). The new values that were to be expressed via the politically correct language that should, as a result, improve social relations by suppressing labels and expressions that might be offensive to a particular group of people (Hughes 2010: 3). Therefore, the main objective of the phenomenon of political correctness has been to influence social as well as language norms that would become widely accepted in our society (Hughes 2010: 38).

Moreover, the language of political correctness is based on a belief that language is not a medium of communication but it is actually capable of forming and expressing attitudes and values (Cameron 1995: 122). That suggests that the language of political correctness cannot be only considered a strictly linguistic phenomenon but it is often described as shaping social attitudes that can be expressed by means of our language behaviour (Hughes 2010: 40). Allan and Burridge (2006: 90) describe how strong the connection between social and linguistic effect of political correctness is and claim that the main objective of the language of political correctness is to impose and mirror social transformations that have been happening in our modern society over the years. Hughes (2010: 27-28) shares the belief that language is transparent and states that another aim of the politically correct language is to reevaluate social attitudes and ideals by a promotion of less derogatory and less prejudicial language.

However, the supporters of politically correct language were often criticized for their “attempts to delegitimize the use of politically incorrect terms” and for attempting to make the value of respect a linguistic property rather than a social norm (O’Neil 2011: 286). Nevertheless, according to Dunant (1994: 26), “words are deeds” and therefore “there is nothing trivial about trying to institutionalize a public norm of respect” that can be expressed directly via our language choices. This point of view is shared by Cameron (1994: 26) who says that language is “a public affirmation of values” therefore it has to be used with caution and its use should be discussed and regulated by language policies.

At this point, it can be assumed that language of political correctness is inseparably connected with social values and norms; therefore, it is discussed and analyzed in this study also as a sociolinguistic phenomenon. What is quite interesting is that the debate on political correctness does not aim at modifying and forcing changes to linguistic system but rather at changing “the meanings of particular paroles” (Hughes 2010: 59). In other words, the main objective is to create a more polite and less demeaning discourse that will appreciate rather than stress cultural, racial and gender differences between human beings (Hughes 2010: 59). Since language is a part of social behaviour, users of language should be aware of the fact that language expresses shared, social attitudes and values. It can be therefore assumed that the main objective of the politically correct language is to ensure that everyone is treated with respect (O’Neil 2011: 279). Thus, the creators of the politically correct language promote avoidance of labels that might carry negative connotations or might be used to offend or bully someone. Instead the politically correct language popularizes the use of neutral substitutes that ensure respectful and equal treatment of all (O’Neil 2011: 279).

To conclude, the language of political correctness has mainly focused on changing social attitudes and norms through applying modifications to language. The so called PC language became not only a linguistic but also social phenomenon since the main aim of the language of political correctness has been to introduce a sense of what should be considered “appropriate” not only in language but also in social behavior (Hughes 2010: 4). According to Hughes (2010: 293), the extent to which the language of political correctness can be considered successful is rather difficult to assess. Nevertheless, it has achieved some of its main aims: first of all, the word “respect” became a key notion that resulted in an increased

level of politeness in public discourse, secondly, it caused some labels to become taboo while used in public, which can be considered a significant achievement (Hughes 2010: 293). And finally, it caused mass media to recognize the importance of using less derogatory labels (Hutton 2001). On the other hand, Hughes (2010: 293) claims that expecting the politically correct language to replace all labels that carry negative connotations and change social norms and attitudes is rather unrealistic.

2.5. PC language guidelines

Under this cover term majority of guidelines that promote bias-free, non-offensive and non-discriminatory language use are understood. They are usually meant to raise a problem of discriminatory language being used not only at universities but also at workplaces or in public spaces (Equal Opportunity Unit 2005: III). It is useful in distinguishing what is appropriate, inclusive and neutral in language and what could be considered sexist, discriminatory and offensive (Equal Opportunity Unit 2005: III). Additionally, guidelines are designed not only to provide a review of inappropriate language but also to educate students as well as teachers that the type of language that we use along with the code of behavior towards other people are of great importance (DeVito 2004: 141). According to Maggio (1991: 3), authors of guidelines believe that “[c]ulture shapes language and then language shapes culture”. Therefore, it is important to define what type of language should be considered inappropriate and what is unacceptable in language (Maggio 1991: 3). And since “[l]anguage goes hand-in-hand with social change – both shaping it and reflecting it”, it seems that institutionalizing language use is not a trivial matter that can be ignored but rather a way of changing social norms and attitudes (Maggio 1991: 3).

Maggio (1991) presents non-discriminatory guidelines for writing that cover a number of topics such as bias, exclusive, sexist and pseudo-generic language. Ways of avoiding and substituting such labels and expressions are provided alongside with concise explanations of why such type of language is inappropriate and should be unacceptable especially in writing (Maggio 1991: 1-26). At the same time the author recognizes the need for promoting more inclusive and less offensive language in communication as well as in public discourse (Maggio 1991: IX). Nevertheless, the main influence on creating language guidelines has the work of Schwartz (1995) who formulated many strategies for applying language in writing

that is supposed to show respect in various areas of discrimination such as race, color, disability, age, political and social background as well as gender. Interestingly, recommendations for non-discriminatory language use ought to be frequently updated not only with labels and phrases recently considered offensive or discriminatory but also with topics that become of interest to the debate on political correctness such as animal rights or addiction (Hughes 2010: 204-211).

In 2005 the Equal Opportunity Unit (2005: III) released a publication of guidelines for non-discriminatory language use to be referred to across universities. It provides many academics and students with a solid framework for applying non-discriminatory labels and phrases in order to ensure that everyone is not only equally treated but also equally heard (Equal Opportunity Unit 2005: III). Those recommendations promote avoiding language that includes stereotypes, omission, negative labeling and discrimination. To tackle these problems, positive, inclusive and non-discriminatory substitutions of certain expressions are presented and their use in the public discourse is promoted. Additionally, next to providing neutral labels and phrases, those guidelines recognize and explain why discriminatory language can be harmful and why is it crucial to watch our language (Equal Opportunity Unit 2005: 1-2). It aims at changing certain types of vocabulary, most often the one considered exclusive or offensive, and at reshaping social beliefs towards certain groups of people that tend to be treated with little respect (Equal Opportunity Unit 2005: III). In a way, this publication might be considered aiming at what the phenomenon of political correctness means to accomplish: at changing social attitudes via shaping linguistic behaviors and language use.

2.6. Criticism of the debate on political correctness

Due to the fact that the phenomenon and the language of political correctness were partly politically motivated, it generated more criticism than any other kind of censoring the language (Allan & Burridge 2006: 90). In order to present the phenomenon of political correctness objectively it is crucial to examine the arguments that have been brought against it by many sociolinguistic writers. Therefore, this section will present the main points of criticism that have been generated over the years.

Political correctness was frequently blamed for trying to introduce a kind of censorship to language that might result in constraint of freedom of speech (Sparrow 2002: 120). American free society considers this kind of censoring of language a serious threat to freedom of speech (Hughes 2010: 12). Some people even claim that the whole debate on political correctness was centered on “effective silencing, of views which differ from a supposed ‘politically correct’ orthodoxy and at different political viewpoints” (Sparrow 2002: 119). On the contrary, many writers believe that almost every language has an ability to impose some limitations or restrictions therefore making absolute freedom of speech a rather unrealistic notion (Allan & Burridge 2006, Cameron 1995, Fish 1994, Sparrow 2002). Allan and Burridge (2006: 110) believe that political correctness is “no more a threat to freedom of speech than other types of verbal taboo”. Interestingly, Cameron (1995: 149-150) also doubts that any kind of modification, whether it is PC-speak or Newspeak, can destroy any language or realistically limit freedom of speech and therefore the basic human right. In addition, Cameron (1995: 165) believes that the politically correct language, similarly to other linguistic standards, can rather threaten “freedom to imagine that our linguistic choices are inconsequential” than our freedom of speech.

Furthermore, what has been many times pointed out in the debate on political correctness is that the decisions concerning the language of political correctness are made by the minority of people who are usually anonymous and “mysteriously unlocatable” (Hughes 2010: 6-7). In other words, many writers tend to criticize political correctness for trying to make language a property of only a small group of people who are, at the same time, the only ones who can decide upon the introduction of certain kind of language modifications (Hughes 2010: 6-7). Those semantic and lexical changes became another object of criticism. Fish (1994: 91) claims that creating new labels does not always result in generating new meanings and neutral labels. Instead, new labels tend to carry the old connotations and messages of the words and expressions they were meant to replace (Fish 1994: 91). Another relevant point of criticism that was often discussed is the fact that certain labels that were used to precisely describe an illness, race or gender are more often replaced with ones that might in fact sound pleasant but are vague, inaccurate and even misleading at times (O’Neil 2011: 285). Moreover, some critics believe that constant changes in language brought by the debate on political correctness cannot realistically alter social attitudes and values because there is no evidence that would

validate the claim that language can determine perception; it might only partly influence it (Cameron 1994: 25). Some discuss this problem in more detail and claim that despite the fact that language changes, our attitudes remain the same and language used may be frequently considered a pleasant cover for the “wrong thoughts” we may still be having (Rees 1993: XVIII).

What is more, the debate on political correctness is claimed to be focused “on various idealistic assumptions on how society should be run, and how people should behave towards each other” (Hughes 2010: 21). Those idealistic assumptions started to be responsible for intervention and “corruption of our language” (Allan & Burrige 2006: 93). At the same time, Allan and Burrige (2006: 99) claim that enforcing those “idealistic assumptions” of what language is supposed to be could be very difficult in any language. This difficulty results from the fact that not everyone uses the meaning of a word in the same way and a meaning of a word can be understood differently (Sparrow 2002: 126). Some even criticize the phenomenon of political correctness for focusing solely on language instead of more significant, political or social matters (Allan & Burrige 2006: 93).

To sum up, the debate on political correctness popularized an idea of what language is supposed to be and this causes critics to see the enforcement of new labels as a kind of censorship of language that might as a consequence limit the basic human right – freedom of speech (Cameron 1995: 121). Additionally, it is often claimed to introduce labels that do not influence social attitudes and instead become often an object of criticism (Rees 1993: XVIII). Nevertheless, despite the strong criticism political correctness is still believed to be more successful in making people change their “linguistic habits” than any other language intervention (Allan & Burrige 2006: 101).

3. Data

After describing theoretical background, the study focused on obtaining a “representative sample of data” (Johnson 2008: 37). Since corpus can be considered a source of linguistic data and representative samples, it has been chosen as the main source of empirical data for this project (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 1). Another advantage of corpus is that it enables researchers to make more objective and reliable statements what is crucial not only in this but in any research (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 4-5). In addition, since corpus provides researchers with “machine readable” texts, it was obvious that the pace of processing data will therefore be increased and looking at data from different angles will become easier (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 4-5). What is more, analyzing empirical data provided by corpus with the help of computer software decreases the risks of errors and simultaneously increases the reliability of the study (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 5). Taking all those factors into account, one can assume that corpus can be considered an appropriate and reliable source of data for this project and that it may allow approaching and answering the research questions included in this study accurately.

Diachronic corpus

Approaching research questions concerning the influence of political correctness on language use involves a diachronic coverage of data. The most common way to conduct a reliable diachronic study is to use historical corpus data that can provide necessary information on language use (McEnery, Xiao, Tono 2006: 82). Therefore, well-defined and representative Corpus of Historical American English became crucial to this study because it allows investigation and examination of the “past stages of language” that may help revealing any possible changes that had been happening in language in the past years (Claridge 2008: 242). The key advantage of the diachronic corpus is that it allows looking at language changes at any point in history and conducting a comparative study between different moments in history (Curzan 2008: 1091). Besides providing diachronic frame, the Corpus of Historical American English can also be considered one of the most notable corpora available and it covers American English – the language that became the subject of the political correctness debate as the very first one.

Unit of analysis

As mentioned by Bieber and Jones (2008: 1289), a very central step in designing a corpus study is determining the object, or in other words, unit of analysis. In this study the frequency of labels that became objects of the debate on political correctness are explored. Labels for the analysis were chosen after a close study of guidelines for non-discriminatory language use (Maggio 1991, Schwartz 1995, Equal Opportunity Unit 2005) combined with the exploration of labels considered politically incorrect as discussed by Ayto (2007), Hughes (2010) and Rees (1993). Afterwards, labels were divided into groups that are composed of politically incorrect ones and their politically correct substitutions. The organization of groups is based on the most popular fields that the debate on political correctness has dealt with and in which it was influential as discussed by Ayto (2007), Hughes (2010), Maggio (1991) and Rees (1993). The following five groups of labels were designed for the purposes of this study:

- Physical illness,
- Mental illness,
- Generic ‘man’,
- Races and nationalities,
- Homosexuality.

Labels that were included in those groups and consequently chosen for the analysis became at some point the objects of the debate on political correctness and were subsequently changed to suit the policies on the politically correct language use. The frequency of those labels has been explored in the sub-corpus of print mass media of Corpus of Historical American English and later on comparatively analyzed. The groups as well as individual labels are introduced, analyzed and discussed in more detail in the analysis section (see: section **6. Analysis**).

In the case of this research there was a number of crucial decisions to be made that would help designing a more reliable study. Therefore, after defining the unit of analysis it became important not only to limit the time span this study is intended to focus on but also the part of the corpus from which the empirical data should be acquired. Those two factors will be discussed in the following sections.

Time frame

The study's interest is focused on the time frame beginning in the 1960s and ending in the 2000s. On one hand, this time frame covers the period when political correctness became known and influential as a movement and, on the other hand, it is not too stretched which limits the possibilities of other social factors influencing language use (Cameron 1994: 18). Additionally, according to Claridge (2008: 243) shorter time frames can be used as successfully as the longer ones to reveal changes in language. Therefore, setting two generations as the basis for the study should provide sufficient data for the analysis. Finally, the empirical data obtained from this particular time frame may reveal changes in language that appeared most likely due to the debate on political correctness.

Sub-corpus of print mass media

Another crucial decision in the process of designing the study was concerned with the choice of the specific area of interest. Since language of political correctness is often claimed to be designed mainly for public purposes, the interest of the study centered on the discourse in which formal and official register is used most frequently (Hughes 2010: 290). Since different registers tend to exploit different degrees of political correctness and this study attempts to explore language in which the highest register can be visible, the field of the study had to be narrowed down (Hughes 2010: 292). Spoken language included in the sub-corpus of Corpus of Historical American English may potentially constitute diversity of genres, dialects and varieties and that is why it may not reliably answer research questions (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 4). At that point, the focus shifts to written language and more specifically to newspapers and magazines that constitute a sub-corpus of print mass media. Additionally, as claimed by Claridge (2008: 243) changes in written language seem to happen within shorter time period than changes in spoken language therefore examining written language may prove more effective. Moreover, popular fiction was not included in this study due to variance of registers it represents (Hughes 2010: 292). The sub-corpus of popular fiction includes registers that stretch from the most formal and politically correct register to least official and politically incorrect (Hughes 2010: 292). Therefore, to increase appropriateness of results popular fiction was dismissed from the study.

Mass media and mass communication

Understanding what mass communication and mass media are is crucial to this research. Conventionally, mass media include a variety of social industries, for example, newspapers, films, music, radio, internet, etc. (Jakubowicz 2009: 9). Those industries use the power of mass communication to address their audience that is usually large and varied (Trenholm 2001: 298-299). Communication between the source of information and the audience is indirect and believed to be a powerful tool used in order to influence social behavior (Trenholm 2001: 298-299). As defined by Trenholm (2001: 300), mass media messages are unique because they are produced by large institutions, they are addressed to a large audience that is “invisible” and finally they are dependent on the technology of transmitting the message.

All mass media have four main functions that they attempt to fulfill and those are: “surveillance, correlation, cultural transmission and entertainment” (Trenholm 2001: 302). Surveillance function deals with gathering information that should be transmitted to the audience and its broadcasting (Trenholm 2001: 302). The correlation role of mass media is concerned with the interpretation and analysis of events and news while cultural transmission aims at educating and influencing audience’s social norms and behaviors (Trenholm 2001: 302). The final function is entertainment that is achieved by providing the audience with enjoyment that shall be also educative (Trenholm 2001: 303). DeVito (2004: 8), however, believes that mass media have a more persuasive function and messages that they transmit are very powerful and have a “direct and immediate” influence on values and opinions of the audience. This is so called “one-step model” in which the audience is considered to be a target of a message that the media transmit (DeVito 2004: 8). Nevertheless, this model is superseded by a “two-step process” that is more complicated (DeVito 2004: 8). First, the message provided by mass media should influence “opinion leaders” who subsequently would encourage the audience to make a certain type of decisions or to form a certain type of opinions (DeVito 2004: 8).

More recently another model was developed and became popular, namely, the “multistep theory” that claims that the messages transmitted by mass media can be interpreted in different ways (DeVito 2004: 8). Those various interpretations depend on the members of the

audience that the receivers of the message interact with (DeVito 2004: 8). Therefore, DeVito (2004: 8) claims that the power of the mass media relies greatly on the interpersonal communication between members of the audience. Nevertheless, sometimes mass media misuse these functions and manipulate news to influence audience's opinion, provide receivers with the kind of entertainment that does not fulfill educative purposes or intentionally let the audience draw wrong conclusions (Trenholm 2001: 303). The power of the mass media has also concerned DeVito (2004: 41) who claims that mass media represent only the content that is considered appropriate by the dominant ideology or political system that is currently in power. Additionally, the leading countries in the world frequently have the major influence on the shape of the mass media in other, less developed countries (DeVito 2004: 41). Values, perspectives and attitudes promoted by those countries in their native mass media have a tendency to become popular in other countries as well (DeVito 2004: 41). As claimed by DeVito (2004: 124), some types of mass media can even function as "gatekeepers" and play a decisive role in determining what information the audience will be provided with and which not.

To conclude, it was crucial to analyze the power of the mass media in this research. However, despite the strong position that mass media may have in the modern society, it has been often emphasized that the audience has to remain critical of the messages and language mass media transmits (DeVito 2004: 169, Trenholm 2001: 303). Even though mass media tend to consider themselves objective and unbiased, they are unfortunately not free of unethical practices, improper opinions and biased and offensive language (DeVito 2004: 141). Therefore, language policies that penalize the use of offensive language were issued to promote using non-derogatory and non-sexist language in public discourse (Maggio 1991, Schwartz 1995, Equal Opportunity Unit 2005, Ayto 2007, Hughes 2010, Rees 1993). Nevertheless, their effectiveness is hard to assess as mass media still tend to convey messages and use terms and labels that may be considered inappropriate not only in the language of public discourse (DeVito 2004: 141).

Print mass media

Print mass media, that are the focus of this study, similarly to the whole industry of mass media, has undergone substantial changes (Jakubowicz 2009: 9). The study takes into

consideration five decades during which the face of the print mass media has been changing and its role has been frequently described as less and less positive (van Dijk 1995: 28).

Print mass media are considered “traditional media” as opposed to “new media” (Jakubowicz 2009: 27-29). New media are associated with internet and virtual communication while traditional media include print media, television, radio, music and films (Jakubowicz 27-29). The main purpose of print mass media is not only to inform but also to educate, “enable and exercise the freedom of expression [...], provide a forum for public debate, influence public opinion” (Jakubowicz 2009: 9). Similarly to other kinds of mass media, print mass media are considered to have social, political, cultural and emotional impact (Jakubowicz 2009: 27). Additionally, print mass media should follow the values of impartialness, tolerance, respect and equality of all people (van Dijk 1995: 28). Nevertheless, in the recent years instances of print mass media being racist or prejudicial are more and more common (van Dijk 1995: 30).

This paragraph will deal with the main features of newspapers and magazines. When it comes to newspapers, they fulfill the informative function and they are geared towards any member of society since they tend not to be specialized (Trenholm 2001: 311). The stories often follow the same layout, so called ‘inverted pyramid’ (Trenholm 2001: 311). This layout provides readers with the most important and eye-catching information first, that is why the headlines appear on the top, followed by the gist of the story and a more detailed description (Trenholm 2001: 311, Harrower 2012: 40). News writers are advised to write condense paragraphs and place a brief summary of the most important pieces of information on the top of the article while the least essential facts should be mentioned at the bottom (Harrower 2013: 41). Therefore, one can assume that newspapers present isolated stories that tend to be short and not very detailed. What is commonly known of many newspapers is their focus on emotional, dramatic, sometimes even oversimplified language that is used to catch attention of a reader (Trenholm 2001: 312). While writing news stories it is important to use simple vocabulary, “strong verbs” instead of “lazy adverbs” and “strong nouns” instead of “lazy adjectives” to keep the stories interesting and vivid (Harrower 2012: 61). Remarkably, in spite of the focus on using vigorous vocabulary, news writers are informed about the importance of avoiding sexist and discriminatory language that may reinforce stereotypes (Harrower 2012: 61). Therefore, it is difficult to assess to what extent newspapers fulfill the educative function

of the print mass media since on one hand they focus on interesting, eye-catching stories, on the other, do not want to offend anyone (Trenholm 2001: 312). Magazines, as opposed to newspapers, are more specialized and have therefore narrower audience (Trenholm 2001: 312). They are believed to fulfill not only the informative but also educative and entertainment functions (Trenholm 2001: 313). Magazines and newspapers also differ in the way information is provided. Stories presented in magazines are longer, more detailed, more complex and personalized; therefore, the use of personal pronouns in articles is not uncommon (Trenholm 2001: 314).

What is more, print mass media have some responsibilities towards the public that, however, have also been changing over the last decades (Jakubowicz 2009: 10). Print mass media, similarly to other types of media, has the possibility of shaping and altering social opinions and attitudes therefore this power should be exercised with caution (van Dijk 1995: 34). Additionally, print mass media is often the only source of information regarding many social groups, their needs and issues (van Dijk 1995: 34). Consequently, print mass media as well as the audience of the print mass media can be very heterogeneous and represent different levels of formality and objectivity. Thus, it is important to note here that not all magazines and not all newspapers reveal the same rank of neutrality. And since the sub-corpus of print mass media is representative of all styles, it might reveal various levels of the characteristics discussed above.

To sum up, the fact that print mass media have been undergoing significant changes over the years cannot be overlooked. Its transition from more objective source of information towards more biased is a well-known and frequently discussed issue. According to Cameron (1995: 84), print mass media in particular has “an interest in promoting certain ideological or political positions”. Their task in recent years has become supplying audience with only those pieces of information that have ideological purpose for a newspaper or a magazine (Cameron 1995: 84). The sub-corpus of print mass media ensures, therefore, that the data used in the study is representative and at the same time reliable because it is centered on the object of political correctness – the language of public discourse.

4. Research questions

This section presents and discusses three research questions on which this study is focused. Each research question was designed to investigate the influence of the debate on political correctness on language and its use in print mass media from a different angle. The aim of this study is to explore and gather data, analyze results and finally answer the following research questions:

- Did the debate on political correctness precipitate the use of politically correct labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media?
- How did the debate influence the use of politically incorrect labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media?
- Was the phenomenon of political correctness successful in substituting the politically incorrect labels with the new neutral labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media?

To answer the first research question it will be crucial to study guidelines for politically correct language in relation to the results of the frequency analysis of the use of politically correct labels. The above mentioned language policies changed multiple times in the course of the debate on political correctness therefore they will have to be closely and carefully analyzed to reveal any co-relations between language policies regarding individual labels and their frequencies at certain points in history. It is expected that the debate on political correctness did influence language use and precipitate the increased frequency of the use of politically correct labels. This hypothesis is based on a claim made by Hughes (2010: 293) who believes that political correctness can be considered successful in encouraging the use of politically correct labels.

Second research question will involve a similar process of analyzing the guidelines for politically correct language in each decade in relation to the frequency of the use of politically incorrect labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Assessing the extent of the influence of the debate on political correctness on the use of politically incorrect labels will be a time-consuming and intricate process. Nevertheless, as described by Hughes (2010: 293), the phenomenon of political correctness did discourage the use of discriminatory and offensive language. Thus, it is anticipated that politically incorrect labels became taboo in public

discourse and their frequency of use has been significantly decreasing under the influence of the debate on political correctness over the years. It will be nevertheless crucial to assess the extent of the influence since as claimed by Hughes (2010: 293)

[i]t is unrealistic to expect politically correct language to replace entirely the coarser established words of natural language and everyday speech.

The final research question attempts to either validate or dismiss Allan and Burridge's (2006: 90) claim in which they state that political correctness was one of the most successful interventions in language, and despite the criticism it managed to change linguistic habits and promote non-discriminatory language use. This task will certainly prove to be the most complicated and will involve a very close analysis of all gathered data to ensure that an accurate assessment of the extent of the success of the phenomenon of political correctness in substituting politically incorrect labels with new, neutral ones in the sub-corpus of print mass media.

The process of gathering and analyzing data for this study has been discussed in the previous section (see: section **3. Data**) while research methods are introduced and described in the following section (see: section **5. Research methods**).

5. Research methods

This chapter consists of a concise summary of the main features of research methods that have been chosen for the purposes of this study and applied in order to answer research questions. Additionally, it presents and shortly discusses descriptions of terms crucial to this research. Since the phenomenon of political correctness in the contemporary understanding is frequently associated with the emergence of the New Left in the U.S.A. in the 1960s, it seemed plausible to examine the influence of political correctness and analyze frequencies of certain groups of labels in the Corpus of Historical American English (Cameron 1994: 18). After choosing the historical corpus for the source of data, it became crucial to determine what kind of research method can approach the research questions the most accurately. Therefore, to be able to examine the influence of the debate of political correctness and the PC language guidelines on the use of certain labels, a corpus-based study was designed in which quantitative method of data analysis is applied.

Corpus-based approach

Corpus linguistics is a relatively new area that has been gaining popularity and that has “undergone a remarkable renaissance in recent years” (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 1). Corpus linguistics uses corpora to approach research questions from a new angle and to possibly enrich the field with new insights (Meyer 2004: 11). In the 1950s, this approach was heavily criticized by Noam Chomsky and was as a result abandoned by researchers in the field of linguistics (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 5-12). In the 1980s, the approach became an object of dispute and was consequently accepted by many linguists as an innovative approach for studying language that may have its limitations but is considered a useful and valuable source of information (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 113). What is particularly important not only to corpus-based approach but also to this MA thesis is that corpus linguistics focuses on language use rather than on the linguistic competence of a language user (Togini Bonelli 2010: 15).

The disagreement whether corpus linguistics is a methodology or a separate branch of linguistics still remains between many thinkers in the field of linguistics (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 6). Nevertheless, in the light of this thesis corpus linguistics is seen as a

methodology of research. Despite the unfavorable comments, it must be admitted that corpus linguistics can be very useful to researchers as a methodology because it offers a possibility to observe certain features of language that appear in a natural setting and allows examining the choice of a certain variant over another (Bieber & Jones 2008: 1291). Moreover, as a methodology it can be used for any type of research that aims at examining the frequency of the use of certain labels or at analyzing any aspect of language (Togini Bonelli 2010: 15). In the case of this study, a diachronic corpus was used in order to retrieve data therefore it can be considered the primary source of empirical data necessary for this research. This kind of corpus differs in only one matter from any other corpora, mainly, that diachronic corpora are “intentionally created to represent and investigate past stages of a language and/or to study language change” (Claridge 2008: 242). Further characteristics of the historical corpus remain similar to other corpora since they all aim at providing representative data that can be used by researchers to investigate various aspects of language (Claridge 2008: 242, McEnery & Wilson 2001: 103).

To start with, it is crucial to define what a corpus is. As claimed by Aston and Burnard (1998: 5), corpus is not the same as an archive or it is not a “random collection of texts”. It has been described in modern linguistics as a finite database that consists of “sampled texts, written or spoken, in machine readable form which may be annotated with various forms of linguistic information” (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 4). What is also important is that all those texts, whether spoken or written, are authentic and “representative of particular language or language variety” (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 4). To reach a high level of corpus representativeness it is essential to build a sample of a language in question or its variety that would offer “as accurate picture as possible of the tendencies of that variety, including their proportions” (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 30). Additionally, different corpora are designed in different ways and using diverse techniques and therefore various corpora may expose various levels of representativeness (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 4). While modern, electronic corpora grew bigger and reached over a million words the issue of representativeness became less concerning (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 96). Nevertheless, despite the increase in corpora sizes it cannot be assumed that any corpus can possibly represent all language varieties (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 96). Thus, while the data obtained from a corpus may be able expose a central tendency that can be observed in a language, it may not reveal minor

trends that have appeared in language (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 98). As a result, it can be assumed that the problem of representativeness of a corpus could be considered a limitation of any corpus-based study.

All modern corpora are machine-readable therefore processing linguistic data can be done quickly and accurately (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 5). What is more, adding annotations to words and phrases included in a corpus is easier and faster than ever before (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 32). Annotating a corpus is an intricate activity that was closely described and examined by Leech (1993). The author lists a number of principles that should improve the procedure and prove its usefulness in the field of linguistics (Leech 1993). Both Leech (1993) and McEnery and Wilson (2001: 32-69) agree that corpus annotations can play an important role in any corpus-based study that can not only shorten the time needed for analysis and provide researchers with additional linguistic information but can also allow a more precise examination of a corpus. It can provide researchers with information necessary to monitor how meaning of certain lexical items may be changing over time (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 61). Despite the varied number of annotations that may suit different types of studies, many critics maintain that annotations can sometimes prove inaccurate (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 26-38). Since, annotations are “interpretative in nature”, a possibility of multiple interpretations may prove problematic (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 26-38).

Corpus-based approach provides researchers with empirical data that consist of authentic examples of language use (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 5). Typically, corpus-based approach tests a theory and revises its validity in the corpus (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 9). Therefore, this type of study can be successfully employed to investigate the process of semantic change in a historical corpus (Curzan 2008: 1101). In addition, it can provide researchers with frequency and distribution of labels over the past years (Evison 2010: 122). Nevertheless, while a corpus can provide researchers with an evidence of what people actually say, it cannot offer any more contextual or linguistics insides (Widdowson 2000: 6-7). It is unable to give a researcher the explanation of the results obtained from a corpus-based study (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 98). In other words, findings of a corpus-based study will not be supported by sufficient information to explain certain features that can be observable in language. Juxtaposing empirical corpus data with “information about semantic

change” can bring some answer to research questions and may successfully reveal certain patterns in language use (Curzan 2008: 1101). But the process of linking data obtained from a corpus with a certain phenomenon has to be performed by a researcher. And this, according to McEnery, Xiao and Tono (2006: 96), may sometimes result in false or inaccurate generalizations and conclusions.

In the case of this study, corpus-based approach attempts to observe certain linguistic features in each decade separately in order to reveal which linguistic choices are preferred over time. However, according to McEnery, Xiao and Tono (2006: 6), not all of research questions can be answered by a corpus-based study. Therefore, it often proves vital to combine a corpus-based approach with other approaches (e.g. intuition-based approach) to properly address and accurately answer all research questions (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 19, Evison 2010: 132-133).

Quantitative analysis

According to McEnery, Xiao and Tono (2006: 45), corpus can provide researchers with relatively reliable quantitative data that is frequently used for the purposes of corpus-based studies. Therefore, since quantitative data is used more frequently in the field of linguistics, studying and mastering the use of quantitative methods of data analysis is considered an important part of the training of the majority MA students (Johnson 2008: 1). For the purposes of this study, quantitative analysis was chosen to “capture the common aspects of a set of observations”, to generalize findings in a particular domain of use, in the case of this research, in the sub-corpus of print mass media and, finally, to establish relationships between the results of the study and guidelines for politically correct language use (Bieber & Jones 2008: 1287, Johnson 2008: 3).

As opposed to qualitative analysis that focuses on examining certain features in language, quantitative analysis focuses on obtaining numerical data (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 76). As claimed by McEnery and Wilson (2001: 81), quantitative analysis in a corpus-based study does not only involve “simple counting” but knowledge and use of some statistical notions. In the case of this study, both raw as well as normalized frequency became important notions that were closely analyzed and later on used in order to answer research questions. Raw

frequency presents a count of occurrence of a word or a phrase in a corpus but it has its limitations; mainly it does not allow drawing conclusions, especially in studies that involve comparisons between different corpora (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 45). Normalized frequency, as opposed to raw frequency, makes it possible to compare results not only among different corpora of different sizes but also among different sub-sections of the same corpus (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 45). Frequency lists including both raw as well as normalized frequencies are generated automatically by the software that eliminates the possibility of a human error and consequently provides researchers with very accurate quantitative data (Evison 2010: 123-124). In addition, it allows performing tests of significance that as a result help to determine if differences in frequencies between various groups of labels happened due to chance or can reliably reveal a pattern (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 84). Therefore, it can be assumed that the notion of frequency became crucial to this study and although it may sound simple, it became the key to not only data analysis but also to assessing the influence of the debate on political correctness as well as on language policies on language use in the sub-corpus of print mass media.

Generalization of findings based on a smaller sample is one of the most basic advantages of quantitative methods of data analysis (Johnson 2008: 34). In other words, quantitative analysis of the study results conducted in a sub-corpus may be able to reveal something that can be true of the sub-corpus as a whole (Johnson 2008: 34). On the other hand, due to generalization the results may be less descriptive and may marginalize or even not reveal minor trends or occasional occurrences that have appeared in language (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 77). Therefore, it can be assumed that while the statistically reliable results are the goal of quantitative analysis it frequently entails a loss of certain type data including “fine distinctions” in language use (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 77).

Even though the goal of this study is to present numerical data, quantitative analysis of the results of the corpus-based study may prove to be useful in certain cases. According to McEnery and Wilson (2001: 76), quantitative analysis might yield results that are not applicable to the study in question; therefore, quantitative analysis of obtained results should be performed as a precursor for quantitative analysis to ensure that the results are “statistically reliable and generalizable”. In the case of this study, raw frequency test conducted on certain

labels may, as an outcome, provide results that contain occurrences of the use of labels that do not apply to the study. Therefore, it has been crucial to qualitatively examine the results of the raw frequency tests in order to confirm that only relevant results were taken into account (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 76). This step can also ensure that numerical data provided by the quantitative study is accurate and that it can reliably reveal certain trends that can be observed in language.

Research methods used in this study were combined in order to present more accurate results and to comply with the high standards of the corpus-based research. Additionally, good knowledge and careful application of the research methods helps to ensure that all generalizations that were drawn on the basis of the results of the study are accurate. Despite the fact that modern research methods are highly computerized, it is important throughout the process of conducting the study to keep in mind the observation made by Curzan (2008: 1105) who claims that

[w]ith all this technological richness, it is critical not to lose sight of the importance of complementary studies: the combination of more quantitative corpus-based studies with close, more qualitative examination of full texts [...]; and careful work with other historical resources as a way to provide sociolinguistic context for change in language use.

6. Analysis

6.1. Introduction

This part of the thesis deals with the analysis of data that was collected for this study. The aim of this part is to examine to what degree the debate on political correctness and the PC language guidelines have influenced the frequency of the use of certain labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Labels that have been included in this research were assembled into five categories. The groups are as follows: ‘Physical illness’, ‘Mental illness’, ‘Generic man’, ‘Races and nationalities’ and ‘Homosexuality’. In each group labels consists of politically correct as well as politically incorrect ones. The examination of labels was conducted as follows:

1. First of all, quantitative analysis is performed and raw frequencies of each label in each group and each decade is retrieved from the sub-corpus of print mass media. The instances of the use of some of the labels have to be examined qualitatively to ensure that they are applicable to the study and connected with a particular issue.
2. The next step of the analysis involves calculation of each raw frequency of labels belonging to each group into normalized frequency that is frequency per million words (FPM). If not all instances of the use of the label were applicable to the study, manual recalculation of the raw frequency into the normalized frequency was necessary.
3. In each group, the combined frequency of all labels belonging to a certain group was calculated and presented by means of a graph.
4. Next, the PC language guidelines were studied to determine which labels were politically incorrect and which were politically correct in each decade. Furthermore, the combined frequency of politically incorrect labels is compared to politically correct labels in each group and each decade in a graph.
5. Differences in frequencies between politically correct and incorrect labels have been tested using a chi-squared test for independence. A null hypothesis of: there is no significant difference in frequencies between politically correct and politically incorrect groups of labels was established and tested in each group. Since testing very low frequencies is quite unreliable, the additional Yates’ chi-squared test has been performed (when 20% of frequencies included in a group is lower than 5) to ensure

that the test results are more reliable (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 54-55). To accurately perform calculations and to avoid errors while conducting both tests, computer software has been employed (Preacher 2001).

6. Afterwards, pairs/groups of labels are closely examined. Frequencies of politically incorrect label(s) are compared to frequencies of their politically correct substitution(s). The differences in frequencies of those labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media are presented by means of graphs. This helps to assess the influence of the debate on political correctness on the specific pairs/groups of labels.
7. The last step of the analysis is the summary of results. It might be assumed that the analysis and the examination of the results are conducted inductively. Once the frequency of all labels is analyzed, the influence of the PC language guidelines can be assessed across all five decades in each group.

Data analysis is performed in the same manner in each group and aims at presenting the results in the similar form to ensure that all results of the study can be, at the end, properly assessed and summarized. The study has proved to be a more intricate activity than expected. Some labels had to be qualitatively analyzed in order to ensure their applicability to the study. Moreover, calculations, in particular, had to be conducted very carefully and transparently to ensure that at each stage of the study the results can be traced back and, if necessary, once again analyzed.

6.2. Physical illness

The first group of politically correct labels that has been examined is 'Physical illness'. Labels in this group often cause controversies but at the same time this is the most fruitful and "productive" group of labels (Rees 1993: 36). That means that this group is rich in euphemisms that correspond to the notions of "decency and decorum" and avoid using blunt terms (Allan & Burridge 2006: 203). As mentioned by Hughes (2010: 195), labels in this group have undergone radical and sometimes unexpected changes. To investigate this claim, a collection of politically incorrect terms and their politically correct substitutions, as suggested by Rees (1993), have been examined. The following terms and phrases have been analyzed:

Cripple – this label when used in reference to people with disabilities is “derogatory and unacceptable” (Maggio 1992: 79). Moreover, it has acquired negative connotations and has been replaced by a politically correct term *disabled* (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 339).

Disabled – this term has been coined to supersede the unacceptable label *cripple* (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 407). In the 1980s it became an object of the political correctness debate and was replaced by terms *differently abled* and *physically handicapped* (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 407). In 1992 it was acknowledged as a proper term to address people with physical disabilities (Rees 1993: 36).

The disabled – interestingly, what Rees (1993: 36) notes is that while *disabled* has been accepted in the 1990s as a politically correct label, *the disabled* remained a negative, politically incorrect label. Using this term has a dehumanizing effect and therefore it should be avoided (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 407).

Handicapped – it has been used in the similar sense to the contemporary meaning since 1910, however, it has been attested as a euphemism of *disabled* in the early sixties until very recently (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 647). As mentioned by Rees (1993: 67), in the 1990s this term has acquired negative connotations of being limited in movement.

Physically challenged – this term according to Ayto (2007: 211) dates back to 1985 when words *disabled* and *handicapped* were considered politically incorrect. *Physically challenged* therefore became a euphemism that was supposed to represent a positive concept of “rising to a challenge” (Ayto 2007: 211). Moreover, as mentioned by Beard and Cerf (1992: 49), it was considered “a cruelty-free synonym for physically disabled”.

Differently abled – this phrase was developed in the mid-80s in an attempt to remove the “stigma of disability” from other terms used in reference to people with disabilities (Rees 1993: 3). In particular, it was used to avoid negative connotations of *disabled* (Ayto 2007: 208).

Victim of – since 1980s this phrase has been considered unacceptable when used in relation to “a person with mental or physical illness or handicap” (Rees 1993: 140). To avoid this stigmatizing phrase Beard and Cerf (1992: 90) suggest using a different, less negative label:

*survivor*¹. Moreover, it is recommended to use ‘people first’ language to avoid using this negative phrase (Maggio 1992: 275).

Afflicted by/ with – this phrase has been listed by Maggio (1992: 32) and Rees (1993: 36) as politically incorrect. Moreover, those labels should not be used in reference to people with disabilities and to avoid this stigmatizing phrase, ‘people first language’ is a politically correct substitution (Maggio 1992: 32).

Suffer from – this phrase is believed to carry negative connotations of experiencing mental or physical pain which is frequently not the main characteristic of people with disabilities (Rees 1993: 131). Similarly to the *victim of* label, this label should be replaced by ‘people first language’ to avoid harmful implications (Maggio 1992: 259).

People with – this so called ‘people first language’ became preferred in the 1990s because it puts a person first and not the illness or disability and therefore has a euphemistic effect (Halmari 2011: 829). This kind of syntactic euphemistic post-modification is the most recent approach to language that is based on a belief that post-modification takes the focus away from the disability and moves it towards the person (Halmari 2011: 839). This proposal became popular because lexical euphemisms often undergo a process of “the euphemism treadmill” and eventually even the newest and least stigmatizing words acquire negative connotations (Halmari 2011: 829). This approach, on the other hand, has been widely accepted and so far functions in common use without having negative connotations (Halmari 2011: 829-830).

The first step of the analysis of the use of labels included in this group is to examine frequencies of labels in question in singular as well as in plural form in the sub-corpus of print mass media. The analysis of the following labels *victim of*, *afflicted by/with*, *suffer* from*, *cripple* and *people with* has been conducted qualitatively to ensure that those labels have been used only in reference to people with physical illnesses. This part of the analysis proved to be an intricate activity that involved manual counting of frequencies of the use of individual

¹This label has not been taken into account in this study because it is unclear whether it is politically correct as suggested by Beard and Cerf (1992: 90) or if it is incorrect as suggested by Rees (1993: 140). Even though it is often considered by writers politically correct, Rees (1993: 140) notices that this label has a more positive meaning than *victim of* therefore should be used as its substitution.

labels in each decade to ensure reliability and comparability of results. Ensuring comparability was achieved by recalculating raw frequency of labels analyzed qualitatively into normalized frequency, that is frequency per million (FPM). Additionally, frequencies of all labels have been calculated into the combined frequency in each decade. The results of the frequency analysis are presented in Figure 1:

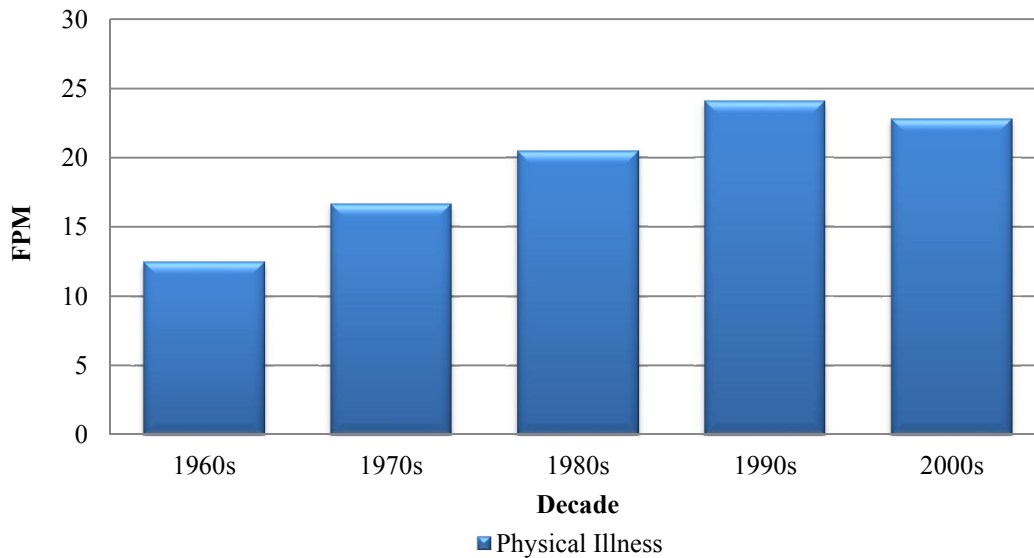


Figure 1: The combined frequency of the use of labels included in the 'Physical illness' group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As visible in Figure 1, the combined frequency of labels falling into the 'Physical illness' group has been gradually increasing until the 1990s when it reaches its peak of 24 per million words. This increase in frequency is a direct result of the more frequent use of *disabled* and *people with* labels. In the 2000s, the combined frequency of labels in 'Physical illness' group slightly decreases as compared to the 1990s and amounts to over 22 per million words.

The next step of the study is to analyze frequencies of politically correct labels as compared to politically incorrect over the years. As already mentioned in this section, some labels have undergone a process of semantic change and acquired negative connotations over the years. Therefore, it has been of special importance to pay close attention to years and decades in which particular labels have been considered unacceptable and politically incorrect and to properly calculate and compare their frequencies. The results are brought by means of the following graph (see: Figure 2):

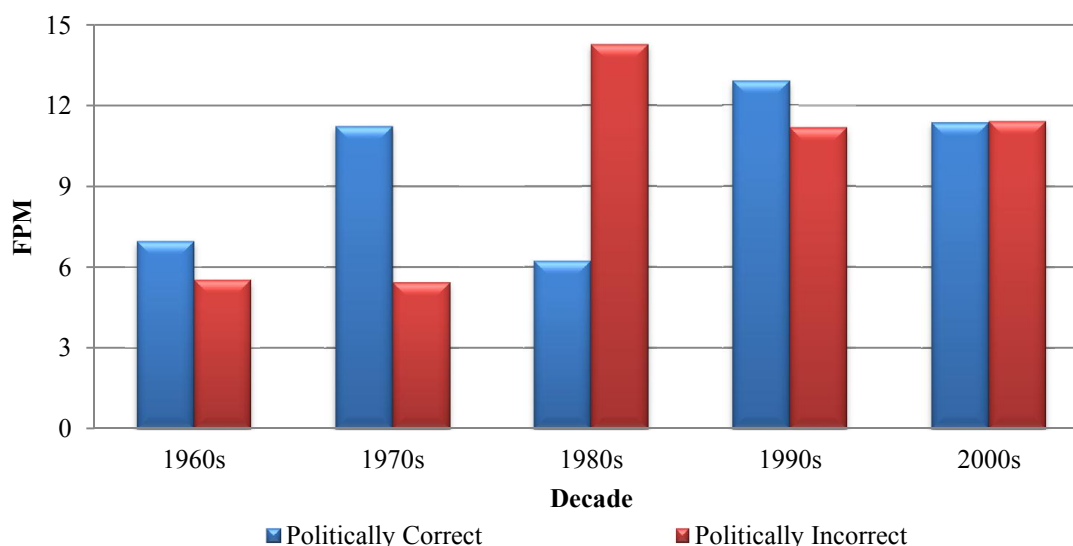


Figure 2: The frequencies of the use of politically correct as compared to incorrect labels included in the 'Physical illness' group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

What is particularly striking in Figure 2 is that the frequency of the politically correct labels as compared to the frequency of the politically incorrect labels has been undergoing rather unexpected changes over the years. In the 1960s and 1970s politically correct labels are used more frequently in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Surprisingly, in the 1980s the frequency of politically incorrect labels increases to 14 per million words and is more than twice as high as the frequency of politically correct labels. In the 1990s, the combined frequency of politically correct labels increases and is slightly higher than of the politically incorrect ones. In the 2000s both frequencies reach an equal level of 11 per million words. One of the reasons that could explain changes in frequencies is the fact that politically correct labels tend to very quickly acquire negative connotations and become inappropriate. While in the 1960s only three labels in the group of 'Physical illness' were considered politically incorrect, in the 2000s already six labels became politically incorrect. Those results may suggest that print mass media do not always keep pace with constant modifications of the PC language policies but, at the same time, seem to at least partly adopt them.

The next step of the study involves conducting a chi-squared independence test to examine whether the results of the analysis of frequencies of labels included this group are significant and independent. The labels have been divided into politically correct and politically incorrect groups of labels. The results have been generated by computer software (Preacher 2001) and are provided in the following table (see: Table 1):

	FPM of politically correct labels	FPM of politically incorrect labels	Total
1960s	6.97	5.54	12.51
1970s	11.24	5.45	16.69
1980s	6.24	14.26	20.50
1990s	12.91	11.17	24.08
2000s	11.38	11.43	22.81
Total	48.74	47.85	96.59
degrees of freedom (DF)			4
chi-square			5.428
Pearson's <i>p</i> -value			0.246

Table 2: The results of the Pearson's chi-squared independence test of frequencies of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the 'Physical illness' group

As visible in Table 1, the results of the Pearson's chi-squared test and its value of 5.428 suggest that there is a great possibility that the difference in frequencies between the groups is independent across all decades, which means that the results are likely not to be in relation to one another. Additionally, the Pearson's *p*-value of 0.246 suggests that the difference in frequencies between those groups of labels is statistically insignificant and might have happened by chance. As a result, the null hypothesis that the frequencies in both groups are not different cannot be rejected in the case of this group of labels. Thus, it can be concluded that frequencies in both groups are similar and the influence of the debate on political correctness may not be visible in the 'Physical illness' group of labels.

To further investigate this group of labels and gain a closer look at the use of individual labels in print mass media, close examination of frequencies proved useful. Firstly, frequencies of *cripple* and *disabled* labels have been analyzed. Frequencies of *cripple* have been manually calculated to improve accuracy of the results. Both labels acquired bad connotations and were considered politically incorrect in the 1960s. In an attempt to create proper, politically correct words referring to people with physical disabilities, labels *handicapped*, *physically challenged* and *differently abled* were coined. All those terms were originally meant to replace *cripple* and *disabled* but eventually acquired negative connotations and became politically incorrect themselves. To examine whether those language policies are reflected in the language use,

frequencies of those labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media have been studied. The results of this analysis are presented in Figure 3:

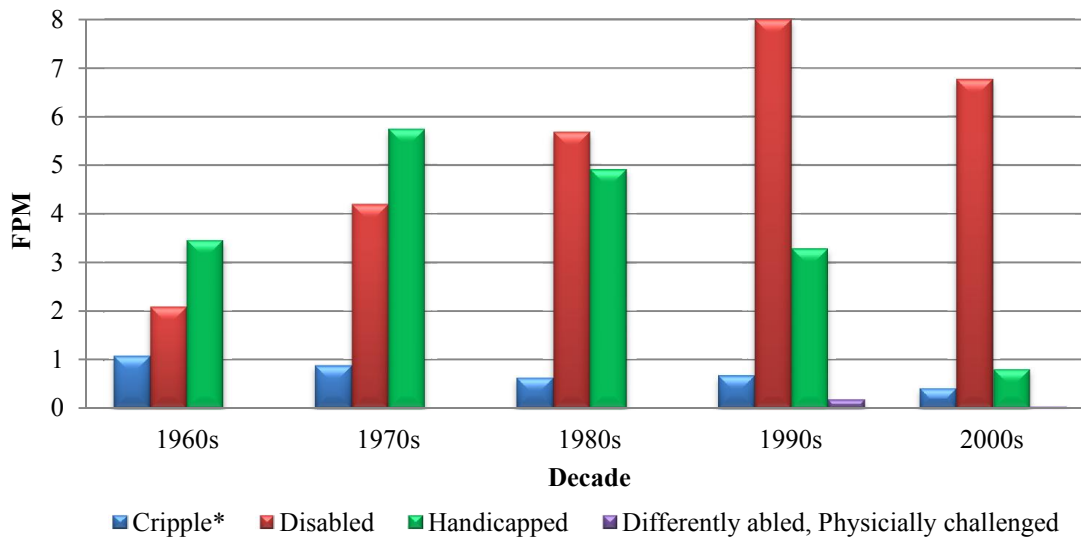


Figure 3: The frequencies of the use of *cripple*, *disabled*, *handicapped* and *differently abled/ physically challenged* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

In the 1960s, both labels *cripple* and *disabled* were considered politically incorrect and were to be replaced by the politically correct at that time label *handicapped*. As Figure 3 shows, the tendency to avoid the use of *cripple* and *disabled* and instead substitute it with *handicapped* is visible in the sub-corpus of print mass media until the 1970s. As expected, in the 1980s and 1990s frequencies of *cripple* and *handicapped* decrease while the frequency of *disabled* increases. In the 2000s, the frequency of *handicapped* has further decreased to less than 1 per million words. At the same time, despite the decrease in the frequency of *disabled* maintains a higher level as compared to other labels and amounts to almost 7 per million words. The results may suggest that the PC language policies concerning the use of *cripple* have an influence on language use because the frequency of the use of this label has indeed been decreasing over the years. The PC guidelines concerning the use of *handicapped* may partly be reflected in the graph. In the 1960s and 1970s it was used more frequently than *disabled*. Since the 1970s, the frequency of its use has been decreasing which mirrors a negative attitude towards this label that was considered unacceptable in the 1990s. Moving on to *disabled*, the frequency seems not to follow the PC language guidelines that until the early 1990s considered this label politically incorrect. Despite the PC language recommendations,

the frequency of this label has been increasing until the 1990s. What came as an unexpected result of the analysis was the extremely low frequency of the *differently abled* and *physically challenged* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Due to the fact that their frequencies have not been exceeding 0.2 per million words over the decades, they have been combined in the graph. The results may suggest that while frequencies of use of *disabled* and *handicapped* labels could have been influenced by the political correctness debate, *differently abled* and *physically challenged* labels seem to be euphemisms that have never been widely accepted. It might be the result of the fact that those terms have been used in negative and ironic contexts only and therefore attracted negative connotations and became politically incorrect (Hughes 2010: 196).

Another pair of labels examined includes *disabled* and *the disabled*. In order to properly evaluate the results of corpus inquiries, labels *disabled* and *the disabled* have been analyzed as two separate groups. To obtain more objective results it has been ensured that the *disabled* group does not include the results of *the disabled*. The frequencies of both labels have been compared in Figure 4:

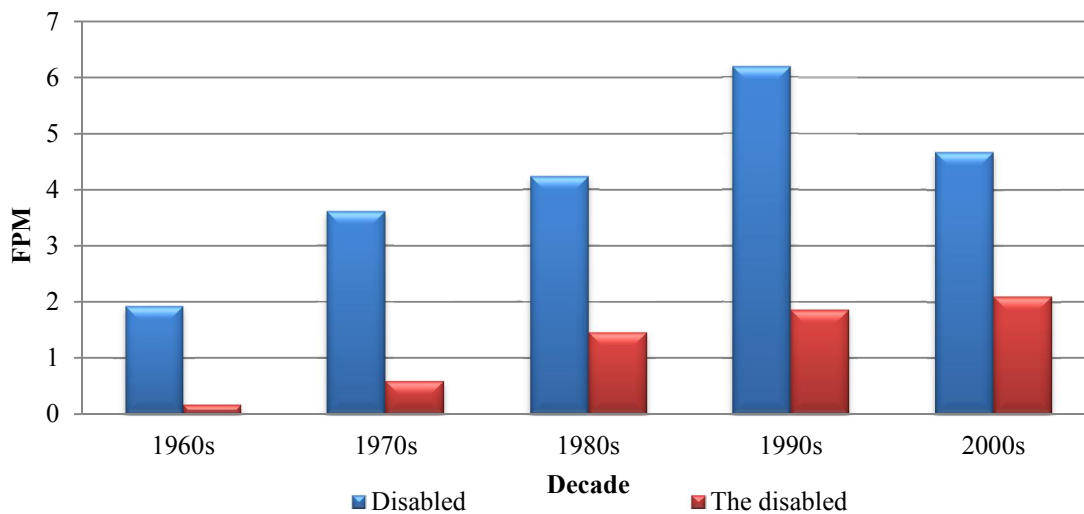


Figure 4: The frequencies of the use of *disabled* and *the disabled* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

What is interesting in Figure 4, is the frequency of the use of politically incorrect label *the disabled* that has been steadily increasing against the PC language guidelines over the years in the sub-corpus of print mass media. On the other hand, the frequency of the use of *disabled*

label has been gradually increasing until the 1990s when it was once again accepted by the PC language recommendations. Surprisingly, after accepting the *disabled* label as politically correct, its frequency decreases in the 2000s what seems to happen against the PC guidelines.

Finally, frequencies of use of *people with*, *suffer from*, *victim of* and *afflicted by/with* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media were examined. To ensure obtaining proper results, labels *victim of*, *afflicted by/with*, *suffer from* and *people with* were qualitatively analyzed and manually calculated. Frequencies of the above mentioned labels are compared in Figure 5:

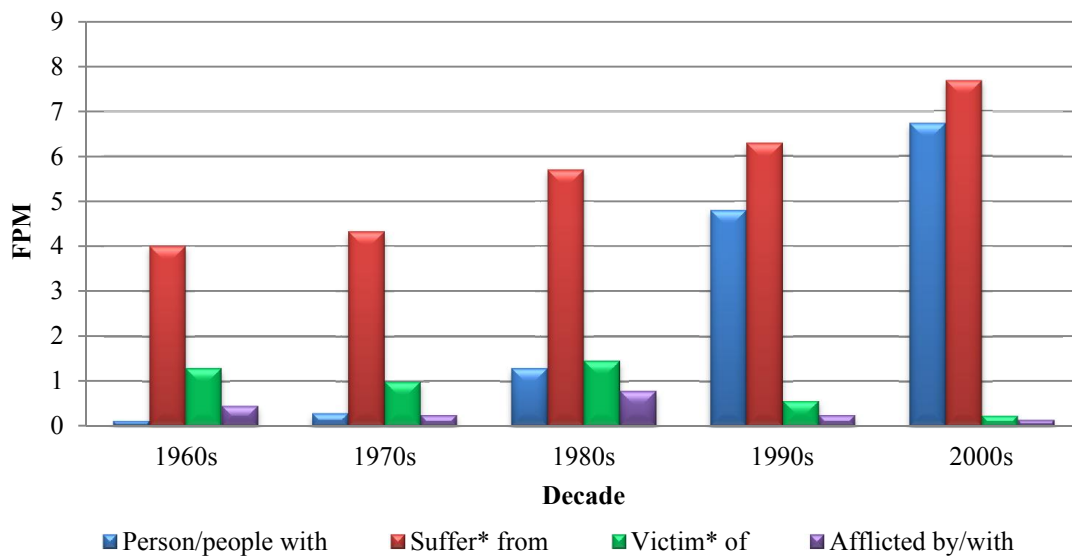


Figure 5: The frequencies of the use of *people with*, *suffer from*, *victim of* and *afflicted by/with* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The results of this part of the analysis have come as quite unexpected. As visible in Figure 5, the *people with* label was popularized in the 1990s which is also mirrored in its frequency of use. In the 1990s, the frequency of the use of this label in the sub-corpus of print mass media increased considerably as compared to previous years and has been increasing ever since. However, what is quite interesting is that the frequency of the use of the *suffer from* label has been steadily growing since the 1960s and remains higher over the years than of its politically correct substitutions. The frequency of the *victim of* label in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s has been maintaining a comparable level but since the 1990s the frequency has been gradually decreasing which seems to follow the PC language guidelines that in the 1980s pronounced this phrase politically incorrect. *Afflicted by/with* phrase has been maintaining a rather low frequency over the decades. One of the reasons for this trend might be that this phrase,

similarly to *suffer from* and *victim of*, has been considered unacceptable and politically incorrect. All in all, presented results seem not to entirely follow the PC language recommendations and may suggest that the language used in the sub-corpus of print media does not completely mirror the recommendations for non-discriminatory language use. However, it would be worthwhile to explore why *suffer from* label is more frequently used than its politically correct substitution. One reason why this label has been maintaining such a high frequency over the decades might be the growing popularity of emotive language in mass media (Carroll 2004: 29). Carroll (2004: 29) claims that selecting this kind of language does not only help to catch readers' attention but it can cause the audience to have an emotional reaction such as pity or anxiety. Additionally, according to Allan and Burridge (2006: 99), emotive language is preferred by those who fight for the rights of physically ill, for the ones suffering from diseases and those who became their victims.

To conclude, the results of the corpus study of labels included the 'Physical illness' group may indicate that the debate on political correctness has not entirely influenced the language used in print mass media. The results of the chi-squared independence test suggest that the difference in frequencies between politically incorrect and correct groups of labels is not statistically significant and therefore the null hypothesis, stating that there is no significant difference in frequencies, could not be rejected in the case of 'Physical illness' group. What is more, the outcomes of the analysis reveal that frequencies of some pairs of labels have been undergoing significant changes and some may, in fact, suggest that the language policies for politically correct language might have influenced language use; however, due to the limited scope of the research in this group of labels the influence may not yet be visible. That is why, the co-relation between the empirical data retrieved from the sub-corpus of print mass media and the PC language guidelines designed under the influence of the debate on political correctness has been further investigated in the 'Mental illness' group of labels in the following section.

6.3. Mental illness

Frequently being mentally ill carries a stigma because it "is viewed not so much as a disease but as a moral failure" (Allan & Burridge 2006: 213). Therefore, mental illness is considered taboo and "while it is acceptable to be physically ill, it is much less acceptable to be mentally

ill” (Allan & BurrIDGE 2006: 216). Labels such as *moron*, *idiot* or *mentally retarded* are used as insults because being mentally ill is “shameful” and therefore those medical labels became tainted with negative connotations (O’Neil 2011: 281-282). Patients with mental illnesses are believed to be dangerous, uncontrollable and behaviorally deviant (Allan & BurrIDGE 2006: 213-214). Thus, those negative connotations had to be replaced by more euphemistic and less offensive labels. Therefore, over the years the debate on political correctness has been focusing on removing a stigma that mental illness carries and replacing often harsh labels and phrases with more euphemistic and less stigmatizing ones (Rees 1993: 93-94). Abusive terms were substituted with more euphemistic but at the same time vaguer and looser labels that over time became misinterpreted and misused (Rees 1993: 93-95). In this group frequencies of use of the following terms in the sub-corpus of print mass media has been explored and analyzed:

Moron – this label was coined as a neutral, medical term to describe an adult with a mental retardation (Ayto 2007: 45). Since the 1920s, it has been used as an insult and subsequently this label was discarded from technical and medical use and as a consequence it has been considered unacceptable and politically incorrect (Ayto 2007: 45).

Idiot – this term used to be a strictly neutral term (O’Neil 2011: 281). Over time it started to be used in reference to a person with mental condition or low intelligence causing this label to acquire a highly negative and offensive meaning (Maggio 1991: 142). It is generally considered politically incorrect; however, it is often used as an insult (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 708).

Cretin – this label describes a person who is “physically deformed and has learning difficulties” (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 336). Nevertheless, this label was listed as politically incorrect because it acquired negative connotations and is “unnecessarily harsh” (Rees 1993: 96).

Imbecile – as mentioned by Rees (1993: 95-96), this label has been considered brutal and abusive and it should never be used especially in context of a person with a mental condition. However, similarly to *idiot* this label is also used in offensive contexts (Rees 1993: 95-96).

Retarded – this label has been used in scientific circles to describe a mentally ill person (O’Neil 2011: 281). According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 1228), since the 1970s this label used in reference to an individual with a mental impairment has been considered abusive and offensive because it started to carry negative connotations. Those negative connotations imply that mental retardation something that should be “shameful and worthy of ridicule” (O’Neil 2011: 281). Therefore, it has been listed by Maggio (1992: 234) as a politically incorrect label that should be avoided.

Mentally handicapped/disabled – those labels were coined in an effort to replace more abusive and offensive terms such as *retarded* or *moron* (Rees 1993: 93-94). However, as defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 892), those labels “have fallen out of favour in recent years and have been largely replaced in official contexts by terms such as *learning difficulties*”.

With special needs – this phrase was created in an attempt to replace politically incorrect words such as *retarded* or *mentally disabled* (Rees 1993: 93). However, this effort turned out to be rather unsuccessful because this phrase is too vague to be widely adopted (Rees 1993: 93).

Learning disabilities/difficulties – those are alternative phrases that were to substitute politically incorrect labels such as *mentally handicapped* or *mentally disabled* (Rees 1993: 94). Those phrases are supposed to cover general mental as well as more cognitive or neurological conditions and became accepted as euphemistic labels in official contexts (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 811). However, similarly to other politically correct phrases they have been considered rather imprecise and they may imply that “mental handicap is a matter of education” (Rees 1993: 94). Consequently, those labels acquired negative meaning particularly among children in schools and became unacceptable in terms of political correctness (Ayto 2007: 192).

People with – as already mentioned in the previous section, this approach to language has been the most recent attempt to create politically correct labels and to replace the ones that have acquired negative connotations (Halmari 2011: 289). In the 1990s, lexical post-modification was replaced by syntactical post-modification to reach a euphemistic effect and

the so called ‘people first’ approach to language was created (Halmari 2011: 829). It has a euphemistic effect because it takes the focus away from an illness and moves it towards a person (Halmari 2011: 839). The ‘people first language’ became widely adopted in everyday use because it can be considered an acceptable substitution for politically incorrect labels and phrases (Halmari 2011: 829-830).

Similarly to the previous section, the first step of the analysis of labels belonging to the ‘Mental illness’ group has been to examine their frequencies. To obtain more reliable results, frequencies include both singular and plural forms of the above mentioned labels. Additionally, the instances of the use of the *people with* label have been qualitatively analyzed and manually calculated to ensure that it was used only in reference to people with mental conditions and to confirm that only occurrences applicable to the study have been taken into consideration. Frequencies of the use all labels have been normalized into frequency per million words (FPM) and have been calculated into the combined frequency in each decade. This part of the analysis has generated the following results (see: Figure 6):

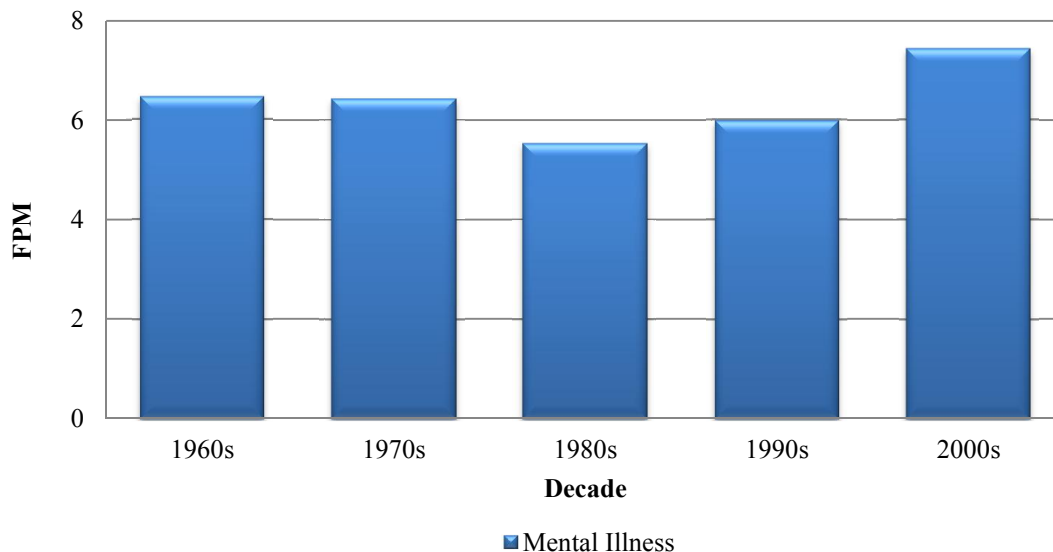


Figure 6: The combined frequency of the use of labels included in the ‘Mental illness’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As clearly shown in Figure 6, the combined frequency of labels included in this group is stable but very low over the years and in the 2000s reaches its peak of only over 7 per million words. This very low frequency may indeed suggest that the labels included in this group may be considered taboo. As claimed by Allan and Burrridge (2006: 213), labels that refer to

mental illness are “tainted with attitudes of shame and disgrace” what seems to be reflected in Figure 6. In the 2000s, a slight increase in frequency is noticeable. It is mainly connected with an increase of the frequency of the use of ‘people first’ approach to language that has brought politically correct solution to referring to people with not only physical but also mental conditions. Nevertheless, it has been crucial to analyze the distribution of politically correct as compared to incorrect labels in each decade to assess the influence of the PC guidelines on language use in sub-corpus of print mass media.

In the next step of the analysis of labels in the ‘Mental illness’ group, the PC language guidelines were carefully studied in each decade to analyze which labels were considered politically correct and politically incorrect over the years. This analysis allowed calculating the combined frequency of politically correct labels as compared to politically incorrect ones in each decade. The frequencies are compared and brought by Figure 7:

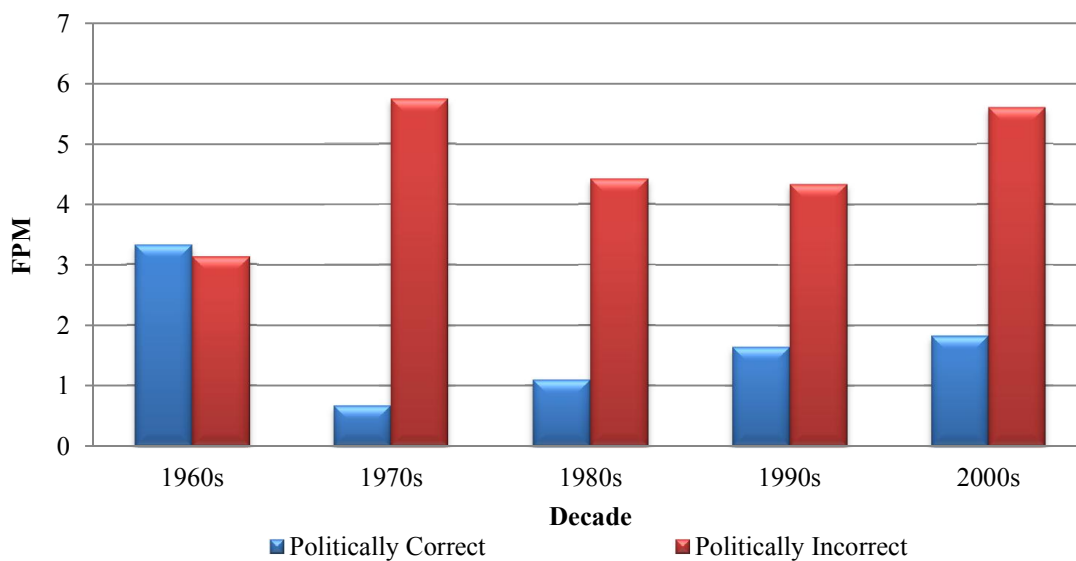


Figure 7: The frequencies of the use of politically correct as compared to incorrect labels included in the ‘Mental illness’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

Figure 7 reveals a surprising pattern that politically incorrect labels are more frequently used than their politically correct substitutions. In the 1960s, frequencies of both politically correct and incorrect labels used in reference to people with mental conditions reach a comparable level. In the 1970s, however, a sudden change was brought by the PC language guidelines that pronounced *retarded* politically incorrect. As a result of this change, in the 1970s the frequency of the use of labels considered politically incorrect has been higher than of

politically correct labels over the decades. Since the 1970s the combined frequency of politically correct labels has been slightly increasing. Therefore, it could be concluded that labels included in the ‘Mental Illness’ group have been used in spite of the PC language guidelines that recommended avoiding terms that might have a stigmatizing effect or be offensive (Rees 1993: 93-94). Nevertheless, the frequency of those labels is quite low therefore making generalizations based on such a small sample might be unreliable.

Since the results of the Pearson’s test may prove unreliable when performed on small frequencies, it has been crucial to conduct additional Yates’ chi-squared independence test in this group of labels to ensure that the results are more accurate (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 86). Table 2 contains results of both Pearson’s and Yates’ tests that have been generated by computer software (Preacher 2001):

	FPM of politically correct labels	FPM of politically incorrect labels	Total
1960s	3.33	3.13	6.46
1970s	0.68	5.75	6.43
1980s	1.10	4.42	5.52
1990s	1.65	4.34	5.99
2000s	1.83	5.60	7.43
Total	8.59	23.24	31.83
degrees of freedom (DF)			4
Pearson’s chi-square			3.018
Pearson’s <i>p</i>-value			0.554
Yates’ chi-square			1.439
Yates’ <i>p</i>-value			0.837

Table 2: The results of the Pearson’s and Yates’ chi-squared independence tests of frequencies of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the ‘Mental illness’ group

The results of both tests presented in Table 2 show that the frequencies of different groups are independent, or in other words, are not related. Moreover, both *p*-values of 0.554 and 0.837, respectively, are significantly higher than the critical 0.05 value and suggest that the difference in frequencies between the politically correct and incorrect groups of labels is not statistically significant and it is likely to have happened by chance. Those high *p*-values fail to

reject the null hypothesis that the frequencies of both groups are indifferent. Therefore, we can assume that the frequencies of both groups are similar and the influence of the debate on political correctness may hardly be visible in this group of labels.

To more closely examine the influence of the PC language guidelines on the use of labels included in the ‘Mental illness’ group, frequencies of individual labels have been analyzed. First, the frequency of the *retarded* label has been compared to the frequency of its politically correct substitution – *mentally handicapped/disabled* in Figure 8:

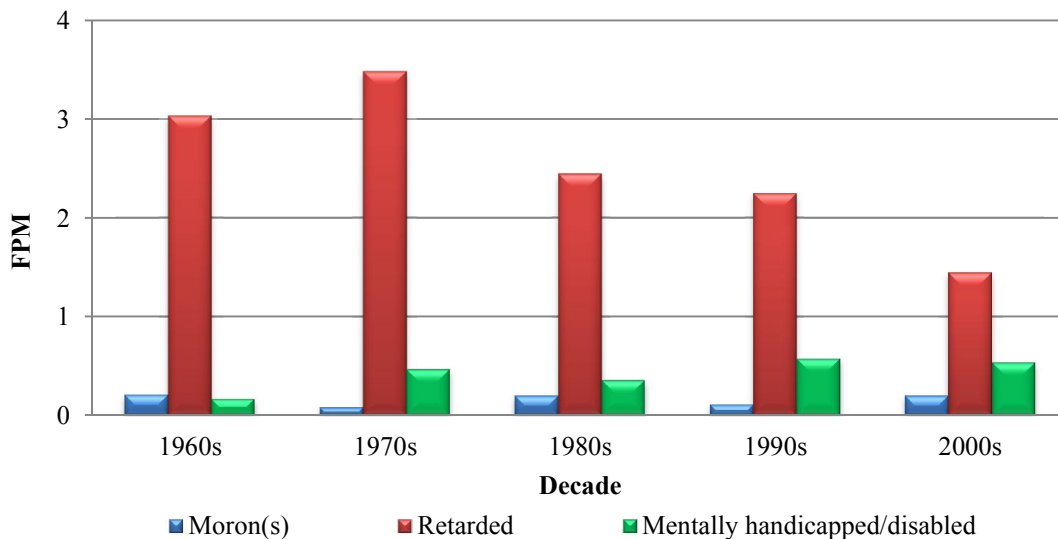


Figure 8: The frequencies of the use of *moron*, *retarded* and *mentally handicapped/ disabled* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As presented in Figure 8, the frequency of the label *moron* has been maintaining a very low level over the years what seems to follow the PC language guidelines that have been considering this label politically incorrect (Ayto 2007: 45). Moving to the *retarded* label, since the 1970s, when this label became politically incorrect, it has been experiencing stable decrease in frequency. This decrease suggests that this label has been used less and less frequently in the sub-corpus of print mass media. However, despite the decline, it retains a higher frequency than its politically correct substitution – *mentally handicapped/disabled*. The frequency of this label, on the other hand, has been slowly increasing over the years. Moreover, the frequency of *mentally handicapped/disabled* is lower than expected and seems not to follow the PC language policies that have been advising using it in the 1970s and the 1980s as a replacement of *retarded*. Recently, it has acquired negative connotations and

should be avoided (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 892). To conclude, those results reveal that the frequency of the *retarded* label is higher as compared to other labels in this group in spite of its incorrectness. On the other hand, the *mentally handicapped/disabled* label has never been widely popular. However, the *retarded* label might often be used in the sub-corpus of print mass media as an insulting or offensive term and not necessarily in relation to a person with a mental condition. Nevertheless, the use of this label in the insulting context has a stigmatizing effect and causes this label to have negative connotations and as a result is considered politically incorrect. However, as mentioned by O’Neil (2011: 285), this word is reintroduced with its actual meaning to stop it from being misused or used as an insult. The aim of this process is to discourage bullies from using this term to offend someone and instead use it properly (O’Neil 2011: 285). This is why, despite the possibility that this label might have been used as an insult; it has been included in the study because it has been undergoing significant semantic changes.

The next step of the analysis involved analyzing frequencies of *cretin*, *imbecile* and *with special needs* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Frequencies of the above mentioned labels have been compared and presented in Figure 9:

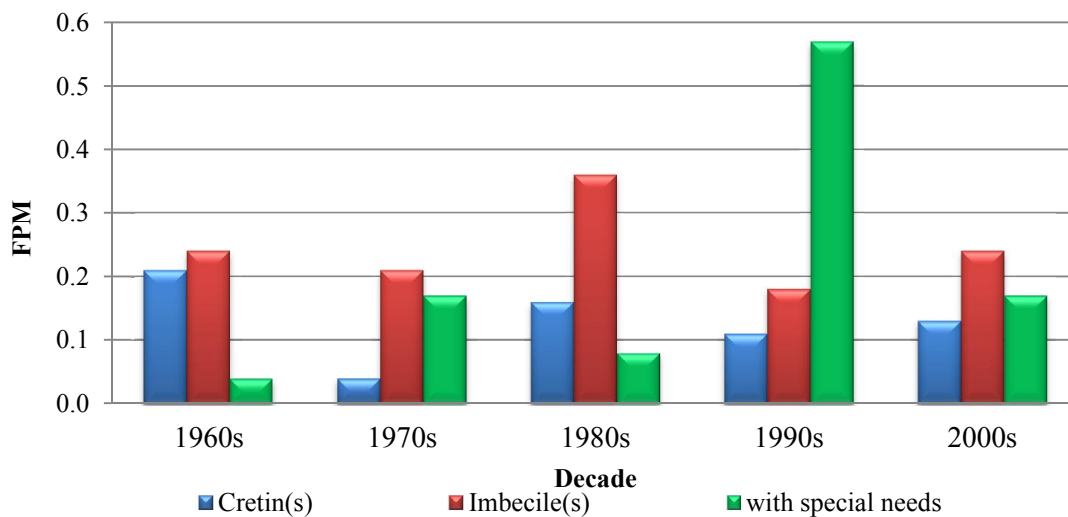


Figure 9: The frequencies of the use of *cretin*, *imbecile* and *with special needs* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

Figure 9 shows frequencies of use of two politically incorrect labels *cretin* and *imbecile* and their politically correct substitution – *with special needs*. Interestingly, despite the PC

language guidelines *cretin* and *imbecile* have not been entirely avoided in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Nevertheless, both *cretin* and *imbecile* are often used as an insult as well. Moving to the politically correct phrase *with special needs*, it is clear that it has been used the most frequently in the 1990s. Due to the fact that the label *with special needs* has been meant to replace politically incorrect and abusive terms *cretin* and *imbecile* therefore they are presented in one graph. However, the frequency of the use of this label is quite low therefore it cannot be considered a popular replacement of politically incorrect labels. To sum up, in the ‘Mental illness’ group, the analysis validates initial results that suggest that almost all labels included in ‘Mental illness’ group have not been used in accordance with the PC language recommendations and it may seem that those guidelines have not had an influence on language use in the sub-corpus of print mass media.

The final step of the analysis of frequencies of labels in this group involves comparing the frequency of the politically incorrect label *idiot* and two its two politically correct substitutions *with learning disabilities/difficulties* and *people with*. The results of the comparison are presented in Figure 10:

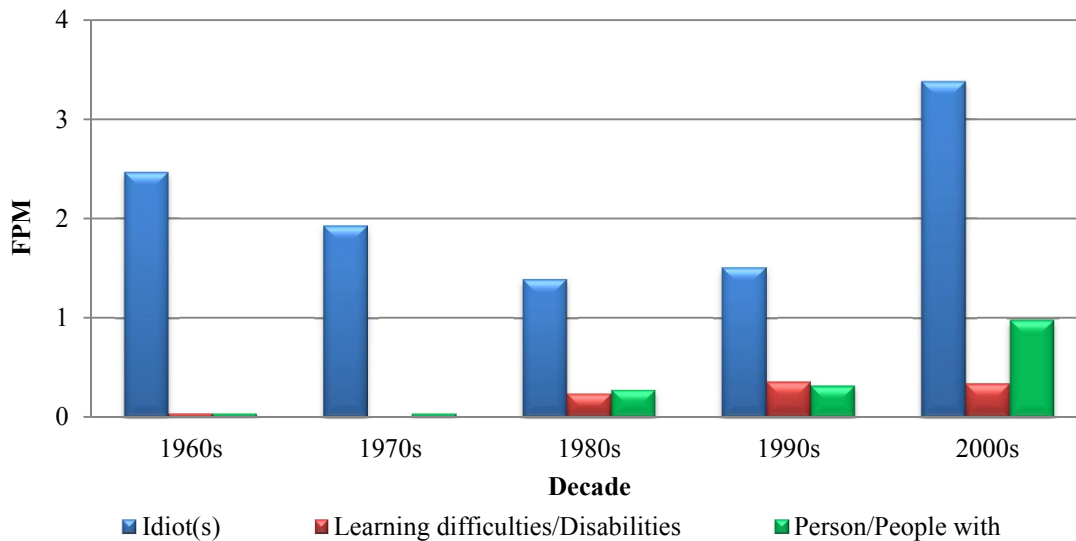


Figure 10: The frequencies of the use of *idiot*, *learning disabilities/ difficulties* and *people with* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The comparison presented in Figure 10 shows that the frequency of the use of *idiot* remains significantly higher over the years than of its politically correct replacement *with learning disabilities/difficulties* and *people with*. The frequency of the *idiot* label has first been

decreasing until the 1980s. Then, in the 1990s and 2000s the frequency increases to over 3 per million words. The two remaining labels are considered politically correct and should be used as substitutions to politically incorrect labels. Nevertheless, both *with learning disabilities/difficulties* and *people with* have never been frequently used and never became widely accepted as politically correct replacements of politically incorrect labels. What develops as a possible tendency is the growing popularity of the use of the *people with* label that also starts to be visible (see: Figure 10) from the 1980s onwards.

As claimed by Allan and Burridge (2006: 213-215), inoffensive, politically correct labels referring to people with mental conditions may be more widely accepted than any other politically correct labels because labels referring to mental illness are exceptionally stigmatizing. However, based on the results of the study, it seems that politically correct labels included in the ‘Mental illness’ group have never gained popularity and have never managed to replace politically incorrect labels. Therefore, based on the results it can be assumed that Hughes (2010: 194) was right while claiming that the debate on political correctness failed to substitute all vocabulary that might be considered offensive. What is particularly interesting is the high frequency of the use of the label *idiot* in print mass media. However, this might be due to the fact that this label is frequently used to insult people rather than to address individuals with mental illness. Summarizing this group of labels, it can be concluded that politically incorrect labels *retarded* and *idiot* are more frequent in the sub-corpus of print mass media than any of their politically correct substitutions. Nevertheless, both labels are also used as abusive terms therefore it might be hard to assess the real influence of the PC language policies on the use of language in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Finally, in this group of labels both Pearson’s and Yates’ chi-squared independence tests were conducted and revealed that the difference in frequencies between groups of labels considered politically incorrect and correct is not statistically significant and independent. Therefore, in the case of the ‘Mental illness’ group, the null hypothesis could not be rejected and it was assumed that frequencies of both groups are similar thus revealing no influence.

6.4. Generic man

The ‘Generic man’ group constitutes the next category of labels that have been analyzed in the course of the study. ‘Generic man’ can be often found in titles, names of jobs and offices

and it is a grammatical convention that neutrally refers to a human being (Ayto 2007: 195). Some, however, believe that the use of ‘man’ is always generic therefore it is frequently used in reference to an “adult male human” rather than to an “individual” or “a human being” (Maggio 1992: 19-20). Cameron (1994: 25) describes a number of studies that have proved in a series of experiments that generic masculine labels are interpreted by many people as actually referring to a male, while gender neutral labels are less tainted this tendency. Additionally, as claimed by Maggio (1992: 8), since gender-specific terms already specify the sex, they cannot be used in reference to both men and women. The debate on political correctness has centered on avoiding exclusion of women and creating labels that are inclusive as well as gender-neutral and may denote both man and women (Ayto 2007: 195). To introduce more inclusive and gender-neutral labels it has been generally recommended to replace a generic ‘man’ suffix with a ‘-person’ suffix (Maggio 1992: 15). In order to properly examine and compare gender-specific labels, they have been grouped into pairs of politically incorrect labels and their politically correct substitution. The PC language guidelines underlying the use of the following terms have been analyzed:

Chairman – this label became a subject of discussion on political correctness because it has been perceived as referring only to adult, male humans (Rees 1993: 90). To avoid specifying the sex and exclusion of women, a gender-neutral label *chairperson* was introduced in 1971 (Ayto 2007: 187).

Chairperson – this label was first created in 1971 as a gender-inclusive substitute for *chairman* (Ayto 2007: 187). As claimed by Ayto (2007: 187), it has been mainly used in reference to women. As mentioned by Rees (1993: 23), this label never became widely accepted or used.

Chair – this label has been introduced in 1976 in an attempt to remove gender-bias and to replace *chairperson* however, according to Rees (1993: 22), it has experienced a rather “mixed reception”. Using *chair* both as a noun and a verb is politically correct and acceptable (Maggio 1992: 64).

Spokesman – due to gender-bias this label has been considered politically incorrect and as a result a substitution to this term (*spokesperson*) was coined in the 1970s (Rees 1993: 130).

Spokesperson – this coinage was created in 1972 in an effort to introduce a gender-neutral substitution for *spokesman* – a label considered politically incorrect (Ayto 2007: 199). *Spokesperson* has been considered one of the most widely accepted, widely adopted and long-lasting gender-neutral substitutions for other labels considered politically incorrect (Ayto 2007: 199). However, some claim that this label has been considered rather “awkward and contrived” (Maggio 1992: 256). Moreover, it has been mostly used in reference to women therefore it is still generally considered a gender-biased and exclusive label (Maggio 1992: 256).

Policeman – listed by Rees (1993: 115) as a politically incorrect and a sexist label that should generally be avoided.

Police officer – this label was popularized by the feminist movement in the 1970s and since then has been considered a gender-neutral replacement of the politically incorrect label *policeman* (Rees 1993: 115, Maggio 1992: 219).

Fireman – it is listed as non-gender inclusive and therefore politically incorrect label that should not be used for purposes of referring inclusively to all human beings (Rees 1992: 55).

Firefighter – as claimed by Rees (1991: 55), it is a “mandatory substitution” for a politically incorrect and gender-specific label *fireman*.

Mankind – this label is considered gender-specific and sexist therefore it is listed by Rees (1991: 91) as a politically incorrect label that should be avoided.

Humankind/Humanity – both labels are described as gender inclusive and are recommended as politically correct substitutions of the label *mankind* (Rees 1993: 91).

Manpower – is listed as politically incorrect label that should be avoided because it may be considered gender-specific and as a result sexist (Maggio 1992: 179). Therefore, a number of politically correct labels have been introduced to replace this term such as *workforce* and *human resources* (Maggio 1992:179).

Workforce/human resources – both labels are recommended as politically correct, gender-neutral alternatives to *manpower* (Maggio 1992: 179).

Similarly to labels included in previous groups, the first step of the analysis of labels included in ‘Generic man’ group was to analyze and calculate frequencies of all labels included in this group in individual decades in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Frequencies of all labels were examined in plural and singular forms and later on calculated into a combined frequency. As mentioned by Ayto (2007: 195), plural of *–person* suffix is almost always *–persons* instead of *–people* therefore plural form taken into account in the study is *–persons*. Additionally, the frequency of the *chair* label has been qualitatively examined and manually recalculated to confirm that only instances of its use that apply to the study were taken into account. Frequencies of the use all labels have been normalized into frequency per million words (FPM) and calculated into the combined frequency in each decade. The results of the frequency analysis are presented in Figure 11:

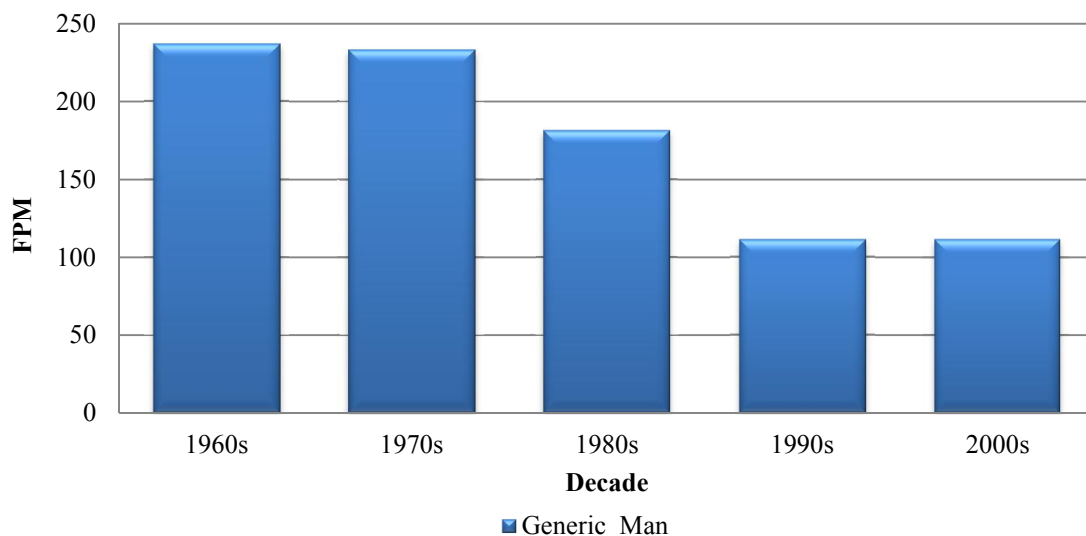


Figure 11: The combined frequency of the use of labels included in the ‘Generic man’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As clearly visible in Figure 11, the combined frequency of labels included in the ‘Generic man’ group has been undergoing substantial changes over the last five decades. In the 1960s and the 1970s, the frequency reaches a comparable level of 230 per million words. In the 1980s, it decreases significantly to 180 per million words. Unexpectedly, in the 1990s and

2000s the frequency of labels in this group further decreases and maintains a value of 111 per million words in the 2000s. Those results and the significant decrease of the combined frequency of labels belonging to this group may suggest that there might be a co-relation between the debate on politically correct language and its use in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Nevertheless, to reliably validate this claim frequency of individual labels and the PC guidelines concerning the use of gender-inclusive language have been further investigated.

The next step of the study involved a close examination of frequencies of labels considered politically correct and incorrect in this group of labels in each decade. Additionally, the PC language guidelines were studied in order to establish which labels have been considered politically correct and incorrect in different decades. This helps establishing whether a co-relation between the PC language guidelines and frequencies of politically correct and incorrect labels in this group exists. As a result, the combined frequency of all labels considered politically correct has been compared to the combined frequency of all politically incorrect labels in Figure 12:

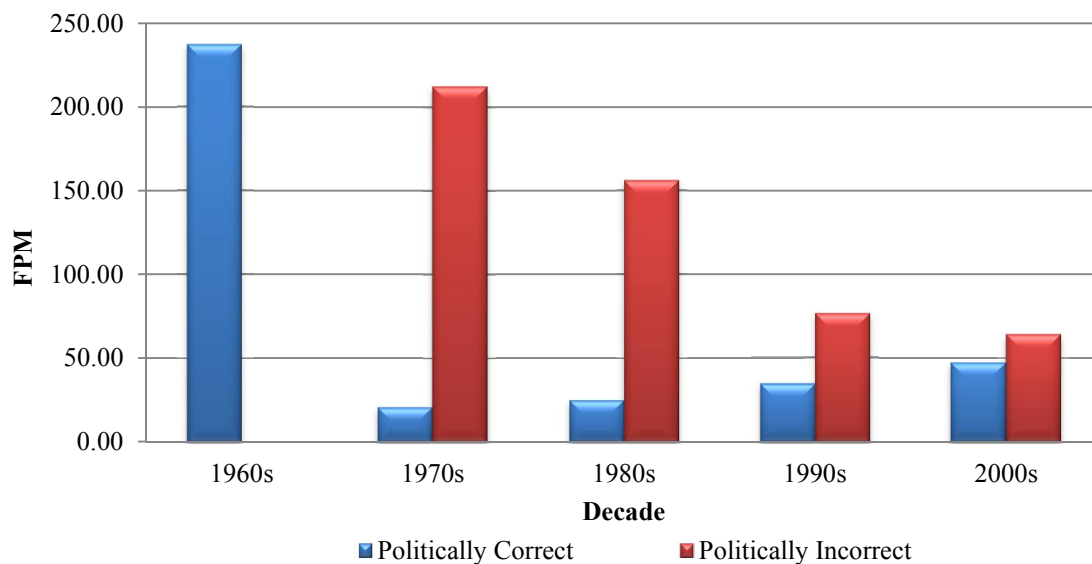


Figure 12: The frequencies of the use of politically correct as compared to incorrect labels included in the ‘Generic man’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

In the 1960s, the discussion on political correctness has not yet centered on labels belonging to the ‘Generic man’ group, therefore, all were considered politically correct. As shown in Figure 12, this situation changes in the 1970s when the use of non-gender neutral language became sexist and at the same time politically incorrect. At that time, the frequency of the use

of politically incorrect labels reaches 212 per million words. Since the 1970s the frequency of politically incorrect labels has been decreasing and in the 2000s declines to only 64 per million words. At the same time, the frequency of politically correct labels has been increasing and reaches 47 per million words in the 2000s. Despite the fact that those results do not seem to follow the guidelines for gender neutral language use, a tendency to substitute politically incorrect labels with more gender inclusive ones starts to be visible. To study this trend more closely pairs of politically incorrect and correct labels have been examined and their frequencies of use in each decade in the sub-corpus of print mass media have been compared. This step of the analysis is useful in assessing the influence of the PC guidelines for non-exclusive language use.

Nevertheless, before analyzing individual labels it has been essential to conduct a chi-squared independence test to analyze whether the differences in frequencies between politically correct and politically incorrect groups of labels are statistically significant. The results have been generated by the computer software (Preacher 2001) and are provided in the following table (see: Table 3):

	FPM of politically correct labels	FPM of politically incorrect labels	Total
1960s	237.07	0	237.07
1970s	21.01	212.52	233.53
1980s	25.22	156.21	181.43
1990s	34.75	76.26	111.01
2000s	47.41	64.12	111.53
Total	365.46	509.11	874.57
degrees of freedom (DF)			4
chi-square			496.52
Pearson's <i>p</i>-value			~0

Table 3: The results of the Pearson's chi-squared independence test of frequencies of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the 'Generic man' group

As Table 3 shows, the chi-square score of 496.52 is significantly above its critical value what suggests that the difference in frequencies between politically correct and incorrect groups of labels is not independent. This means that frequencies of labels considered politically correct

and politically incorrect in the ‘Generic man’ group of labels may be in relation to each other. What is more, the p -value of ~ 0 shows that the difference in frequencies among and across those groups is statistically significant and that the possibility of them occurring due to chance is highly unlikely. Therefore, on the basis of the chi-square independence test results, the null hypothesis can be rejected and it can be concluded that frequencies of both groups are, in fact, significantly different.

The next step of the analysis has involved an examination of frequencies of individual labels in the “Generic man” group. Figure 13 presents the frequency of the politically incorrect label *chairman* as compared to the frequency of its politically correct substitutions *chair* and *chairperson*. The frequency of the *chair* label has been examined qualitatively to ensure that only instances of its use that apply to the study were taken into account.

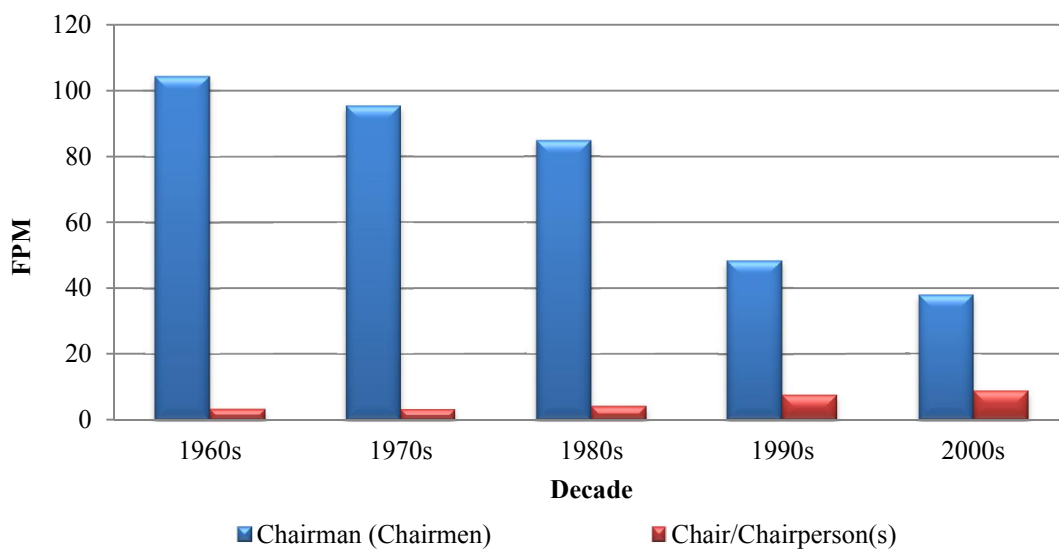


Figure 13: The frequencies of the use of *chairman* and *chair/chairperson* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The results presented in the Figure 13 reveal that the frequency of *chairman* considered non-gender neutral in the 1970s has been high as compared to its politically correct substitution – *chair/chairperson* – over the decades. Since the 1960s, the frequency of this politically incorrect label has been decreasing; nevertheless, it amounts to 37 per million words in the 2000s. Frequencies of gender neutral *chair* and *chairperson* labels have been combined because both have been very low over the years. Since the 1990s it seems that those labels have been used more frequently than ever before, nevertheless, the frequency reaches only 9

per million words. Those results suggest that the PC language guidelines might have had little influence on the use of gender-inclusive instead of gender-biased language. Unexpectedly, based on frequencies of those labels Maggio's claim that *-person* suffix has been recommended and widely accepted cannot be validated (1992: 15). It is even more surprising since news writers are advised to use gender inclusive labels and not use words or phrases that may reinforce sexist stereotypes (Harrower 2013: 61).

To further investigate the influence of the PC language guidelines on frequencies of use of gender-neutral language, the next pair of labels including gender-specific label *spokesman* and gender-neutral *spokesperson* has been analyzed. Frequencies of the above mentioned labels have been compared and the results of this comparison are presented in Figure 14:

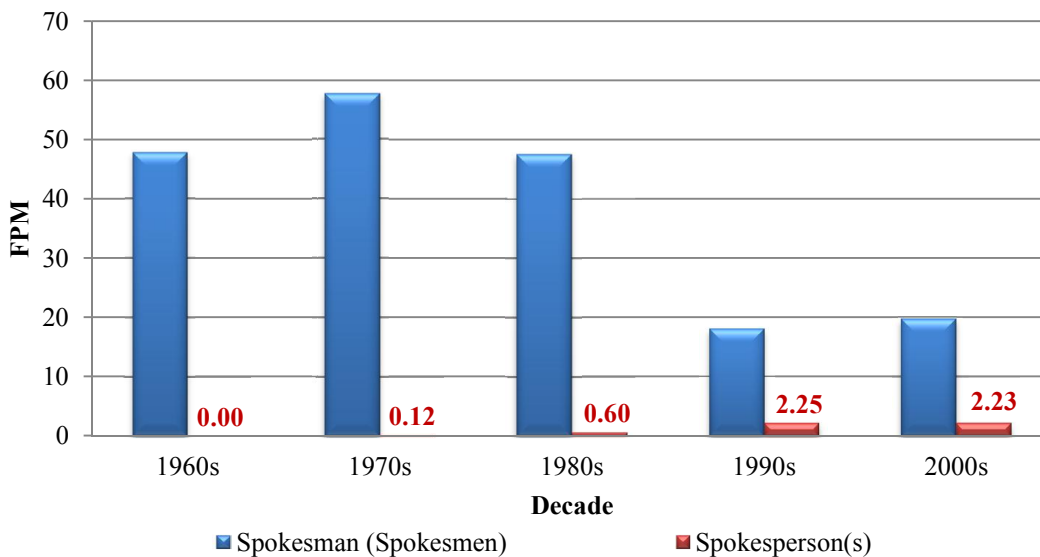


Figure 14: The frequencies of the use of *spokesman* and *spokesperson* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The results brought by Figure 14 suggest that the frequency of the gender-specific and therefore politically incorrect label *spokesman* is significantly higher as compared to its politically correct replacement – *spokesperson*. The frequency of *spokesman* has been increasing between the 1960s and 1980s despite the PC guidelines that advise avoiding using exclusive language and labels. In the 1990s and 2000s it decreases and amounts to 18 per million words. The recommended substitution for this term, namely *spokesperson*, has never been frequently used in the sub-corpus of print mass media. The frequency of the *spokesperson* label is significantly lower which again may indicate that the PC guidelines for

non-sexist language use have not been entirely followed also in this case. Interestingly, based on the results of the study, Ayto's (2007: 199) claim that *spokesperson* has been one of the most widely accepted gender-inclusive labels cannot be validated. On the contrary, Maggio (1992: 256) has an entirely opposing view and suggests that this label is still being considered gender-specific (is, however, used more frequently in reference to women rather than to men) and therefore it has never been popularly used as a gender neutral substitution for *spokesman*. This claim seems to be grounded in the results of the corpus study of this label. Even though the frequency of *spokesman* has been higher over the years than of its politically correct substitution, the tendency to avoid this label is visible in the sub-corpus of print mass media. However, to gain a more complete overview of this group of labels it is essential to investigate the remaining pairs that are included in the 'Generic man'.

The next pair of labels examined and analyzed is the politically incorrect label *policeman* that is gender-specific and its politically correct, gender-inclusive substitution *police officer*. The results are brought by means of Figure 15:

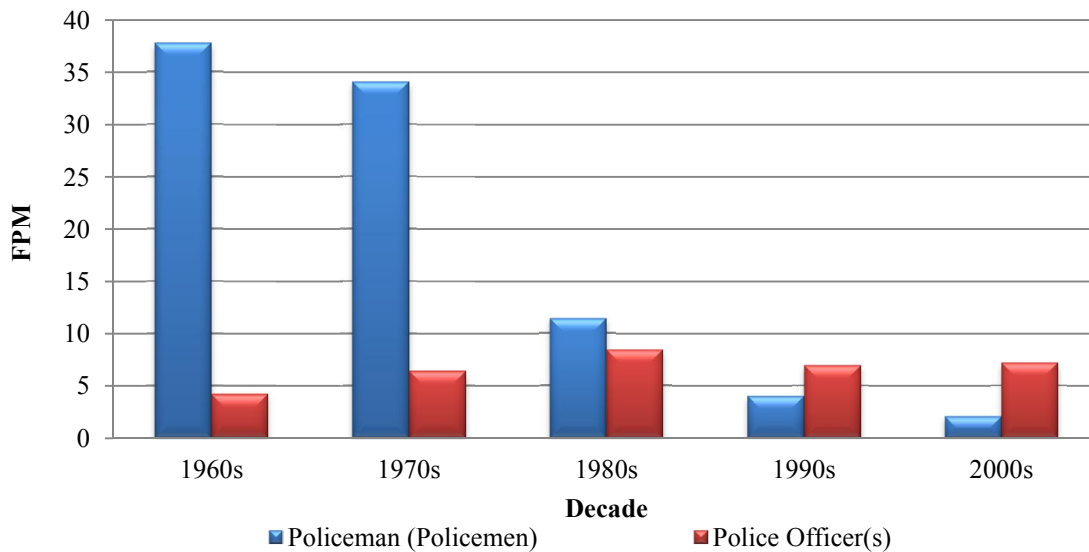


Figure 15: The frequencies of the use of *policeman* and *police officer* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The transition from the use of gender-exclusive to more gender-inclusive language is visible in Figure 15. Since the 1960s, the frequency of the politically incorrect *policeman* label has been gradually decreasing while the frequency of the gender-neutral *police officer* label has

been increasing over the years. In the 2000s, a change in the frequency of the use between those two labels is visible and suggests that the PC language guidelines for gender-specific language use might have been followed and the politically correct substitution has been accepted and used more often in the sub-corpus of print mass media. However, what is quite interesting in this graph is the fact that this pair of labels seems to follow the initial results that reveal a decrease in combined frequency (see: Figure 11). In the case of both *policeman* and *police officer* labels, the combined frequency has significantly decreased over the years – from 42 per million words in the 1960s to 9 per million words in the 2000s. At this point it became interesting which labels in this group have experienced a similar drop in frequency therefore frequencies of the remaining pairs of labels have been closely analyzed and compared in the following graphs.

The next pair of labels that have been examined in this group of labels includes the gender-specific label *fireman* and its gender-inclusive substitution *firefighter*. Frequencies of both labels have been retrieved from the sub-corpus of print mass media and compared in the Figure 16:

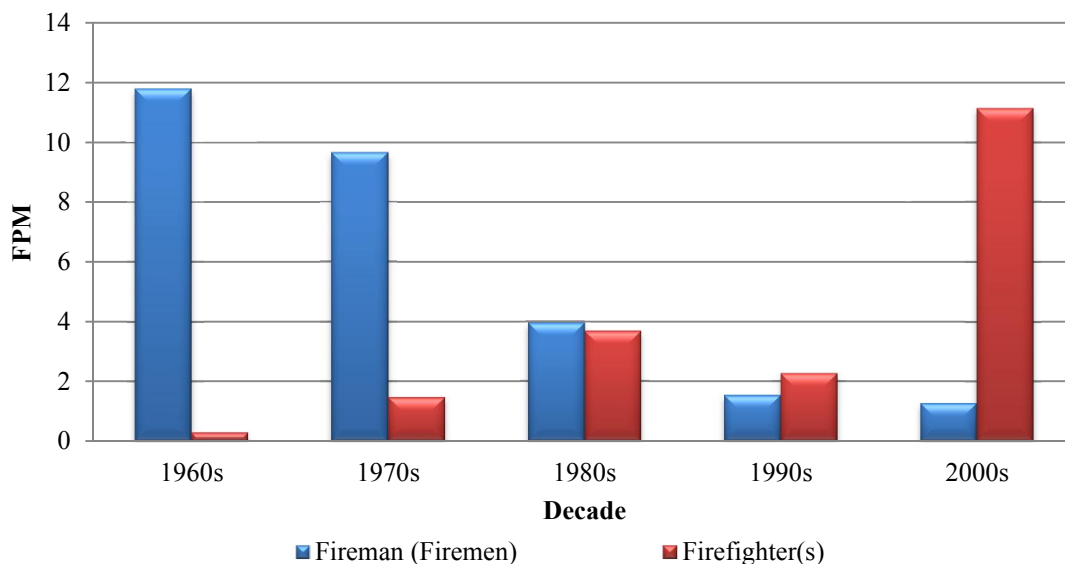


Figure 16: The frequency of the use of *fireman* and *firefighter* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As shown in Figure 16, the transition from the gender-specific to gender neutral label has also taken place after the 1980s. The frequency of the gender-specific *fireman* label has been gradually decreasing since the 1960s that is years preceding the debate on the gender-

exclusive language while the frequency of the gender-neutral *firefighter* has experienced a significant increase (especially in the 2000s). Those results suggest that the PC language guidelines may have influenced the frequency of the use of those labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media and promoted the use of a more gender-inclusive language. Additionally, it seems that *firefighter*, the “mandatory substitution” of a gender specific and therefore politically incorrect label *fireman*, has been indeed more frequently used in the sub-corpus (Rees 1991: 55).

The next pair of labels analyzed and examined includes the politically incorrect label *mankind* and its politically correct substitutions *humankind* and *humanity*. The frequency of both labels have been compared and presented by means of Figure 17:

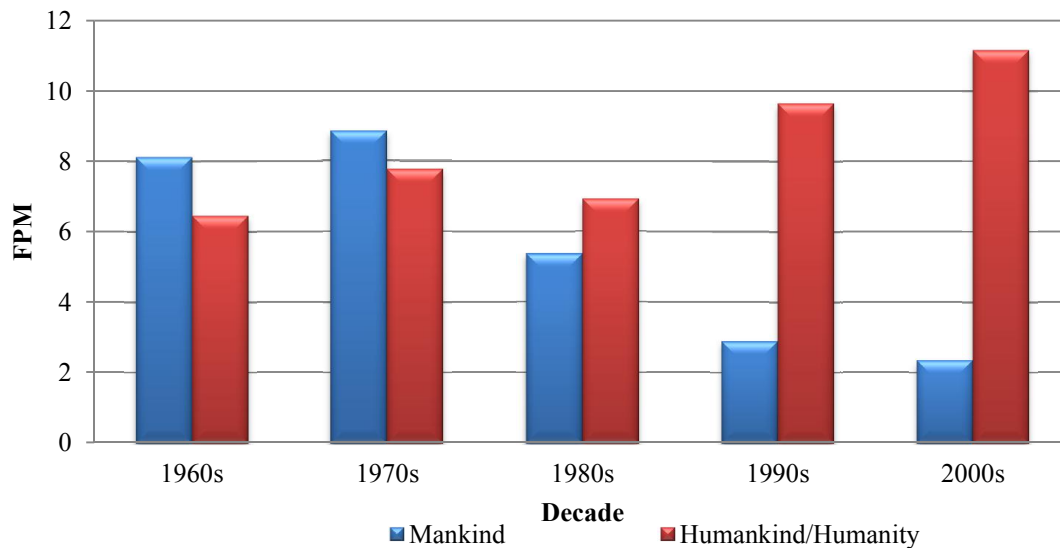


Figure 17: The frequencies of the use of *mankind* and *humankind/ humanity* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The results of the analysis of frequencies of this pair of labels presented in Figure 17 reveal that the gender-specific label *mankind* has been experiencing a gradual decrease in frequency over the years while its gender neutral substitution *humankind/humanity* has been gaining popularity in the sub-corpus of print mass media. The shift from gender-exclusive to gender-inclusive language happens, as expected, between the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, politically correct labels have been more frequently used than the gender-specific ones. This transition to more gender-inclusive language might have been motivated by the language guidelines for gender-neutral language use that in the 1970s strongly advocated using non-sexist labels.

The final pair of labels analyzed in this group includes the genders-specific and therefore politically incorrect label *manpower* and its gender-inclusive substitutions *workforce* and *human resources*. Frequencies of use of the above mentioned labels have been analyzed and compared in each decade. The results of this comparison are presented in Figure 18:

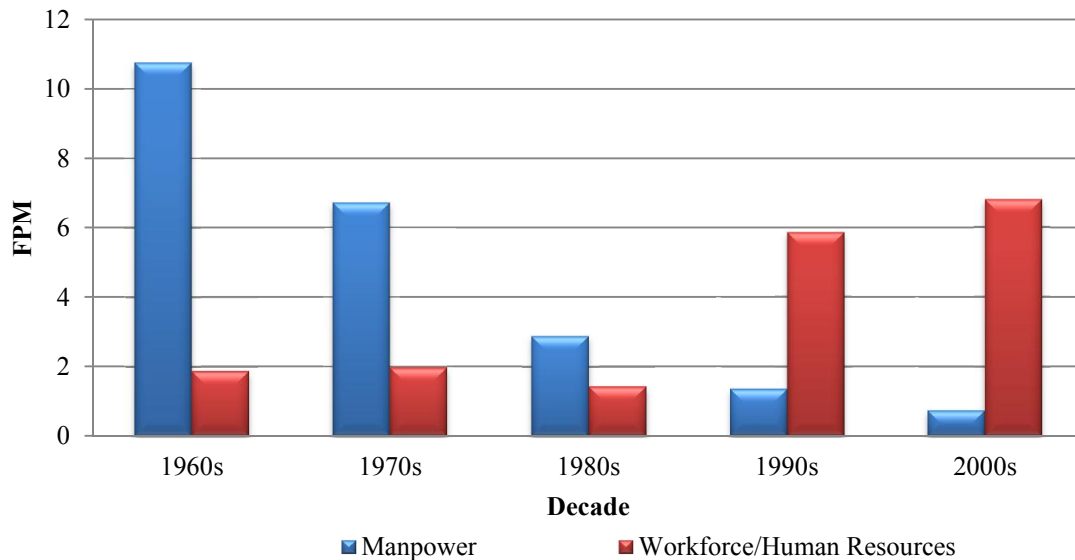


Figure 18: The frequencies of the use of *manpower* and *workforce/ human resources* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

Figure 18 suggests that the final pair of labels have also undergone a significant transition. The frequency of the *manpower* label has been gradually decreasing in the ‘Generic man’ group over the years. From the 1960 until the 1980s, the frequency of the gender-exclusive label has been decreasing. The transition from gender-specific to gender-neutral language is noticeable in the 1990s and since then gender-neutral labels *workforce* and *human resources* have been used more frequently in the sub-corpus of print mass media than *manpower*. Those results seem to reinforce the PC language guidelines that recommend avoiding gender-exclusive labels and instead advise using more gender-neutral, non-sexist labels. Therefore, it might be assumed that in this case the debate on political correctness has influenced language use in the sub-corpus of print mass media.

Summarizing the ‘Generic man’ group of labels it could be concluded that not all labels belonging to this group have undergone the transition recommended by the PC language guidelines. Frequencies of gender-specific labels *chairman* and *spokesman* seem not to be affected by the PC language recommendations and have been maintaining a high frequency

over the years. On the other hand, frequencies of the remaining labels *policeman*, *fireman*, *mankind* and *manpower* have been decreasing what suggests that gender-specific labels are less and less popular while their language-neutral substitutions have been more frequently adopted in the sub-corpus of print mass media. To conclude, the results reveal that labels in the ‘Generic man’ group have not been entirely following the PC language guidelines and some seem to maintain a high frequency in spite of them. In addition, the results of chi-squared independence test suggest that the difference in frequencies between politically incorrect and correct groups of labels is statistically significant and not independent. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that frequencies are not different has been rejected. To investigate the influence of the PC language recommendations further, the next group of labels has been created, analyzed and presented in the following section.

6. 5. Races and nationalities

This group of labels deals with bias and non-biased treatment of various races and nationalities. Racist labels are frequently used to offend, discriminate or humiliate another individual on ground of their skin color or ethnicity (Maggio 1992: 230). Insults tend to be based on differences in physical appearance (Allan & Burrige 2006: 79). Therefore, the debate on political correctness has focused on removing racially and ethnically prejudicial labels from common use because as Cameron (1995: 145) rhetorically asks “is that not precisely the point of the linguistic intervention – to challenge the kind of discourse that defines people by skin colour?”. Thus, the changes have focused on creating more inclusive language that would embrace those who have always been considered foreigners and outsiders (Hughes 2010: 116). It can be concluded that the debate on political correctness attempts to create labels that would be helpful in removing prejudicial labels from language and including the ones who tend to be considered excluded. And this is precisely what this part of the study attempts to do – to examine to what extent the debate on political correctness has influenced language use and succeeded in removing prejudicial labels from language used in print mass media.

Negro/Nigger – those labels have been widely known as one of the most offensive and racist labels used to refer to African Americans (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 966). Since the 1960s their use has been considered deeply insulting and as a result inappropriate (Maggio 1992:

199-200). Therefore, exclusion of these labels from the common use has been considered the most remarkable accomplishment of the anti-racism movement (Rees 1993: 99).

Black – this label used in reference to African-Americans has been considered rather inappropriate because it carries negative connotations of badness and evil (Maggio 1992: 51). Maggio (1992: 50) recommends using the *African American* label but at the same time notices that some people still prefer to be called *Black*.

Afro American/African American – these terms were established in the 1960s and became a preferred substitution for *Black/Blacks* in the 1980s (Ayto 2007: 160). Both terms imply that an American person is of African origin and therefore establishes “a connection with the home continent” (Beard & Cerf 1992: 4). Even though those terms became widely used and quite popular in the common use, *Black/Blacks* has still been frequently used (Maggio 1992: 32). Moreover, *Afro American* is used less frequently than *African American* and those labels are generally not hyphenated (Maggio 1992: 32).

Person of color – this phrase became popular as a substitution for *Afro American* and *African American* labels (Rees 1993: 110). However, its use is problematic because it became an inclusive terms for all nationalities and races other than white therefore it has never been widely popular (Beard & Cerf 1992: 47).

Colored – this label was coined in 1938 to refer to an American person of African descent (Ayto 2007: 89). Since the 1960s its use has been considered unacceptable and rather offensive (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 283).

Hispanic – used in reference to citizens of the United States whose mother tongue is Spanish (Maggio 1992: 131). Despite the fact that this term is politically correct it should be, when possible, replaced by more specific terms such as *Latino* or *Chicano* (Maggio 1992: 131).

Latina/Latino – this label is politically correct only when used in reference to people of Latin American origin (Maggio 1992: 160). This term is gender specific and therefore should be used appropriately (Maggio 1992: 160).

Chicana/Chicano – since the 1940s it has become a preferred label for *Mexican American* (Rees 1993: 27). However, as recommended by Maggio, this label can be only used in reference to people who prefer to be addressed this way (Maggio 1992: 65).

Mexican American – this label is listed as politically incorrect and therefore should be replaced by more specific labels such as *Chicana/Chicano* or *Latina/Latino* (Rees 1993: 27). However, since those are gender specific they should be used with caution (Rees 1993: 27).

Englishman/Englishwoman – considered politically incorrect and should be substituted by *English* (Rees 1993: 45). However, label *English* has to be carefully used since it is an exclusive term and should not be used in reference to British people (Maggio 1992: 93). Due to the fact that this label can be used gender-fairly, it was analyzed in this group and not in the ‘Generic man’ group of labels.

English – gender inclusive substitution for *Englishman* and *Englishwoman* (Rees 1993: 45).

Indian – this label describes an “original inhabitant of North America” and it carries stereotypically unfavorable connotations (Rees 1993: 120).

American Indian/Native American – since the 1970s those labels have been considered politically correct substitutions for *Indian* (Rees 1993: 120-121). However, Rees claims that *American Indian* remains less popular in common use while *Native American* has been used more frequently (Rees 1993: 121).

Jew – this label is considered offensive and politically incorrect therefore the *Jewish person* label should be used since it is not derogatory (Rees 1993: 82).

Jewish person – this label is considered a euphemism for *Jew* (Rees 1993: 82).

White person – this label is mostly used in reference to a person of European descent and similarly to *black person* it is a politically correct label however it is gradually being replaced by more specific labels such as *European* (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 1645).

Ethnic – this euphemism has been used since the 1940s to refer to people racially different (Ayto 2007: 119). Over the years, it has become a label that denotes all but white people therefore it is considered an exclusive label (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 490).

The analysis of this group of labels proved to be an intricate activity due to qualitative analysis of labels *Black*, *colored*, *English*, *Jewish* and *ethnic*. In addition, labels *Afro American/African American* and *Mexican American* have been calculated in both hyphenated and non-hyphenated form. In addition, all labels have been examined in plural and in singular form. Consequently, it has been confirmed that only accurate results that refer to race and/or nationality have been taken into consideration. To ensure that all results are comparable, raw frequencies of labels examined qualitatively have been recalculated into normalized frequency per million words (FPM). Figure 19 presents the combined frequency of labels included in the ‘Races and nationalities’ group:

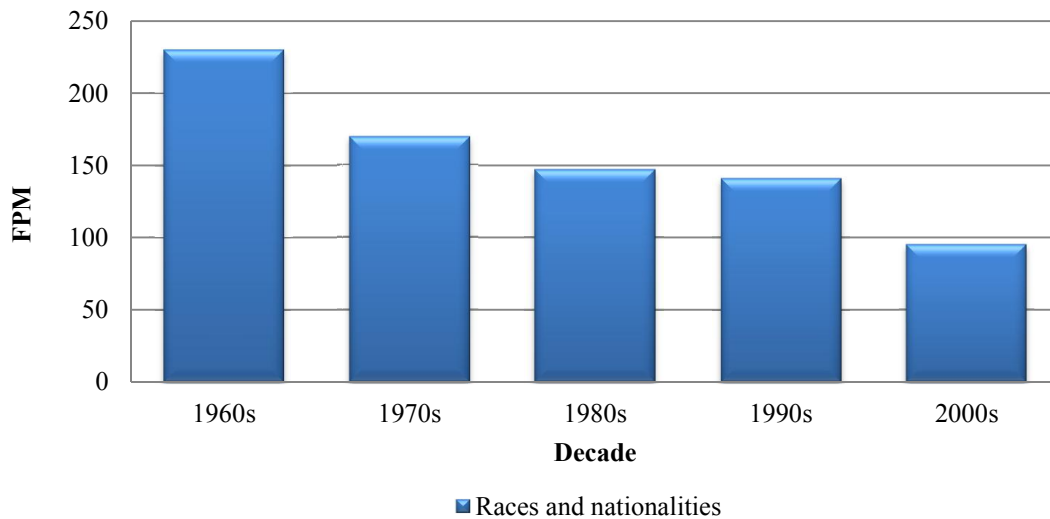


Figure 19: The combined frequency of the use of labels included in the ‘Races and nationalities’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

Similarly to results in the ‘Generic man’ group, the combined frequency of labels in the ‘Races and nationalities’ group has been gradually decreasing over the years. As visible in Figure 19, the combined frequency in the 1960s reaches 230 per million words and has been ever since decreasing. In the 2000s the frequency is lower and amounts to 95 per million words. This substantial decrease may be a result of a significant decrease of frequency of *Negro/Nigger* and *Black* labels. This decrease in frequency might have also partly happened

due to a new trend in article and news writing that recommends avoiding mentioning race or nationality unless absolutely necessary (Harrower 2013: 61).

To analyze this group of labels in more detail it has been particularly important to pay close attention to the PC language policies considering the use of certain labels in each decade. This helped establishing which labels have been considered politically correct or incorrect in a given decade. The combined frequency of all politically correct labels has been compared to politically incorrect labels in Figure 20:

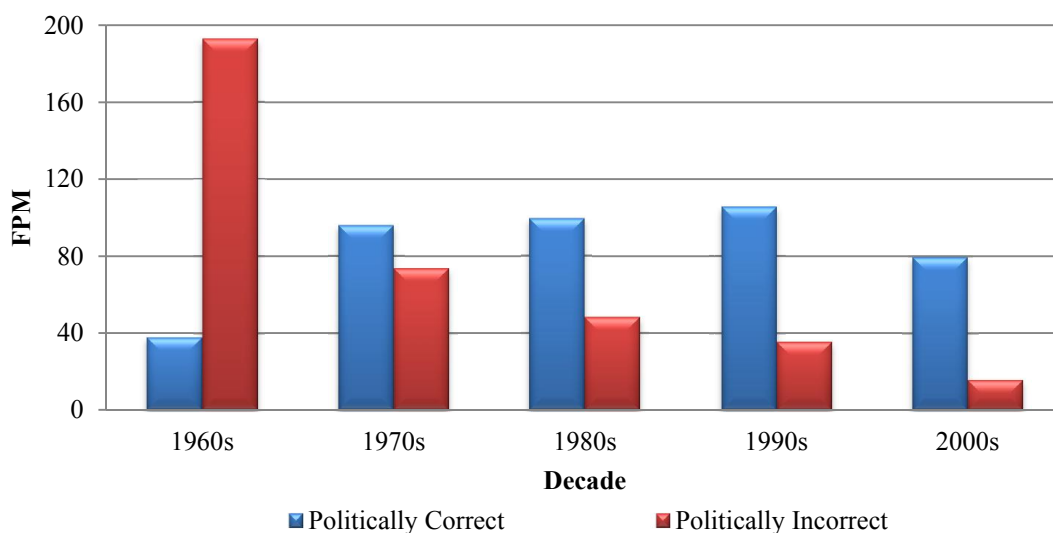


Figure 20: The frequencies of the use of politically correct as compared to incorrect labels included in the ‘Races and nationalities’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

Figure 20 clearly shows that this group of labels has undergone rapid changes over the years. In the 1960s, the frequency of politically incorrect labels reaches 192 per million words. This high frequency is a direct result of a very high frequency of *Negro/Nigger* labels that have been pronounced politically incorrect in the 1960s. Since the 1970s, the frequency of politically incorrect labels has been decreasing while politically correct labels have been used more frequently in the sub-corpus of print mass media. It seems that the 1970s brought a transition towards less offensive and more respective use of language. Additionally, in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s politically correct labels have a higher frequency than politically incorrect labels. Those results may suggest that the PC language policies might have influenced more frequent use of politically correct labels and less common use of politically incorrect ones in the sub-corpus of print mass media from the 1970s onwards.

Similarly to other groups of labels included in this study, frequencies of politically correct and incorrect groups of labels included in ‘Races and nationalities’ have been examined using a Pearson’s chi-squared independence test. The test was performed to examine if the difference in frequencies between both groups can be considered statistically significant. The test has been performed using computer software (Preacher 2001) and its results are presented in the following Table 4:

	FPM of politically correct labels	FPM of politically incorrect labels	Total
1960s	37.82	192.73	230.64
1970s	95.83	73.67	169.50
1980s	99.22	48.17	147.39
1990s	105.74	35.46	141.20
2000s	79.40	15.71	95.11
Total	418.01	365.73	783.84
		degrees of freedom (DF)	4
		chi-square	199.698
		Pearson’s <i>p</i>-value	~0

Table 4: The results of the Pearson’s chi-squared independence test of frequencies of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the ‘Races and nationalities’ group

The results of the Pearson’s chi-squared independence test presented in Table 4 reveal a high chi-square value of 199.698 that may suggest that the difference in frequencies between the politically correct and incorrect groups of labels is not independent. In other words, the frequency of one group may be related to the frequency of the other. What is more, the low *p*-value of ~0 implies that the difference in frequencies among and across groups is indeed statistically significant. Therefore, it can be assumed that it is unlikely that this difference might have happened due to chance. Additionally, the null hypothesis has been rejected and it might be concluded that there is a significant difference in frequency between both groups.

To gain a closer look at individual labels, the next stage of the analysis focuses on examining the relation between the PC language policies and frequencies of individual labels. First of all, labels *Negro/Nigger* and *Black* have been analyzed and the results are brought by means of the following graph (see: Figure 21):

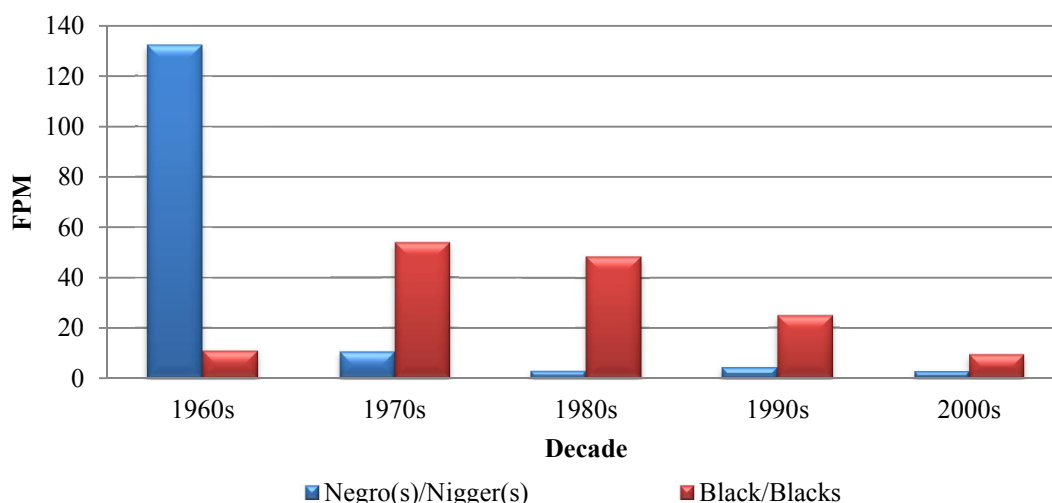


Figure 21: The frequencies of the use of *Negro/Nigger* and *Black* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

In the 1960s, the frequency of politically incorrect *Negro/Nigger* label is significantly higher than the frequency of *Black*. In the 1970s, the frequency decreases considerably and has been decreasing over the next decades to amount to 2 per million words in the 2000s. It seems that, as claimed by Rees (1993: 99), the main achievement of the PC language policies has been the exclusion of this label from the common use which is visible in the graph. The label *Black* is used rather infrequently in the 1960s but the frequency increases in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 2000s, the frequency amounts to 9 per million words only. Based on the results presented in the graph above, one can conclude that both *Negro/Nigger* and *Black* have been used less and less popularly in the sub-corpus of mass media. Therefore, it can be assumed that the PC language guidelines might have encouraged users of language to avoid those labels in public discourse.

The following graph (see: Figure 22) shows frequencies of labels that were created in an attempt to replace the politically incorrect *Black* label. It presents the comparison of the frequency of the *Black* label to its politically correct substitution *African American/Afro American*. Figure 22 reveals that while the frequency of the label *Black* has been decreasing since the 1970s, the frequency of *African American/Afro American* has been increasing since the 1980s. In the 2000s, the frequency of politically correct *African American/Afro American* reaches 28 per million words and is higher than the frequency of the *Black* label.

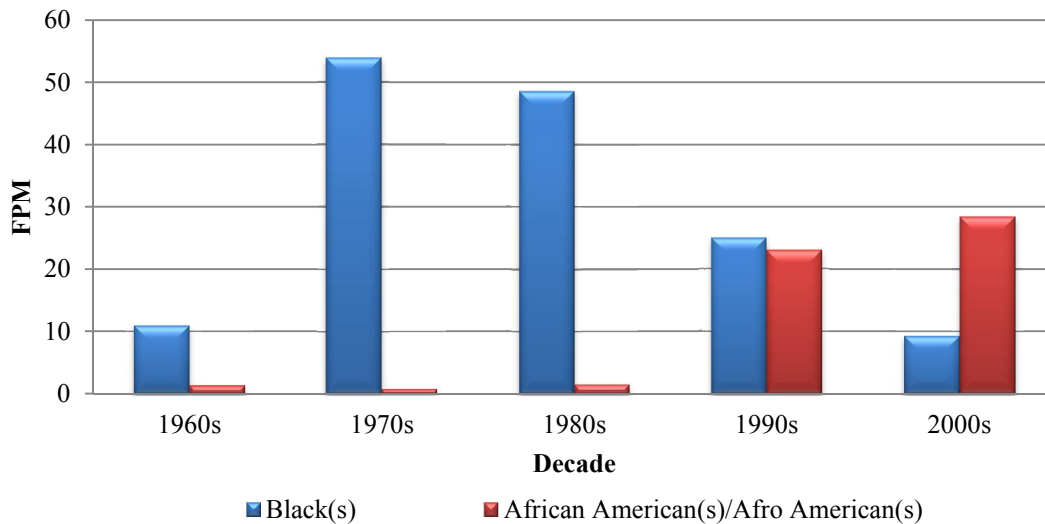


Figure 22: The frequencies of the use of *Black* and *African American/Afro American* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

On the basis of the results presented in Figure 22, it seems that the guidelines for politically correct language, that have been advocating the use of *African American/Afro American* label since the 1980s as a substitution for *Black*, have indeed succeeded in influencing the language use and managed to substitute a negative label with a neutral one (Ayto 2007: 160).

The next step of the analysis involves examining the politically incorrect label *colored* and its politically correct substitution *person of color*. The *person of color* label has been created to avoid any possibly negative connotations carried by the label *colored*. Beard and Cerf (1992: 47) claim that the *person of color* label has never managed to fulfill its role to replace labels that might have been used abusively and thus has never been widely used. This statement seemed worth investigating therefore Figure 23 presents a comparison of the frequency of the use of the politically correct label *person of color* to the frequency of the use of the politically incorrect label *colored*. The graph below (see: Figure 23) clearly shows that the frequency of the use of the label *colored* has been decreasing significantly (from 5 FPM in the 1960s to 1 FPM in the 2000s) over the years what seems to follow the PC language guidelines that consider this phrase negative. At the same time, the label *person of color* has been more popularly used in the 1990s and 2000s than the label *colored*. Nevertheless, the frequency of those labels is low and therefore the claim made by Beard and Cerf (1992: 47) cannot be reliably validated by the obtained results.

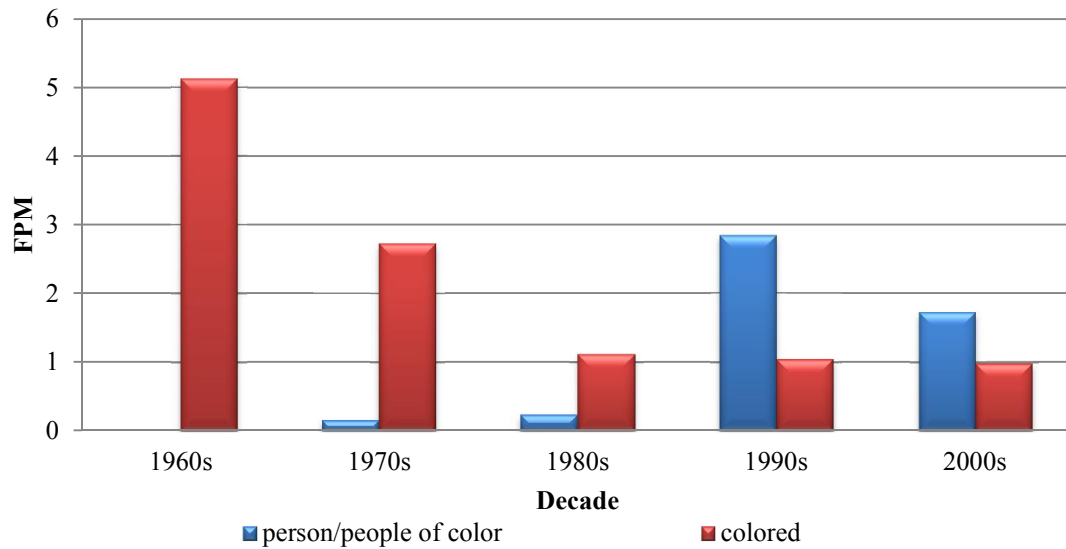


Figure 23: The frequencies of the use of *person of color* and *colored* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The next step of the analysis focused on examining labels *Mexican American*, *Hispanic* and *Latina/Latino*, *Chicana/Chicano*. Figure 24 presents a comparison of frequencies of those labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media:

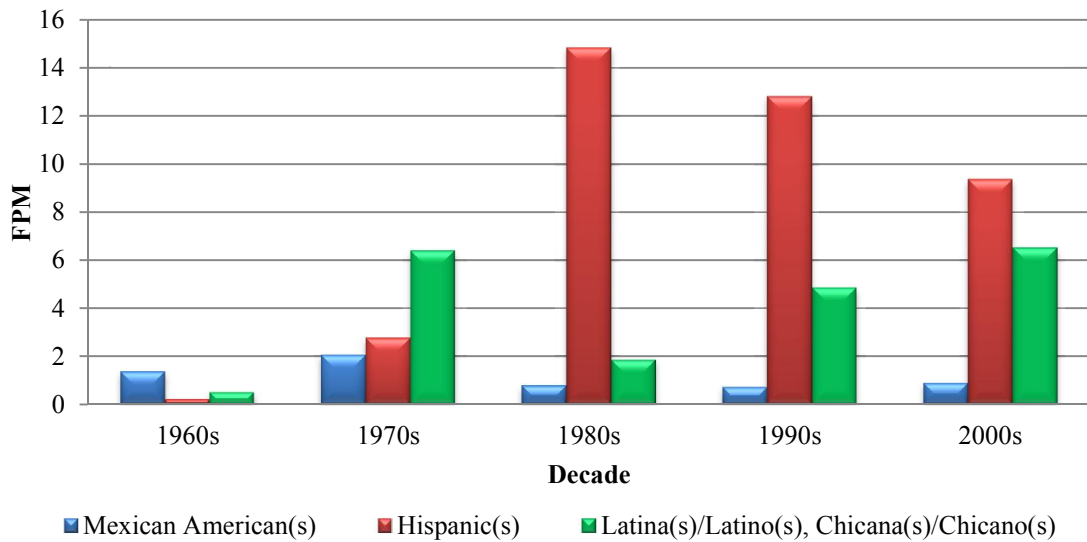


Figure 24: The frequencies of the use of *Mexican American*, *Hispanic*, *Latina/Latino* and *Chicana/Chicano* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As clearly visible in Figure 24, *Mexican American* has been rather unpopular and constitutes only around 2 per million words in each decade what seems to follow the PC language recommendations. The frequency of the use of the *Hispanic* label has been increasing and

reaches almost 15 per million words in the 1980s. Its frequency has been, nevertheless, since then gradually decreasing. The combined frequency of *Latina/Latino* and *Chicana/Chicano* has been increasing and in the 1970s reaches over 6 per million words. In the 1980s, it decreases but starts increasing again in the next decades. The frequency of those labels has been combined due to the fact that those labels are not popularly used; therefore, the frequency counts are low. Additionally, those are the only labels that are of a comparable frequency and must be used gender-fairly. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the PC language policies might have influenced language use in this case as well. The frequency of the use of the *Mexican American* label has been very low while frequencies of the remaining, politically correct labels have been increasing over the years. Nevertheless, the results do not reveal a tendency to substitute *Hispanic* label with a more exact one.

The next stage of the analysis is to analyze labels *Englishman* and *English*. *Englishman* is considered politically incorrect and since it is gender-specific it is often used gender-unfairly. Therefore, the label *English* can be considered its politically correct replacement. To properly analyze both labels search queries included ‘Englishman’, ‘Englishmen’, ‘an English’ and ‘the English’. To ensure that the *English* label has been used in reference to people only, the results have been qualitatively examined. The results of the analysis and the comparison of frequencies of both labels are presented by means of Figure 25:

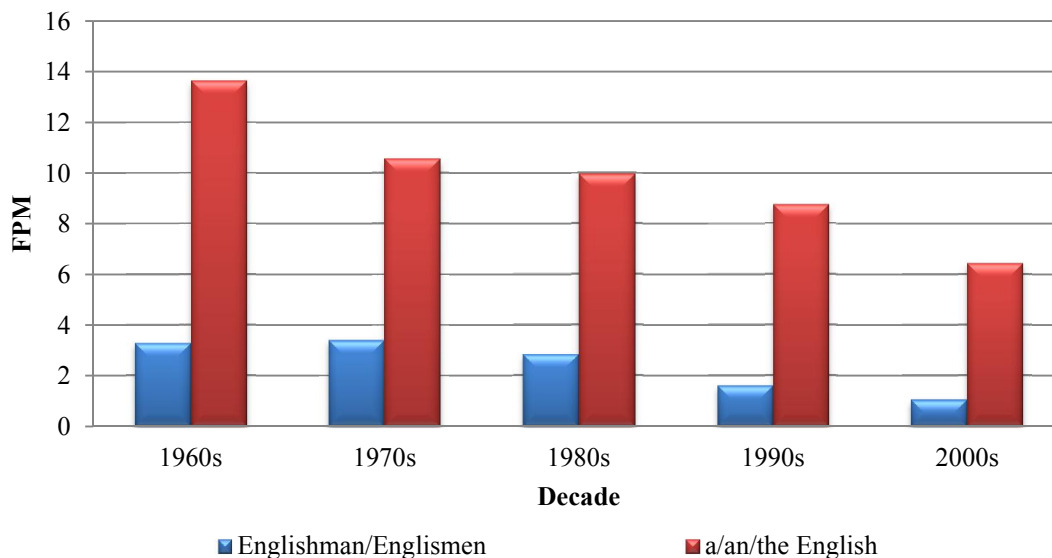


Figure 25: The frequencies of the use of *Englishman/Englishwoman* and *English* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The results presented in the graph above (see: Figure 25) reveal that the *English* label has been more popular than *Englishman/Englishwoman*. In addition, the frequency of the use of the *Englishman/Englishwoman* label has been gradually decreasing over the years and reaches only 1 per million words in the 2000s. Similarly, *English* has continued to decrease in frequency over the years; nevertheless, it remains significantly higher than that of the *Englishman/Englishwoman* label and constitutes over 6 per million words in the 2000s. On the basis of the frequency counts of those labels it can be concluded that the PC language policies might have influenced the decrease in the frequency of the use of *Englishman* and a more common use of its politically substitution *English*.

Jew and *Jewish person* are placed in focus in the next step of the analysis. The frequency of the *Jew* label considered politically incorrect has been compared to its politically correct substitution *Jewish person* and is presented in Figure 26:

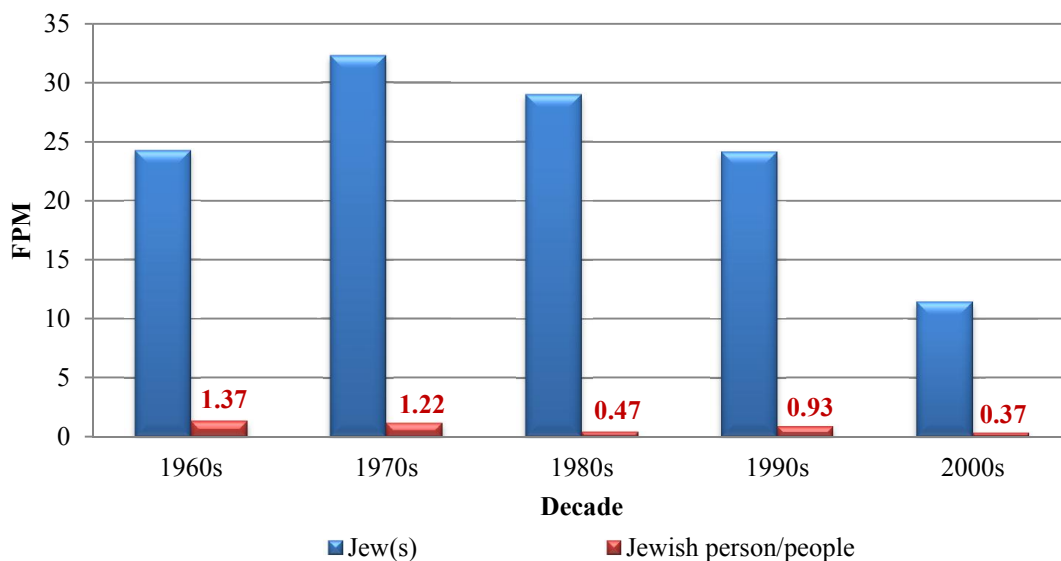


Figure 26: The frequencies of the use of *Jew* and *Jewish person* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

Figure 26 reveals that the *Jewish person* label has not been popularly used in the sub-corpus of print mass media and, additionally, its low frequency has been further decreasing over the years which seems not to follow the PC language guidelines. On the contrary, the frequency of the *Jew* label considered politically incorrect has been higher than that of its politically correct substitution *Jewish person*. It has also undergone some changes over the years. To begin with,

in the 1960s *Jew* reaches almost 25 per million words while in the 1970s the frequency further increases. Since then the frequency has been gradually decreasing to amount to slightly over 10 per million words in the 2000s. In this case it seems that the PC language recommendations have not entirely influenced language use considering replacing *Jew* label with a less derogatory *Jewish person* label. Nevertheless, it seems that the *Jew* label has been used less commonly in the sub-corpus of print mass media in the 2000s than in the 1960s. Therefore, it can be concluded that the PC language guidelines might have encouraged users of language to avoid using this offensive label.

Next, the frequency of the politically incorrect label *Native American/American Indian* has been compared to its politically correct substitution – *Indian*. Figure 27 presents the comparison of frequencies of those labels:

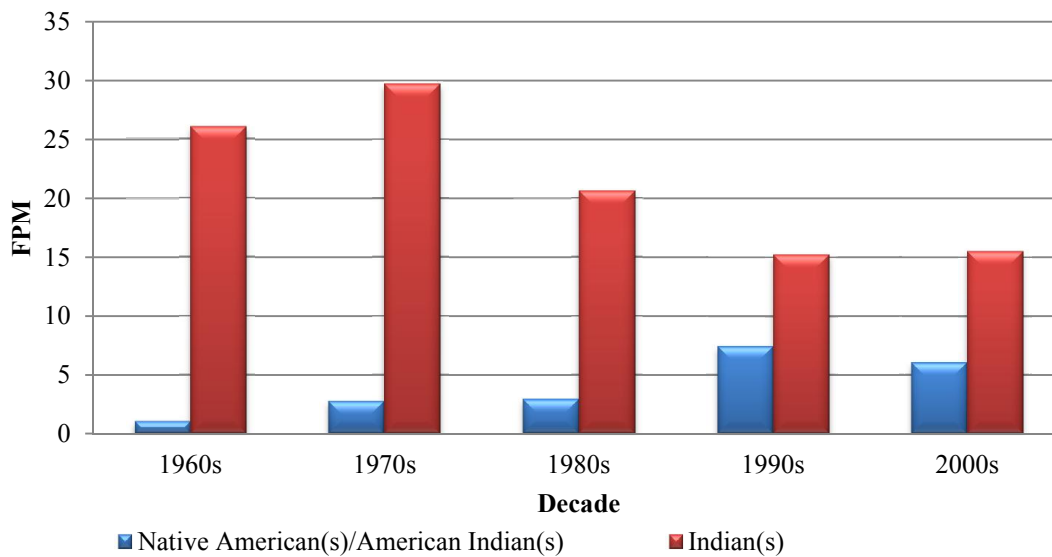


Figure 27: The frequencies of the use of *Native American/American Indian* and *Indian* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As visible in Figure 27, this pair of labels seems not to completely follow the PC language policies as well. The *Indian* label has been more popular in the sub-corpus of print mass media and has been maintaining a high frequency as compared to *Native American/American Indian* over the decades. In the 1970s it reaches its peak and constitutes almost 30 per million words. Since then, the frequency has been gradually decreasing and amounts to 15 per million words in the 2000s. The frequency of politically correct *Native American/American Indian* has been steadily increasing but reaches little over 5 per million words in the 2000s. Despite

the increase, it still remains a less frequently used label than *Native American/American Indian*. The results of the frequency analysis (see: Figure 27) suggest that this pair of labels do not follow the PC language policies that recommended replacing Indian with Native American/American Indian. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that a tendency to avoid using the politically incorrect label and to substitute it with the more inclusive and, at the same time, politically correct one starts to be visible in the sub-corpus of print mass media.

Finally, the frequency of the inclusive *white person* label was compared to the frequency of the *ethnic* label. The results of this comparison are brought by means of Figure 28:

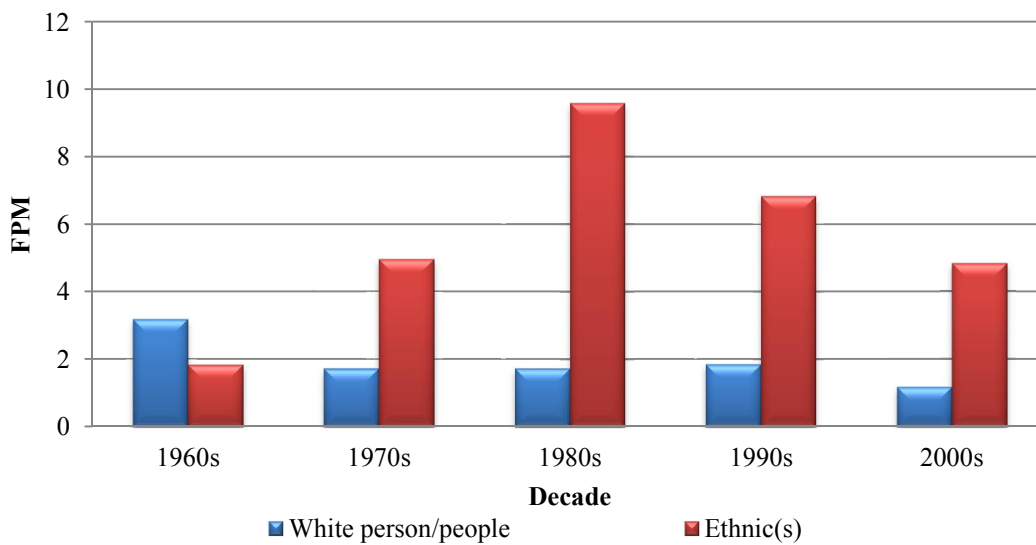


Figure 28: The frequencies of the use of *white person* and *ethnic* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As described by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 1645), the *white person* label is non-specific and therefore it is often recommended to use more specific labels instead of the vague ones. As presented in Figure 28, the frequency of the *white person* label has been low over the years what may suggest that this label has been replaced by more specific ones. Interestingly, the frequency of the *ethnic* label has been increasing since the 1960s. The *ethnic* label is exclusive of white people but at the same time inclusive of all races and ethnicities other than white. Despite the fact that the use of this label might seem not specific enough, its frequency has been increasing from the 1960s until the 1980s. In the 1990s it experiences a sudden drop to further decrease in the 2000s. In the

2000s, it amounts to almost 5 per million words and despite the decrease; it still remains a more frequently used label than the *white person*.

Summarizing this group of labels it seems that the PC language policies might have influenced language use in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Politically incorrect labels such as *Negro/Nigger* and *Black* have been used less frequently in the sub-corpus and have been replaced by less derogatory and more specific labels such as *African American* and *Afro American*. Interestingly, labels considered offensive and politically incorrect such as *Kaffir*, *Polack*, *Jap* or *Nip* are non-existent in the sub-corpus of print mass media. That might prove that there is indeed a co-relation between language policies concerning the use of politically correct language and the actual frequency of the use of labels. Moreover, the results of the chi-squared independence test suggest that the difference in frequencies between politically correct and incorrect groups of labels included in the 'Races and nationalities' group is statistically significant and not independent. Those results reject the null hypothesis that assumes that there is no difference in frequencies what may suggest that the debate on political correctness might have had an influence on language used in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Nevertheless, based on the more detailed results presented in this section, it seems that the PC language policies have not managed to completely remove politically incorrect labels from the written discourse of print mass media.

6.6. Homosexuality

The final group of labels is concerned with the topic of homosexuality. As mentioned by Hughes (2010: 180), the debate on political correctness of labels denoting homosexuality or homosexual people was started in the 1970s by the Gay Liberation Movement. The main objective of this movement was to popularize non-homophobic labels and non-homophobic language (Hughes 2010: 180). Many labels included in this group follow the "insider/outsider" rule which, as described by Maggio (1991: 11), states that while some labels are used among insiders, they cannot be used by the outsiders in reference to this group of people/individuals. Interestingly, Allan and Burrige (2006: 81) claim that in spite of the fact that social attitudes towards homosexuality are changing to the more positive ones, it is still quite popular to use the following labels in a negative and offensive way. This group of labels includes six labels that have been closely analyzed. As the starting point, the PC

policies on the use of particular labels have been examined and summarized in the following list:

Faggot – this label is an abusive and offensive term that denotes a male, homosexual person (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 510). The term is politically incorrect and carries strong, negative connotations (Hughes 2010: 189, Rees 1993: 52). Especially, while used by heterosexual people, this term is particularly insulting and improper (Maggio 1991: 99). Additionally, even though the homosexual community has been trying to reclaim this label and therefore remove its negative connotations, it still remains a negative and offensive label (Hughes 2010: 189).

Queer – this label is a derogatory, insulting and since the 1960s it has been considered unacceptable when used in reference to a homosexual person (Ayto 2007: 74). In addition to negative connotations of homosexuality it carries also “criminal associations” (Hughes 2010: 186). However, homosexual people have been using this term themselves in an attempt to remove negative connotations that this label may carry (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 1177). The attempts to reclaim this label have been rather ineffective and the label still is considered offensive (Allan & BurrIDGE 2006: 156). Nonetheless, this label still remains a taboo word while used by straight people (Maggio 1991: 230).

Gay – this label has been engineered in the 1970s order to have “a positive and sexually innocent” label that would replace negative labels *queer* and *faggot* (Hughes 2010: 186, Rees 1993: 61). From the very beginning it was used as “an in-group label signifying a social or political identity” (Cameron 1995: 146). In the 1980s, this term became one of few widely accepted labels that can be used by non-gay people to refer to a homosexual person (Ayto 2007: 94). Interestingly, this label is frequently used in reference to homosexual men, less often to homosexual women (Soanes & Stevenson 2006: 590).

Dyke – as claimed by Maggio (1991: 90), this label should not be used by non-gay people in reference to a homosexual female because it may carry negative connotations.

Lesbian – this label has been particularly popular since the 1970s when the Women’s Liberation Movement promoted a gender-fair label that would be independent of *gay* and

include all homosexual women (Maggio 1991: 162). Therefore this term has been generally accepted and considered politically correct (Rees 1993: 61).

Homosexual – this label is a gender-inclusive clinical label invented by sexologists (Cameron 1995: 146). It was designed to be an inclusive term which is not very popular among homosexuals due to the fact that “it is seen as clinical, sexually objectifying, and limiting” (Maggio 1991: 135). On the other hand, Hughes (2010: 186) claims that this label is the most neutral ones and carries no negative connotations therefore it is considered politically correct.

The analysis of this group of labels included examining frequency of the above mentioned labels in singular and plural forms. Frequencies of the use all labels have been normalized into frequency per million words (FPM) and have been calculated into the combined frequency in each decade. Figure 29 presents the combined frequency of all labels included in the ‘Homosexuality’ group in each decade in the sub-corpus of print mass media:

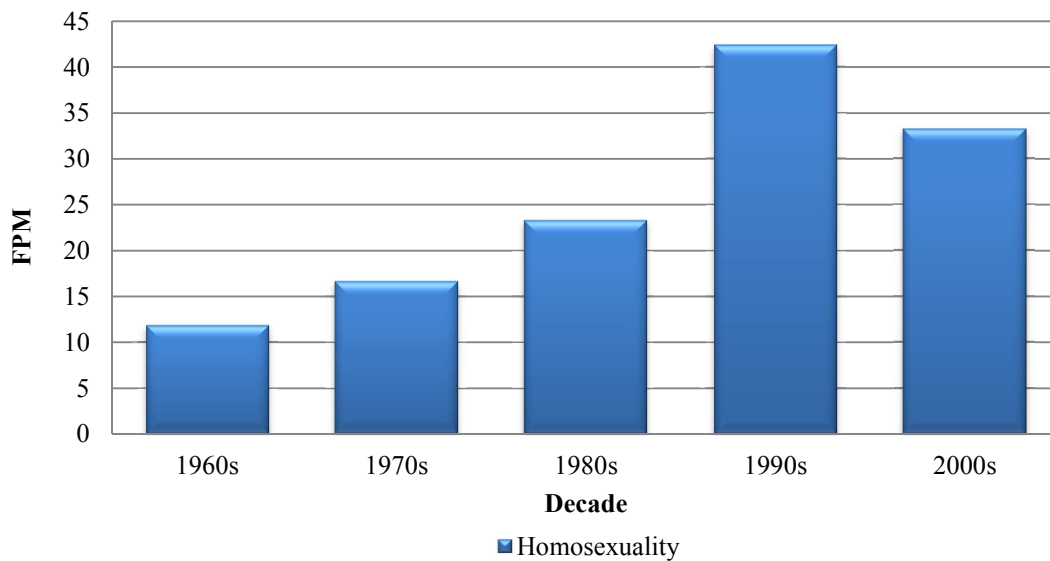


Figure 29: The combined frequency of the use of labels included in the ‘Homosexuality’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As clearly visible in Figure 29, the combined frequency of labels included in the ‘Homosexuality’ group has been gradually increasing from the 1960s until the 1980s. This gradual increase might be connected with the fact that in the 1970s the gays and lesbians’ movement took part in the public debate on politically correct language and started to advocate for equal treatment for homosexual people and the use of a less offensive and in

consequence more respectful language (Allan & Burrige 2006: 155-156). The most significant increase in the frequency is noticeable in the 1990s and can be considered a direct result of the increased use of labels *gay* and *lesbian*. In the 2000s, the frequency of labels in this group has slightly decreased and amounts to 33 per million words.

Examining the combined frequency of politically incorrect and correct labels in each decade has comprised the next step of the analysis. To properly calculate the results of the analysis it has been of crucial importance to closely examine the PC language policies in each decade to determine which labels have been considered either politically correct or incorrect in each decade. Figure 30 presents the results of this part of the analysis:

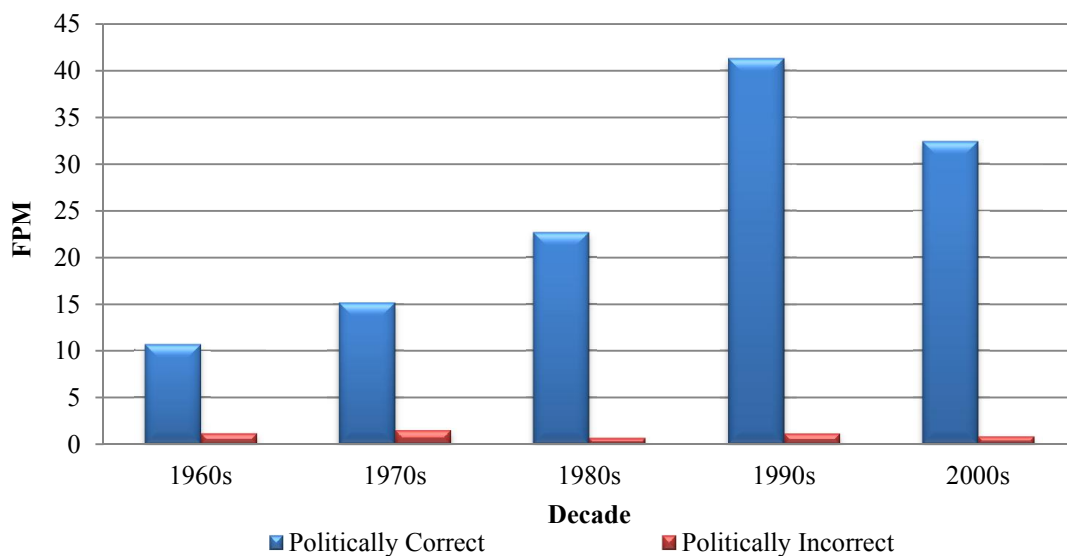


Figure 30: The frequencies of the use of politically correct as compared to incorrect labels included in the ‘Homosexuality’ group in the sub-corpus of print mass media

The close examination of frequencies of politically correct and incorrect labels in each decade revealed that the vast majority of labels used in each decade are considered politically correct. As clearly shown in Figure 30, from the 1960s until the 2000s, the frequency of the politically correct labels in has been decreasing and has been, on average, 26 times higher than the frequency of the politically incorrect labels. The frequency of the politically incorrect labels has been maintaining a very low level over the years and has constituted around 1 per million words in each decade. It seems that the PC language policies might have had the greatest influence on labels in this group as compared to other groups of labels. Therefore, it can be assumed that the debate on non-homophobic language use that took place in the 1970s has

resulted not only in the increase of the frequency of use of politically correct labels but also in the increased frequency of labels belonging to this group.

The frequency of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the ‘Homosexuality’ group has been tested using Pearson’s and Yates’ chi-squared independence tests. Yates’ test has been applied due to low frequencies of politically incorrect labels and therefore to increase the reliability of the results. Both tests have been performed using computer software (Preacher 2001) and the results are presented in the following table (see: Table 5):

	FPM of politically correct labels	FPM of politically incorrect labels	Total
1960s	10.65	1.15	11.82
1970s	15.17	1.50	16.67
1980s	22.64	0.65	23.29
1990s	41.28	1.15	42.43
2000s	32.39	0.83	33.22
Total	122.15	5.28	127.43
degrees of freedom (DF)			4
Pearson’s chi-square			2.475
Pearson’s <i>p</i>-value			0.649
Yates’ chi-square			0.245
Yates’ <i>p</i>-value			0.993

Table 5: The results of the Pearson’s and Yates’ chi-squared independence tests of frequencies of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the ‘Homosexuality’ group

Table 5 shows the results of both Pearson’s and Yates’ independence tests that reveal chi-square values of 2.475 and 0.245 respectively. Those values suggest that the difference in frequencies between politically correct and incorrect groups of labels is independent. In other words, it can be assumed that the frequencies of both groups are most likely not related to one another. What is more, both Pearson’s and Yates’ *p*-values of 0.649 and 0.993, that significantly exceed the 0.05 critical point, imply that the differences in frequencies among and across groups are not statistically significant and it is likely that this difference might have happened due to chance. As a result, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and we can

assume that frequencies of those groups are similar and may not reveal any influence of the debate on political correctness on the language in the sub-corpus of print mass media.

The next stage of the analysis has involved analyzing individual labels. Firstly, frequencies of the politically incorrect label *faggot* that carries strong negative connotations and the frequency of its politically correct substitution *gay* in the sub-corpus of print mass media have been compared. Both labels can be used only in reference to a male therefore can be considered gender-specific labels. The results of the comparison of their frequencies are presented in Figure 31:

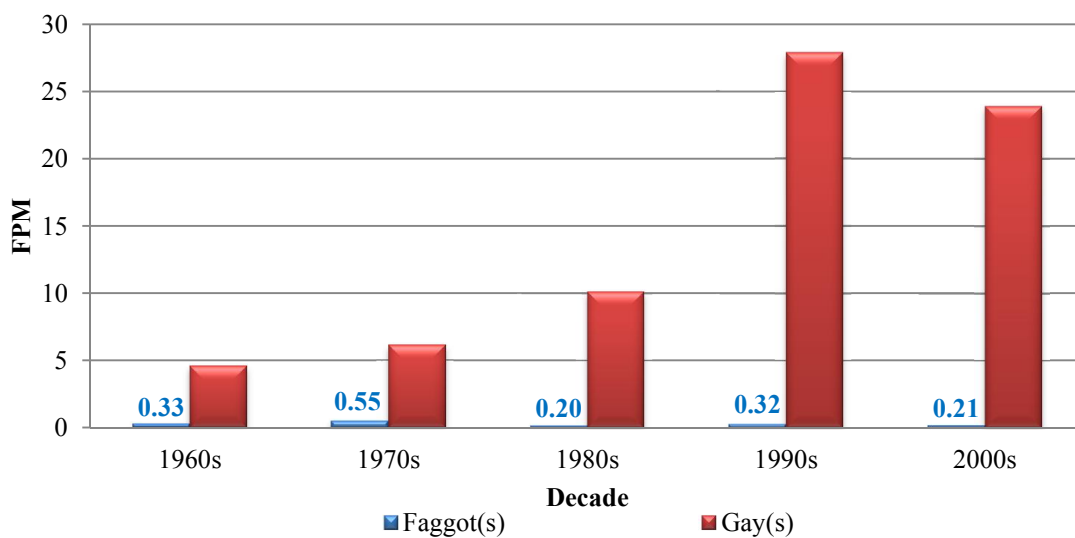


Figure 31: The frequencies of the use of *faggot* and *gay* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As visible in Figure 31, the frequency of the politically incorrect label *faggot* has been very low in the sub-corpus of print mass media over the decades. On the other hand, the frequency of *gay* considered acceptable reaches almost 5 per million words in the 1960s and has been gradually increasing until the 1990s. In the 1990s, the frequency increases significantly and reaches 27 per million words to slightly decrease in the 2000s. The increase is particularly visible in the years following the debate on the PC language policies concerning the use of non-homophobic language. It might suggest that the debate on political correctness and PC language might have influence the high frequency of the use of politically correct label *gay* while the politically incorrect label *faggot* has been generally avoided.

The next pair of labels that have been analyzed are *dyke* and *lesbian*. Both labels are used in reference to females only and while *lesbian* is considered politically correct *dyke* is an improper label that should be avoided. Frequencies of both labels have been compared and are presented in Figure 32:

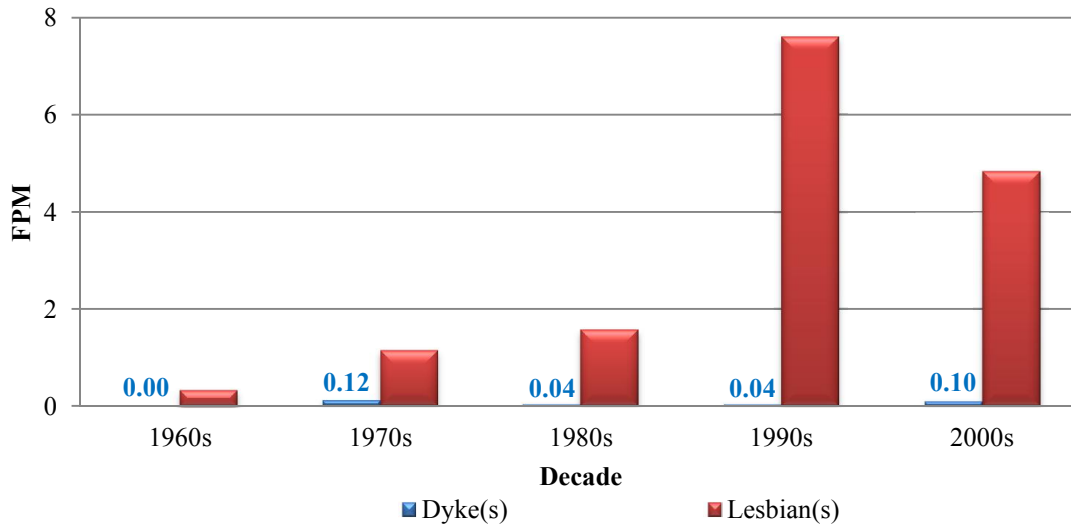


Figure 32: The frequencies of the use of *dyke* and *lesbian* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As expected, results presented in Figure 32 resemble the previous graph and reveal that the frequency of the politically incorrect label *dyke* is very low. The frequency of the politically correct label *lesbian* has been increasing until the 1990s and reaches almost 8 per million words. In the 2000s, the frequency slightly decreases but remains higher than the frequency of *dyke*. Once again, the PC language policies might have influenced the frequency of the use of the politically correct label while the politically incorrect, abusive term has been avoided in the sub-corpus of print mass media in the last decades. Interestingly, while Figure 32 reveals a similar tendency as the previous one (see: Figure 31), the frequency of the politically correct label *lesbian* is much lower than the frequency of *gay* over the years.

The final step of the study of labels belonging to this group involved a frequency analysis of the remaining two labels, namely, the politically incorrect label *queer* and its politically correct substitution *homosexual*. The graph below (see: Figure 33) reveals the most unexpected results in this section, mainly, that the frequency of the politically correct label *homosexual* has decreased significantly over the last decades:

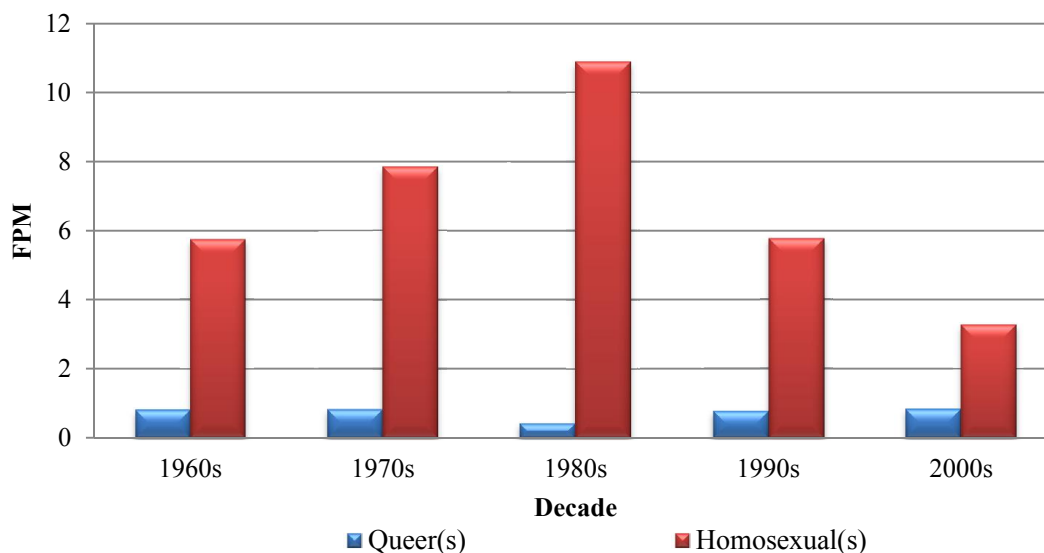


Figure 33: The frequencies of the use of *queer* and *homosexual* labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media

Interestingly, as visible in Figure 33, the decrease happens in the years following the debate on the PC language policies that consider the label politically correct. However, the decrease seems to mirror the unfavorable attitude towards this term, as mentioned by Maggio (1991: 135) who considers this label diminishing. At the same time, it may partly explain the increase in the frequency of the use of *gay* and *lesbian* labels in the 1990s. The frequency of the politically incorrect label *queer* has been maintaining a low but stable level of around 1 per million words. Therefore, it once again can be assumed that the use of both labels has been following the PC language policies that recommend using non-homophobic language.

To conclude this section, it seems that politically incorrect labels belonging to the ‘Homosexuality’ group have generally been avoided in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Offensive labels such as *homo*, *lassie* or *poof* are inexistent in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Additionally, labels that are politically correct have been more frequently used over the last decades than the politically incorrect ones therefore it can be assumed that this group of labels might have adopted and followed the PC language policies. Nevertheless, both significance tests have revealed that the difference in frequencies between politically incorrect and politically correct group of labels may not be statistically significant and are likely to have happened due to chance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of the tests have failed to reject the null hypothesis therefore it remains unresolved in this group of labels.

7. Conclusion

Having finished the analysis, we can conclude that the groups of labels that were chosen for the study are diverse and are concerned with various topics. Therefore, the results are also very varied within as well as among the groups. The starting point of the conclusion is the comparison of frequencies of labels belonging to each group in the sub-corpus of print mass media. Figure 34 presents the combined frequencies per million words (FPM) of labels included in each group:

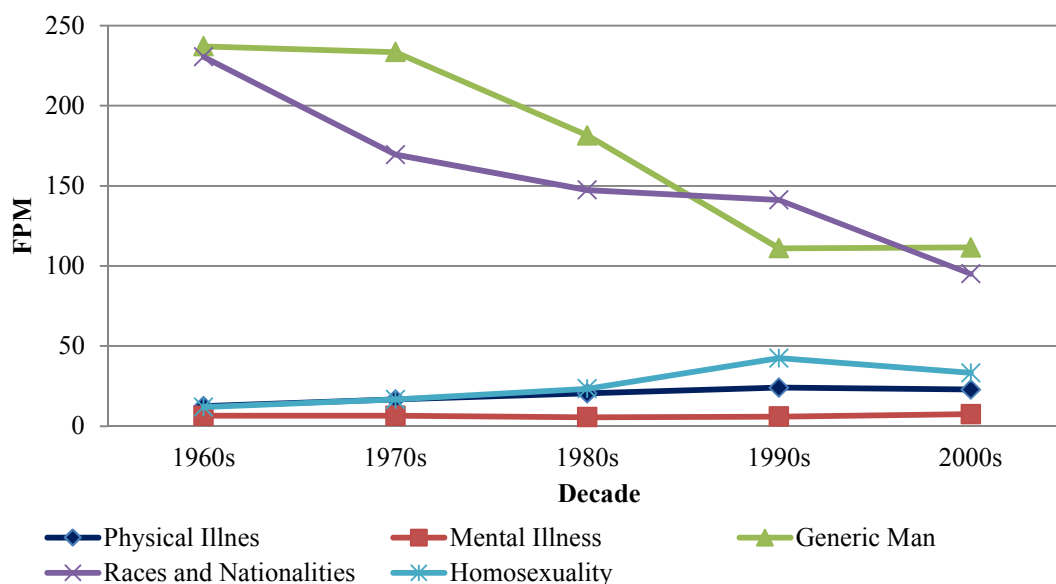


Figure 34: The combined frequencies of the use of labels in the ‘Physical illness’, ‘Mental illness’, ‘Generic man’, ‘Races and nationalities’ and ‘Homosexuality’ groups in the sub-corpus of print mass media

As visible in Figure 34, frequencies of use of labels belonging to ‘Generic man’ and ‘Races and nationalities’ groups are significantly higher than of the remaining ones. At the same time, it seems those are the ones that have undergone significant changes over the decades. What is also quite interesting is that frequencies of both of these groups have been decreasing and reached a comparable level in the 2000s. The ‘Mental Illness’ group has the lowest and simultaneously the most stable frequency over the decades. Finally, the frequencies of labels included in ‘Physical illness’ and ‘Homosexuality’ groups are similar but as compared to ‘Generic man’ and ‘Races and nationalities’ groups seem of a rather low frequency in the sub-corpus of print mass media. One of the reasons for this tendency might be the fact that mental, physical illness and homosexuality are still taboo topics that tend to be less frequently

discussed in the public discourse (Allan & Burridge 2006: 81-216). On the other hand, generic man and races and nationalities are topics that, first of all, are not considered taboo and secondly concern every person as opposed to physical and mental illness and homosexuality.

Another level on which the results of the study can be compared and summarized is the frequency of all politically correct and incorrect labels in each decade. This step involved calculating the combined frequency of all politically correct labels and comparing it to the combined frequency of all politically incorrect labels in each decade. This comparison allows answering the first and the second research question that this study set out, namely, whether the debate on political correctness facilitated the use of politically correct labels and in what way the debate influenced the use of politically incorrect labels in the sub-corpus of print mass media. The results are brought by means of Figure 35:

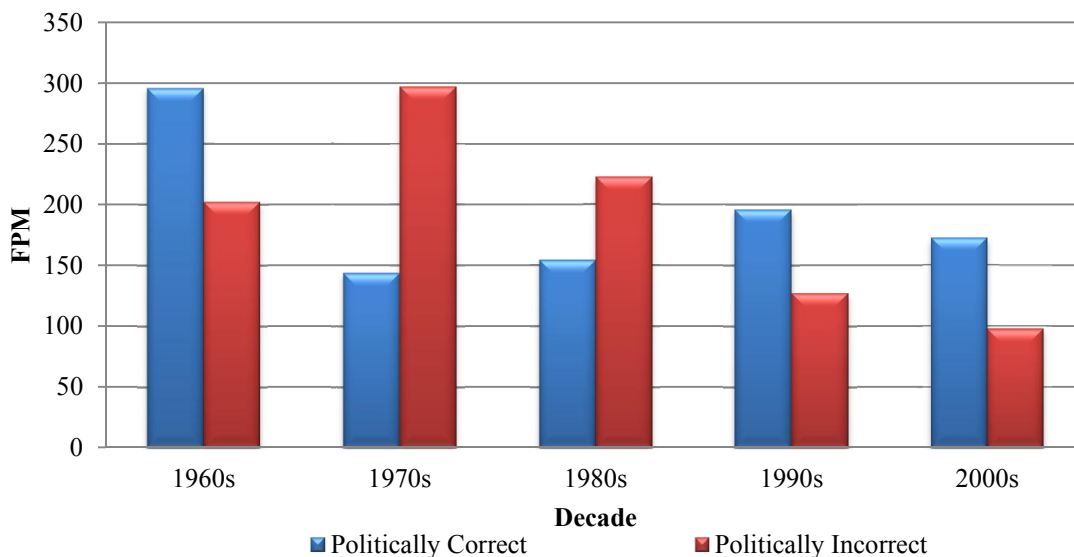


Figure 35: The combined frequencies of the use of politically correct as compared to incorrect labels included in this study

Figure 35 combines frequencies of all politically correct and incorrect labels included in all five groups that have been taken into account in this study. In the 1960s, when the debate on political correctness started, the combined frequency of politically correct labels is slightly higher than of politically incorrect labels and amounts to 295 per million words. In the 1970s, partly due to the change of the PC language policies concerning the use of sexist language, the tendency changes and the combined frequency of all PC labels increases and reaches 297 per

million words. This shows that politically incorrect labels are used more frequently than their politically correct substitutions. In the 1980s, this tendency has been maintained but at the same time the combined frequency of the politically incorrect labels slightly decreases while the frequency of politically correct labels increases. In the 1990s, the situation changes significantly and the PC labels are more frequently used than politically incorrect ones in the sub-corpus of print mass media. In the 2000s, the situation is similar and the combined frequency of politically correct labels amounts to 172 per million words while the combined frequency of politically incorrect labels is much lower (97 per million words).

To ensure that the difference in frequencies between the groups of politically incorrect and politically correct labels are significant and independent, Pearson's chi-squared test was conducted. The test has been performed using computer software (Preacher 2001) and generated the following results (see: Table 6):

	FPM of politically correct labels	FPM of politically incorrect labels	Total
1960s	295.84	202.39	498.22
1970s	143.93	297.05	440.98
1980s	154.43	222.77	377.20
1990s	196.34	127.63	323.97
2000s	172.41	97.69	270.10
Total	962.95	947.53	1910.48
degrees of freedom (DF)			4
chi-square			118.203
Pearson's <i>p</i>-value			~0

Table 6: The results of the Pearson's chi-squared independence test of the combined frequencies of all politically correct and incorrect labels included in the study

As visible in Table 6, the chi-square value of 118.203 suggests that the difference in the combined frequencies between the politically correct and incorrect groups of labels is not independent which means that frequencies in both groups might be related. In addition the low *p*-value of ~0 suggests that the difference in frequencies between the groups is statistically significant and it is unlikely that it has happened due to chance. Therefore, based

on the results of the independence test the null hypothesis stating that the results are not significantly different and thus are unlikely to be influenced by the debate has been rejected.

To summarize, it seems that the debate on political correctness and language policies did manage to precipitate the use of politically correct labels. Additionally, the difference in frequencies between both politically correct and incorrect groups of labels can be considered statistically significant. Therefore, based on the results of the combined frequency analysis, the hypothesis claiming that the debate was successful in enforcing the use of politically correct labels can be, therefore, validated. Answering the second research question involves looking at frequencies of politically incorrect labels. Since the 1970s the combined frequency of politically incorrect labels has been gradually decreasing nevertheless it still amounts to 97 per million words in the 2000s which suggests that the debate on political correctness was only partially successful and proved not to be as powerful as expected. Therefore, once again the hypothesis stating that the politically incorrect labels were not completely eliminated can be validated on the basis of the results of the study. Therefore, it can be assumed that the debate on political correctness has partially influenced the decrease in frequency of use of politically incorrect labels. Nevertheless, this influence has proved to be less strong and less visible in the sub-corpus of print mass media than expected.

To conclude, due to the fact that the frequency as well as the distribution of labels in various groups is very diverse, the consistency and representativeness of the results of the study has increased. To ensure that the results of the study are reliable, the examination of all labels in each group was conducted partly manually to confirm that only appropriate instances of the use of the above mentioned labels were taken into account. The results of the study show that various groups have been differently influenced by the PC language policies. In some groups it seems that the PC language policies have been followed and as a result the majority of labels used in the recent years are considered politically correct as in the case of labels included in the 'Homosexuality' and 'Races and nationalities' groups. The remaining groups of labels, namely the, 'Generic man', 'Physical illness' and 'Mental illness' seem to be less strongly influenced by the PC language policies and the majority of labels used in the recent years in those groups have been considered politically incorrect. Maggio (1993: 3) claims that "language goes hand-in-hand with social change – both shaping it and reflecting it" therefore

it might be assumed that results of this study mirror the changes that happen in the language. However, changes in language may be caused by diverse social movements, in this case it might be assumed that the debate on political correctness of various terms, phrases and labels seems could be the most influential.

Coming to the final research question, assessing how successful the debate on political correctness has been in shaping new linguistic norms proved to be quite difficult. Various groups represent various extents of influence and therefore the success of the phenomenon is difficult to assess. Therefore, the answer to the final research rejects the initial hypothesis that assumed that the debate on political correctness has been very successful in discouraging the use of politically incorrect labels (Allan & Burridge 2006: 90). Based on this study, the influence of the phenomenon of political correctness can be assessed only in relation to the influence on the use of particular labels. The results of the study on influence are not homogenous therefore it has not proved to be successful in eliminating all prejudicial language. Nevertheless, the results of the study in some group of labels prove that political correctness might have had an influence on the decreasing frequency of politically incorrect labels. To conclude, the results of the study suggest that political correctness does not prove as successful on the actual use of language as expected; however, it does have certain amount of power in shaping public discourse that cannot be overlooked or ignored (Allan & Burridge 2006, Cameron 1995, Hughes 2010).

8. Limitations

This study comes with a set of limitations that might have influenced reliability and representativeness of the research. Those limitations include the source of data, the unit of analysis and research methods and will be discussed in this section.

The main limitations that this study was faced with are weaknesses that are associated with a corpus-based study. Firstly, conducting the study in the Corpus of Historical American English caused the outcomes and conclusions of the research to be only applicable to that particular corpus. The results cannot be generalized and assumed to be true for other corpora (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 96). Moreover, even though corpus is considered one of the most representative sources of data, it does not represent all language varieties and therefore the representativeness of the study might also be limited (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 96). In other words, despite the high level of representativeness, corpus is not representative of all language varieties or, in case of this study, every genre and level of formality that might be crucial in making the study complete and in drawing accurate generalizations.

Another limitation is connected with the choice of the sub-corpus of print mass media. The generalizations made on the basis of the results from this section did not allow making more general claims considering the influence of the phenomenon of political correctness on the public discourse as a whole. Additionally, the sub-corpus of print mass media might have, on one hand, best mirrored the impact that political correctness has on public discourse; on the other hand, it limited it only to written language and does not reveal what was the impact on spoken public discourse.

Corpus is able to provide researchers with data that comes without a closer description therefore making assumptions based on the results of a corpus-based study has its limitations (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 96). Drawing conclusions is a responsibility of a researcher and might be performed with a different extent of accuracy (McEnery, Xiao & Tono 2006: 96). In the case of this study, relating data obtained from the corpus to the PC language guidelines was crucial while making conclusions. Nevertheless, the assumptions made on the basis of the analysis may not be as straightforward as presented in this research because, as claimed by McEnery and Wilson (2001: 77),

[i]t is difficult to assess the degree to which change is the direct consequence of recommendations made by linguistic authorities and style guides because change comes from people's personal decisions to alter their language.

The use of quantitative methods of research in a corpus-based study may also raise some concerns. As claimed by McEnery and Wilson (2001: 77), quantitative methods of research are less detailed, descriptive and might also be less accurate. To improve the accuracy of the results, qualitative analysis was additionally conducted in case of some labels to ensure that only instances applicable to the research were taken into account. What is more, the analysis of single labels has been performed to improve the accuracy of calculations as well as conclusions. Therefore, the issue of limitations of quantitative methods of research became less concerning.

The final limitation is connected with the choice of labels that were included in the process of analysis. The selection of labels as well as groups of labels for the analysis was based on guidelines that outline what is considered acceptable and unacceptable in language (Maggio 1991, Schwartz 1995, The Equal Opportunity Unit 2005). On one hand, it might be assumed that sources of labels taken into consideration in this research are highly reliable and represent the five main categories to which those PC language guidelines refer. Nevertheless, the choice of those groups and particular labels might have had an impact on the results obtained in this research. Some groups of labels have revealed a rather low frequency therefore this study was also faced data scarcity in the case of 'Physical illness', 'Mental illness' and 'Homosexuality' groups of labels. To overcome this problem more groups of labels were included in the study what also to might have increased its representativeness. However, due to limited scope of this research not all labels that have become an object of the debate on political correctness were could be examined in this study.

The limitations mentioned in this section might have influenced the accuracy and representativeness of the results of this thesis to a different extent. To reduce the impact of those limitations on the reliability of the thesis, qualitative examination of the results as well as careful analysis of data in relation to the PC language guidelines was performed.

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10. Appendix

10.1. Table of politically correct and incorrect labels included in the study

The table includes labels considered politically correct and incorrect in each group and decade.

Decade	Physical illness	
	Labels considered politically correct	Labels considered politically incorrect
1960s	• Disabled • The disabled • Handicapped • Physically challenged • Differently abled • Victim of • People with	• Cripple • Afflicted by/with • Suffer from
1970s	• Disabled • The disabled • Handicapped • Physically challenged • Differently abled • Victim of • People with	• Cripple • Afflicted by/with • Suffer from
1980s	• Handicapped • Physically challenged • Differently abled • People with	• Cripple • Disabled • The disabled • Victim of • Afflicted by/with • Suffer from
1990s	• Disabled • Physically challenged • Differently abled • People with	• Cripple • The disabled • Handicapped • Victim of • Afflicted by/with • Suffer from

2000s	• Disabled • Physically challenged • Differently abled • People with	• Cripple • The disabled • Handicapped • Victim of • Afflicted by/with • Suffer from
Decade	Mental illness	
	Labels considered politically correct	Labels considered politically incorrect
1960s	• Retarded • With special needs • Mentally handicapped/disabled • Learning disabilities/difficulties • People with	• Moron • Idiot • Cretin • Imbecile
1970s	• With special needs • Mentally handicapped/disabled • Learning disabilities/difficulties • People with	• Moron • Idiot • Cretin • Imbecile • Retarded
1980s	• With special needs • Mentally handicapped/disabled • Learning disabilities/difficulties • People with	• Moron • Idiot • Cretin • Imbecile • Retarded
1990s	• With special needs • Mentally handicapped/disabled • Learning disabilities/difficulties • People with	• Moron • Idiot • Cretin • Imbecile • Retarded
2000s	• Learning disabilities/difficulties • People with	• Moron • Idiot • Cretin • Imbecile • Retarded • With special needs • Mentally handicapped/disabled

Decade	Generic man	
	Labels considered politically correct	Labels considered politically incorrect
1960s	• Chairman • Chairperson • Chair • Spokesman • Spokesperson • Policeman • Police officer • Fireman • Firefighter • Mankind • Humanity/Humankind • Manpower • Workforce/Human resources	
1970s	• Chairperson • Chair • Spokesperson • Police officer • Firefighter • Humanity/Humankind • Workforce/Human resources	• Chairman • Spokesman • Policeman • Fireman • Mankind • Manpower
1980s	• Chairperson • Chair • Spokesperson • Police officer • Firefighter • Humanity/Humankind • Workforce/Human resources	• Chairman • Spokesman • Policeman • Fireman • Mankind • Manpower
1990s	• Chairperson • Chair • Spokesperson • Police officer • Firefighter • Humanity/Humankind • Workforce/Human resources	• Chairman • Spokesman • Policeman • Fireman • Mankind • Manpower
2000s	• Chairperson • Chair • Spokesperson • Police officer • Firefighter • Humanity/Humankind	• Chairman • Spokesman • Policeman • Fireman • Mankind • Manpower

	• Workforce/Human resources	
Decade	Races and nationalities	
	Labels considered politically correct	Labels considered politically incorrect
1960s	• Afro American/African American • Person of color • Hispanic • Latina/Latino • Chicana/Chicano • English • Jewish person • Indian • American Indian/Native American • White person	• Negro/Nigger • Black • Colored • Mexican American • Englishman/Englishwoman • Jew • Ethnic
1970s	• Afro American/African American • Person of color • Hispanic • Latina/Latino • Chicana/Chicano • English • Jewish person • Indian • American Indian/Native American • White person	• Negro/Nigger • Black • Colored • Mexican American • Englishman/Englishwoman • Jew • Ethnic
1980s	• Afro American/African American • Person of color • Hispanic • Latina/Latino • Chicana/Chicano • English • Jewish person • Indian • American Indian/Native American • White person	• Negro/Nigger • Black • Colored • Mexican American • Englishman/Englishwoman • Jew • Ethnic
1990s	• Afro American/African American • Person of color	• Negro/Nigger • Black • Colored

	• Hispanic • Latina/Latino • Chicana/Chicano • English • Jewish person • Indian • American Indian/Native American • White person	• Mexican American • Englishman/Englishwoman • Jew • Ethnic
2000s	• Afro American/African American • Person of color • Hispanic • Latina/Latino • Chicana/Chicano • English • Jewish person • Indian • American Indian/Native American • White person	• Negro/Nigger • Black • Colored • Mexican American • Englishman/Englishwoman • Jew • Ethnic
Decade	Homosexuality	
	Labels considered politically correct	Labels considered politically incorrect
1960s	• Gay • Lesbian • Homosexual	• Faggot • Queer • Dyke
1970s	• Gay • Lesbian • Homosexual	• Faggot • Queer • Dyke
1980s	• Gay • Lesbian • Homosexual	• Faggot • Queer • Dyke
1990s	• Gay • Lesbian • Homosexual	• Faggot • Queer • Dyke
2000s	• Gay • Lesbian • Homosexual	• Faggot • Queer • Dyke

10.2. German Abstract (Zusammenfassung)

Die Debatte über „Political Correctness“ – also die politische Korrektheit – verursachte in den vergangenen Jahren einige Kontroversen in der Wissenschaft. Obwohl es in den Sozialwissenschaften häufig thematisiert und auch erforscht wurde, hatte es in den Sprachwissenschaften bisher eine eher untergeordnete Rolle und wurde daher nur vereinzelt als Thema einer wissenschaftlichen Forschungsarbeit behandelt. Für den Begriff der politischen Korrektheit gibt es eine Vielzahl an Definitionen welche sich über die Jahre immer wieder veränderte. Sehr häufig wird die politische Korrektheit als sozio-linguistisches Phänomen bezeichnet, welches als Ziel hat zu einer gesellschaftlich akzeptierten Art der Formulierung zu finden. Dies wird durch eine Umgestaltung der Ausdrucksweise der gewohnten Sprache erreicht.

Diese Masterthesis analysiert dabei den Einfluss der politischen Korrektheit auf die Schreibweise der Sprache im Zeitraum zwischen 1960 und 2009. In diesem Zeitraum wurde der Begriff am häufigsten diskutiert und trug deshalb auch maßgeblich dazu bei, dass es zu einer Abwandlung der gewohnten Schreibweise kam, und das Thema mehr Berücksichtigung im Alltag erfuhr. Politische Korrektheit wird deshalb des Öfteren auch als eine Art der Zensurierung der Sprache verstanden. Die Masterthesis versuchte hierbei Antworten auf die folgenden drei Forschungsfragen zu geben: Wurde die Verwendung von politisch korrekten Worten durch die Debatte über diese beschleunigt? Wie wurde die Verwendung von politisch inkorrekten Worten durch die Debatte über diese beeinflusst? Und: Wie erfolgreich war das Phänomen der politischen Korrektheit auf die Abänderung von politisch inkorrekten Worten auf als neutral definierte Begriffe? Zur Erarbeitung der Forschungsfragen dieser Masterthesis wurde die quantitative Inhaltsanalyse gewählt. Dabei wurde aus dem gesamten Korpus des historisch amerikanischen Englisch die Sub Kategorie der gedruckten Massenmedien für die Datenanalyse ausgesucht und in weiterer Folge im Detail analysiert. Zur Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen wurde die Häufigkeit der Verwendung von ausgewählten politisch korrekten und inkorrekten Worten im Sub Korpus ausgewertet. Diese wurden in die folgenden Kategorien zugeordnet: Körperliche Krankheit, Geistige Krankheit, Generisches Maskulinum, Ethnische Gruppen und Nationalitäten sowie Homosexualität. Die Kombination der Ergebnisse aus der quantitativen Forschung und der Analyse der vorhandenen Grundlagen zur

Verwendung von politisch korrekten Worten aus dem amerikanischen Englisch, welche als Richtlinien definiert wurden, zeigte, dass die politische Korrektheit einen Einfluss auf einige Ausdrücke unsere Wortwahl hat.

Diese Masterthesis könnte als Basis und Datenmaterial für zukünftige Thesen dienen, da die Forschung zu diesem Thema noch nicht sehr weit fortgeschritten ist und weitere Datenanalysen notwendig sind. Als nächster Schritt wäre deshalb eine weitere Forschung zu diesem Thema angebracht, welche sich abseits der Daten aus den gedruckten Massenmedien mit einem erweiterten oder anderen Sub Korpus beschäftigt und als Vergleich zu diesen Erkenntnissen hinzuzieht um weitere Rückschlüsse ziehen zu können.

10.3. Curriculum Vitae

Persönliche Daten

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Schulausbildung

10-2003 – 06-2006: Gymnasium (Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej in Polen): Abschluss Matura

Studienverlauf

10-2006 – 06-2009: Bakkalaureat, Universität Warschau: Englische Philologie

- Integrierte Sprachkenntnisse
- Sprachwissenschaften
- Englische und Amerikanische Literatur
- Geschichte und Kulturkunde Großbritanniens
- Geschichte und Kulturkunde der USA

10-2006 – 06-2009: Diplomstudium, Lehrerbildungsinstitut der Universität Warschau: Englische Sprachdidaktik

- Unterrichtsmethodik der englischen Sprache
- Pädagogik
- Pädagogisches Praktikum

Titel der Diplomarbeit:

- “Integrating reading with other language skills at an intermediate level”

seit 10-2011: Masterstudium, Universität Wien: English Language and Linguistics

- Language, Literature and Culture
- Advanced Academic Language Skills

- Research Foundations

Titel der Masterarbeit:

- “The debate on political correctness and its influence on language use in print mass media: A corpus-based study”

Unterbrechung der Studienzeiten

10-2009 – 03-2011	Englischtrainerin in der Erwachsenenbildung (Sprachakademie für Erwachsene)
09-2010 – 03-2011	Teilnahme am “European Human Capital Programme“ als Englischlehrerin

Weitere Qualifikationen

Fremdsprachenkenntnisse:

- Polnisch (Muttersprache)
- Englisch (fließend)
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Zusätzliche Sprachkurse:

- 03-2011 – 09-2011 Intensivdeutschkurse, Innovationszentrum (B2/2 Zertifikat)
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