

REVIEW PAPER

THE USE OF POLITICALLY CORRECT SPEECH IN MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the authors analyze the use of politically correct speech in media. The media and society are interconnected and conditioning each other. In this theoretical environment, McLuhan states that the medium is the message while implying speech as a core medium in a symbolic process of shaping reality into a culture. Throughout history, especially after Gutenberg's printing press machine, media shaped cultural change from "biographies of the famous" to "personal biographies". Such a social shift required politically correct speech as a form of self-control in public communication, and awareness that the language can harm, and offend others, especially races, genders, and ethnic groups. Even though politically incorrect speech overlaps with hate speech to some extent, it is not legally sanctioned like hate speech. Politically incorrect speakers are just considered rude. Language codes in American universities in the 1980s began shaping a culture of political correctness that slowly accumulated the power of social pressure and intolerance for politically incorrect speech. Political correctness is interconnected with cultural imperialism and multiculturalism. It raises awareness that the dominant culture in the media promotes its values as universal and neutral, being exclusive and oppressive towards different cultures. While explaining and comparing the media context of establishing politically correct speech as a cultural norm this paper provides examples of incorrect speech in media and its misuse to be recognized and understood in its opposites. The critique of politically correct speech is that it affects the quality of education, social interaction, and freedom of speech.

Keywords: Media, Politically correct speech, Hate speech, Cultural imperialism, Multiculturalism, Freedom of speech



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INTRODUCTION

Beginning with the assumption that the media is not neutral, that our speech is not neutral, that cultural imperialism is a phenomenon that we are not aware of and that freedom of speech is the foundation of democracy, authors start a journey of researching and understanding the use of politically correct speech in the media and the creation of a culture of political correctness in society. On this journey, a broad choice of literature in different fields tickled the author's research interests. In the media analysis, the main direction set McLuhan's (1964) statement that it is impossible to understand social and cultural changes without knowledge of how media works. Therefore, it was reached for the analysis of researchers such as Potter (2021), Perry (1993), Williams (2003), McQuail (1987), Baran and Davis (2012), and many others who in their works describe dynamic relationship between media and society which creates a platform of continuous change and mutually induced development. The medium as the message in McLuhan's (1964) analysis carries within itself awareness of another medium and leads authors to the core, speech as the fundamental medium that mediates between individual and society creating culture as a symbolic process in which reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed. Jara-Figuera et.al. 's (2019) research results introduce a tool for understanding how the media shaped cultural change from "biographies of the famous" after Gutenberg invented the printing press, via audiovisual media to "personal biographies" in digital media and social network personal profiles.

Politically correct speech is an interesting topic to many researchers, such as Mishchenko and Baranova (2023), Al Rawi (2017), Hampton-Garland (2024), Zinaida (2019), Huges (2010), and many others, though in this work the most important is Kurelić's (2017) analysis in which politically correct speech is certain self-control in public communication distinctly leaned on awareness of the person who uses the language that the spoken sentences and words can cause harm, and offend others primarily in the relationship between races, genders, and ethnic groups. Inducing language codes in American universities started creating a culture of political correctness that changed English vocabulary. Since politically incorrect speech is not legally sanctioned as hate speech is, a culture of political correctness can provide a needed form of social pressure that does not tolerate politically incorrect speech. To understand the bond between cultural

imperialism, multiculturalism, and politically correct speech important analysis is given by Westfall (2019), Witt (2021), and Kurelić (2017) among many others. Cultural imperialism refers to the dominant and strong culture in the media promoting their values as universal and neutral. Any exception from that is labeled as deviant, therefore the dominant culture in America acts oppressive towards cultures that are different. In the shift from the "melting pot" to the "salad bowl", the American concept of multiculturalism creates a culture of different identities which are then politicized.

Criticism of politically correct speech by Hamburger (2017), Hartman (2011), and Kurelić (2017) represents complaints about the quality of education and freedom of speech.

MEDIA IN THE FUNCTION OF SOCIETY AND VICE VERSA

Between the individuals and the society media becomes the mediator and catalysts of development. This same development returns to the media, enabling the development of the media themselves at the same time. The specific mediating role of media recognized by McLuhan (1964), is presented as the phrase "Medium is the Message" at first as a chapter in his book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, but later on he kept using it as the title of a book he published in 1967. Describing his standing points McLuhan (1964) pointed out that the communication medium itself is more important than the information. He also extends the argument for understanding the medium as the message itself, explaining that the content of any medium is always another medium leading us to the conclusion that speech is the content of writing, writing is the content of print, and print itself is the content of the telegraph and so on. Leaning on the mentioned standing points, Paul and Rai (2023) describe the mediating role of media that brought the world into one single unit, so media refers to traditional mass communication systems and content generators as well as other technologies for mediated human speech. McLuhan's (1964) statement that it becomes impossible to understand social and cultural changes without knowledge of how media works influenced the work of future researchers such as Potter (2021), Perry (1993), Williams (2003), McQuail (1987), Baran and Davis (2012), and many others who described in their works how media can influence the public while presenting ideas and ideologies to achieve general social goals and therefore social and cultural change. This is why

the audience and public sometimes consider media as a biased medium focused on presenting via mass communication what their government or companies expect. The high class controls those companies' expectations, whether private or public. Therefore, they decide what will be portrayed in the media. McQuail (1987) states that even when the government does not directly control media it can be supported by it and, consequently biased. This has been a debate of many authors so to Williams (2003) it is pointed to the effects of the media, the way the world is represented, the factors that are shaping media messages, and the specific nature of the audiences consuming these messages. On the other hand, Williams (2003) implies the broader impact of the media on society through the role of the mass media in the process of democracy and globalization. Additionally, McQuail (1987) understood the influence of media as indirect, because the messages transferred by media create specific "media logic".

Taking this into consideration we can state two basic opinions. The first and the most obvious one is that the audience is being controlled by the media and the content presented to the audience affects the audience's behavior. Mass society theory describes this phenomenon as Williams (2003) notes more like speculation about human nature rather than empirical observation based on research. However, it has encouraged a view of the effects of the media on people's lives and behavior as straightforward and unambiguous. This perspective is labeled as the 'hypodermic needle' or 'magic bullet' model, and assumes a direct correlation between what people see, hear, and read and how they behave. The other opinion is that we, as humans, go for the individual approach. We are individually responsible for the influence the media has over our lives and our behavior when we come into contact with said influence. Potter (2021) agrees that humans, consciously as highly intellectual beings blessed with the knowledge gained in our lives, can dissect and disseminate information given to us by mass media and take from it what we consider to be important, and of value to us and our lives and disregard the rest creating a new form of media culture and media literacy, necessary for new (social) media subjects. In this context, McFadden (2010) sees media as an opportunity for entertaining and providing an outlet for the imagination, educating, and informing the public, managing to serve as a public forum for the discussion of important issues, and acting as a watchdog for government, business, and other institutions.

DYNAMIC INTERACTION OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY OR TRANSFORMING THE MESSAGE

The relationship between media and society is a dynamic process in which changes and adjustments occur continuously, where each side is sensitive and reacts to changes in the other.

Accordingly, the media is a part of human society aligned with the level of social development. The role that shamans played, or cave drawings had in primitive societies essentially coincided with the oral and individual tradition of transmitting symbolized social experience or just information spelled out in myths, legends, or verses of prehistoric epics. The idea of media's contribution in inducing society's development and as an indicator of the level of society's development is later seen through the study of rhetoric, ancient theater, and even later the memorization and transmission of messages from holy books to shape public opinion and society as a whole through their institutional interpretation.

The invention of Johannes Gutenberg's printing press transformed media's interpretation of social reality forever. McFadden (2010) understands that it created a social and technological predisposition that made the mass production of print media possible. It was cheaper to produce and easier for texts to reach a wide audience. Pery (1993) explains that this historical moment of accessibility to printed materials made information, knowledge, and art, especially literature and religious books, more available to every literate person. Literacy, as the ability to write and read thoughts and words, becomes a tool to understand the world we live in, to shape it rationally sowing the seeds for the development of science and continuous reinterpretation of society. So, we can freely say that literacy was meant to be the literacy of the media, trying to make information available to understand and interpret it individually. Institutions (at that time religious) lost the exclusivity of being in the middle, between the holy book and the illiterate population. Individuals (literate) got the opportunity to participate in reinterpretation seen as Martin Luther's reformation which according to Pery's (1993) statements shaped Western civilization in a completely new way, creating the foundation for individual freedom and human rights, leading us later on to the specific and correct way of speech in media itself. Printed media such as newspapers, pamphlets, etc. played a great historical role and

later became immensely popular but then declined due to the rise of other media forms such as radio and television. The popularity peak of big news in the 1980s, according to Potter (2021), corresponded with the decline in newspapers.

Following McLuhan's hypothesis that medium is the message, Bosch (2015) noted that every new medium in its turn altered the perceptions and actions of the audience, but also social meanings. The same concept is formulated, understood, and interpreted differently since it appears in different media (in a pamphlet, on television, etc.). One of the important changes that Bryant and Oliver (2009) were writing about was more inclusiveness towards racial differences that was easily seen on TV shows as representing more non-white actors and news hosts on TV screens. A similar situation was in the case of representing other minority cultures. The representation of patriarchal families in the 1980s on TV shifted towards more roles of working wives and divorced parents as Gauntlett (2002) noted. Even though it was not enough and, differences were presented more often passively (as their role in society was expected at that time), they were introduced to the endeavor of creating a completely new communicational culture which McQuel (1987) according to Carey (1975) explains as a symbolic process in which reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed. The rise of critical cultural theory in the 1980s has been extended to consider issues of gender and subculture as McQuel (1987) notes. This further development and improvement in the field of mass communications was experienced as accepting the dignity of being different in the minds of the masses. The impact of technology as McQuel (1987) understands it, points to differences in cultural experience, in times before the invention of audiovisual media. The cultural experience before audio-visual media was mediated through personal contact, religious ceremonies, public performances, or printed texts. On the other hand, mediated cultural experience through audio-visual media is accessible to all in many forms that may alter its meaning and significance.

With the appearance of television as a medium, we have encountered the technological advancements necessary for creating a personal computer that would soon give us information at our fingertips and invite us to join the public sphere. At this point, not just media professionals are sharing their work, but the public as an audience and part of the public sphere began to share their experiences and views on the topic. New media cul-

ture started to shape the globalized world. McQuel (1987) in this newly shaping environment understands globalization as a steady increase in the internationalization of cultural production and distribution often referred to as 'Americanization'. So many questions appear about the consequences, of pre-existing cultural content and forms. Can the global community expect homogenization, diversification, or hybridization, McQuel (1987) questions the capacity of minorities to survive, and the possible development of new ones in a globalized world. This inevitable question of how new media which is globally available can affect further societal adjustments in culture, education, science, etc. got the important answer in research results of testing McLuhan's hypothesis by Jara-Figueroa et.al. (2019). They reached the very core of understanding the message that different media produce and provided us the tool to recognize new messages that media is or can become. Publishing biographies of political and religious leaders, after the printing press invention was replaced with biographies of famous scholars and artists. Similar changes appear with the introduction of film, radio, and television. Radio brought the rise of performers, singers, and actors in the public space. The following era of television meant the rise of famous athletes, soccer players, and race car drivers. Additionally, the authors realized that geographical areas closer to the city where the printing press machine was invented were birthplaces of great scholars and scientists. McFadden (2010) wonders how the transitions from one media to another have affected the media industry and society. Are we aware of a new cultural shift? The digital media as the most important tool in today's world as Potter (2021) notices, represents the need for instantaneous information and the opportunity to edit and produce the content they find important with continuous access anytime, anywhere by using their mobile devices. Besides that, we are facing a total absence of secrecy. Personal profiles on social media, and promoting selfie culture create an understanding that the message of digital media is an ordinary person's biography, completely exposing privacy (sometimes even intimacy) and being included in the global media community where posted content can be accessible to everyone or anyone.

The new global culture of mass communication requires a conscious inclusive language code, a culture shaped by those to whom it is addressing and not by those who are speaking. So, the message of social media expresses individuality and different identities which in some communities

and cultures become political reality (e.g. disabled, minorities, genders, etc.) and consequently require politically correct speech as a tool for shaping global media culture and society itself.

POLITICALLY CORRECT SPEECH, RECOGNITION OF EQUALITY

The term politically correct speech is difficult to define because it encompasses the multidimensional aspect of recognizing and appreciating diversity in the experience of equal value, man to man, regardless of their identities, and as Mishchenko and Baranova (2023) suggest, of their political ideologies. In that context for Kurelić (2017) politically correct speech means primarily awareness of the person who uses the language that the spoken sentences and words can cause harm, and offend others. Therefore, it contains a certain self-control in public communication aimed at achieving civilized speech primarily in the relationship between races, genders, and ethnic groups.

To comprehend what politically correct speech means, it is important to understand the social and political context while media (as a message) was transforming and therefore creating a new media culture and social reality shifted from "famous people biographies" to "personal biographies".

Rosa Parks's resolute "no" was in 1955 a turning point in the democratization of America's society. It went further with the movement for the civil rights of African Americans led by the charismatic dream of Martin Luther King broadcasted on TV¹ in 1963 and available to the broad public to consider this wisdom of the "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he said: "... I have a dream that one day this nation will rise and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal" (Amanović, 2011, p. 103). Thus, after the 1960s political correctness has been developing in what it is today. It becomes a reliable tool for anti-discrimination and inclusivity. The first discussions about politically correct speech at that time were considered as an option to confront intolerance with intolerance. In that case, both sides in interaction would have approved language code for intolerance in speech which even at the time as Al Rawi (2017) noted, was dismissed as incorrect and illogical, because the intention was to recognize intolerant ideas and to find a form to change them. In real everyday life, intolerance was part of lives

even of those who were intolerant. If anyone did something that went against the norm, which was discrimination, they were considered intolerant. An example of this is the intolerance for the difference in gender and identity in the early ages. When such a concept appeared in political discourses it had elements of ethics. Hampton-Garland (2024) recognized it in the standing points of President Lyndon B. Johnson's speech in 1964 in which he said that he would enact established policies regardless of political correctness, explaining it as right.

After several court judgments, universities had to abolish segregation and allow black students to participate equally in the academic community. This opportunity, over time, created the need for a new culture of speech, and new language codes in the world of academic interaction that would establish a new culture, a culture of politically correct speech. From this perspective, it was primarily an American endeavor in the 1980s to try to prevent any racist speech in American universities. Stanford University established language codes to avoid terms that are offensive to black people. Later on, as Kurelić (2017) notes, these codes expanded to exclude sexist speech and speech that offends minorities. Therefore, the purpose of politically correct speech, according to Zinaida (2024) is to use language that does not unjustly place any group above others.

Efforts to understand political correctness also lead us to a form of unwritten etiquette, consciously polite and considerate speech to everyone around, to address the person in a way that does not offend. This is done by not interfering in one's private life and not making derogatory remarks about one's race, nationality, personal identity, and disabilities as Monashnenko et.al. (2021) note, while also having on mind Huges's (2009) statement that it was not an attempt to change or to suppress language, but the meanings of specific words while trying to establish a new public discourse capable of replacing forms of a prejudicial and demeaning kind that affect the feelings and dignity of individuals. As previously stated, Roper (2024) continues to elaborate that politically correct speech needs to avoid the elimination and exclusion of various identity groups through language evolution. Roper (2024) also points out the social importance of language in shaping our reality, especially how we think about it. The same author explains that language shapes society by revealing and promoting social biases. Having Roper's (2021) standing point

¹ I have a dream speech, On web site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vP4iYITtS3s>; Accessed: 27. 7. 2024.

in mind, sexist and racist language promotes sexism and racism in social reality. Kurelić (2017) in this context highlights the contribution of feminist theories which criticize the pattern of the social division of labor by gender, explaining that it continues and renews itself through the self-intelligibility of language, striving to suppress the power of language to intervene in these relationships. Therefore, results of previous studies showed a tendency (adults and children) not to be able to think of the occupation being filled by someone of the opposite gender when they are presented with gendered occupations such as firemen, policeman, congressmen, etc. Thanks to the movement for politically correct speech, our everyday English vocabulary is supplemented with words like 'a member of congress' instead of 'congressman' and 'first-year student' instead of 'freshman' etc.. With these clear distinctions in gender nouns, they become gender-neutral and non-discriminatory, and therefore politically correct. Driven by the need for politically correct speech, American and British politicians, as Kurelić (2017) noticed at one point, started using the phrase "Happy Holidays" instead of "Marry Christmas" because Christmas is the national holiday so it should be a holiday for everyone and not only for Christians.

It is important to mention that politically correct speech and hate speech overlap to some extent due to the wide defining area, but they also differ significantly. First of all, hate speech is regulated by law and politically incorrect speech is not, but the politically incorrect speaker is considered rude and arrogant. On the other hand, in the case of hate speech, there is clear and open intolerance towards religious, national, immigrant, gender, etc. groups; open insults by calling for persecution, expulsion, and destruction, putting them in an inferior position. Hence, Kurelić (2017) gives the example of hate speech if someone says that all immigrants should be in camps. Donald Trump is the best example of how rudely ignoring politically correct speech in public speech can be used for one's political gain. However, the media initially considered him as a politically illiterate person who did not know how to speak politically. Kurelić (2017) marks one of his first

public speeches as a politically incorrect attack on Mexicans that bordered on hate speech where he said that Mexicans as illegal immigrants are drug dealers and rapists². Even though the media despised his rhetoric, his politically incorrect speech was a magnet for exclusive news. After a while, he also addressed Karli Fiorina³ regarding her physical appearance offensively. This time again, his politically incorrect speech managed to keep him in the focus of the media attention. Since Trump used politically incorrect speech during the entire first presidential campaign, Kurelić (2017) concludes that it was designed in the direction of destroying political correctness and that he managed to win the mandate with such a campaign. Similarly, Wilders⁴ in one of his campaigns for the Netherlands government, calls Moroccans, "Scum". Since politically incorrect speech is not legally sanctioned as hate speech is, Kurelić (2017) states that creating a culture of political correctness can provide a form of social pressure that does not tolerate politically incorrect speech even in private and informal relationships, especially for public figures. Such an example is the case of Donald Sterling⁵ who, as the owner of the LA Clippers, criticized his girlfriend in a phone conversation about posting pictures with Magic Johnson on Instagram. He asked her to remove the posted picture with black people. The private phone conversation was recorded without consent and went viral creating social backlash and strong public pressure because of the racist statements he made, even though they were in private conversation and recorded without permission. Donald Sterling as an example, according to Kurelić (2017), showed the public that cultural change has an objective political force.

OVERCOMING CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

At American universities in the 80s, led an everyday classroom discussion about how American society assimilated and imposed a certain type of culture. Therefore, the proposition of curriculum reform was expected. This reform was supposed to overcome the cultural one-dimensionality in education and to establish a new educational form. Students in history departments, as Kurelić (2017)

2 Donald Trump doubles down on calling Mexicans 'rapis...'; On web site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JazlJ0s-cL4>; Accessed: 25. 7. 2024.

3 GOP DEBATE: FIORINA ON TRUMP" S "FACE" COMMENTS; On web site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYrH0wfn0rU>; Accessed: 25. 7. 2024.

4 Dutch politician Geert Wilders calls Moroccans "scum"; On web site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obxQZlZlpsk>; Accessed: 22. 7. 2024.

5 Clippers Owner Donald Sterling to Girlfriend: Don't Bring Black People to My Games (Audio) | TMZ, On web site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhT6d5fMhzl>; Accessed: 22. 7. 2024.

notes, pointed out that complete history is written from a male perspective. American history is written from the perspective of white settlers. Therefore, there isn't any systematized study of black history within the framework of American history that looks like a Western movie. Indians are portrayed as negative historical actors, without analyzing the elements of genocide, culturocide, and horror that happened to Indians. There is not any systematized study of women's history within the study of the history of the world, so it looks like women's contribution to society was only through reproduction in patriarchal families.

Cultural imperialism as an American phenomenon according to Kurelić (2017) means the dominance of a culture that is white, male, Protestant, and straight. Mentioned values of their culture are considered universal and it seems that no one is aware of it. Therefore male, heterosexual, white, and Protestant are portrayed as neutral and any exception from that is labeled as deviant. Cultural imperialism refers to the dominant culture. Facebook is an excellent representative of the dominant culture, in a way that Kurelić (2017) understands it. Locally created at an American university, it is becoming the dominant form of communication just like a Japanese cartoon, which completely redefines the existing value and aesthetic concept in the perception of children who watch these contents. Thus, for Kurelić (2017) cultural imperialism today also means the dominance of strong cultures in the media. The dominant American culture as white, Protestant, heterosexual, and male is oppressive towards cultures that are different. Before the politically correct speech movement, some oppressive words were acceptable and part of everyday language and literature. The most remarkable is using the word "Nigger" in Tom Soyer. The same word today thanks to political correctness has been brought to the point where some people cannot say it like they cannot say a swear word. A similar situation is with the word "Boy", according to Kurelić (2007), which was used for the relationship of submission of blacks and now is unacceptable in public discourse.

The concept of political correctness began to evolve finding its roots in understanding the relationship between cultural imperialism and multiculturalism. The "melting pot" of cultures in America, Westfall (2019) defines, as a society where people of different ethnic origins and cultures all come together

to mix and merge, creating a new culture. It can be a monocultural metaphor for a heterogeneous society becoming homogenous. Opponents of the term would offer "multiculturalism" as an alternative metaphor while using the terms "salad bowl" or "mosaic" to describe the current American culture according to Westfall (2019). The idea is that even while the different cultures mix, they retain many of their cultural and ethnic values/traditions. In such a social environment, multiculturalism is for Westfall (2019), cultural or racial groups in a society having equal rights and opportunities, and none is ignored or regarded as unimportant. Therefore, the American concept of multiculturalism creates a culture of different identities (black culture, disabled culture, gay culture, etc.), and these identities are then politicized.

On the other hand, Canada, for example, in 1971 put great efforts into lowering tensions between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians encouraging its concept of multiculturalism. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act from 1971 became law in 1988 as Brosseau and Dewing (2018) note. It was the first country in the world to adopt a multiculturalism policy, which acknowledges that all cultures bring intrinsic value and solidified the Canadian government as one committed to promoting a diverse and multicultural society as Whitt (2021) states. Such a Canadian multicultural atmosphere is much closer to the conditions of life in Europe because nations and national minorities are considered as cultures. A notable example is Canadian President Trudeau's visit to American President Trump when he answered questions in both English and French at a press conference⁶, performing a pure form of Canadian multiculturalism and a culture of political correctness. He showed how not to offend any of the language groups he represents when speaking publicly on their behalf, as Kurelić (2017) noticed.

CRITICISM OF THE POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Conservative criticism is in Hamburger's (2017) work marked by the first major critic Alan Bloom wrote in his book: "The Closing of the American Mind" in 1977. Kurelić (2017) continues noting Bloom's claims that the liberal, left-wing is playing with American culture by destroying the educational canon and introducing different cultures into the American educational process under separate minority identities. Thus, instead of students studying what is most important, they study what is in line

6 Trump, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau Full Press Conference | ABC News, On the web site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygcZmDFRnd0>; Accessed: 22. 7. 2024.

with their identities, e.g. homosexuals study gay studies or queer studies, and women study gender studies. Kurelić (2017) notes that Bloom's standing point is relativism and that he thinks it should be resisted, opposing the same time to language codes at American universities which in his opinion stifle normal communication.

Liberal Criticism is trying to explain that by studying curriculum according to identities students are not learning the best, especially when studying literature. Hartman (2011) cites Saul Bellow who stated in the foreword to Bloom's book that students will read Zulu literature when they produce Tolstoj. Considering the circumstances liberal education is supposed to prepare young people to make quality decisions for life which is much more important than education in identity. Explaining it, Kurelić (2017) does not forget to mention the possibility of creating bi-illiteracy among students who are being educated in their identities. This is the case for example with the students in America who study in the language of their country of origin. Kurelić (2017) believes that this kind of adulation of minority cultures takes away the right to quality education in the culture of the country in which they live.

It is also important to mention criticism by media workers such as David Lynch and Miloš Foreman as Kurelić (2017) notes. Lynch's TV show "On Air"⁷ portrayed a blind person as a character who created funny situations hurting actors while doing his job. Due to fear of lawsuits from people who are blind, the series was shut down. Kurelić (2017) observed a circumstance related to political correctness and pointed out that the offended person determines what is offensive and limits the freedom of expression, not the one who speaks. In addition, Kurelić (2017) also mentions criticism of Miloš Foreman's movie *People vs. Larry Flint*, which criticized feminists. He defended himself by sharing the experience of suppressed freedom of artistic expression and freedom of speech in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, when he found himself in a situation of weighing between insulting women by the content of the film and freedom of speech, he still approved freedom of speech.

Restricting freedom of speech is also an important criticism of politically correct speech. Freedom of speech as the foundation of democracy is like Browne (2006) understands, endangered

by political correctness when the marketplace of ideas, rather than offering a wide range of views, offers any view so long as it is politically correct. Political correctness in his opinion could lead to closing down the freedom of open debate. Regarding the importance of the freedom of speech, it is among the most cherished constitutional rights in liberal democracies, entrenched in most contemporary constitutions, and international human rights treaties. Freedom of speech is classified as a "first-generation right", protecting individuals from interference by the state.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of politically correct speech in media brought a wider understanding of the mutual influence of society and media. Therefore, it is not possible to understand social changes without understanding how media works. McLuhan's notion about the "medium is the message" sets the fundamentals of this analysis realizing that the core medium is a speech. Speech mediates between individuals and society and creates a symbolic process that produces, maintains, repairs, and transforms reality into a culture. This change is notable after the invention of the printing press machine. A change in the medium affected the availability of media content that was reshaped from biographies of religious leaders and politicians to biographies of scientists and artists. Audiovisual media brought a new level of availability for media content and celebrities like athletes, actors, soccer players, singers, etc. are presented as famous people's biographies. Digitalization provides instant information and accessibility to publish media content on social networks and personal profiles instantly creating a new form of medium's message – personal biographies.

The social and media shift induced cultural change as the movement for politically correct speech. The requirement of self-control in public communication and always present awareness that the spoken words can cause harm, and offend others, especially races, genders, and ethnic groups. The rudeness of politically incorrect speech isn't sanctioned by the law but resisting it creates a form of social pressure and politically correct culture in which English vocabulary changed and words like "Nigger" for some people are unacceptable as much as swearwords. This paper contains examples from the media of misusing politically incorrect speech to achieve political goals recog-

7 David Lynch's *Forgotten Sitcom - On The Air*; On web site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdfTQ29sca8>; Accessed: 25. 7. 2024.

nizing and representing politically correct speech in its opposites. Therefore, politically correct speech dismantled cultural imperialism and contributed to the multicultural concept of the "salad bowl" that creates a culture of different identities. Even cultural reshaping towards political correctness brought a lot of good to society, it was criticized as harmful to education, social interaction, and freedom of speech to some extent.

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