

Awareness and Perceptions on Politically Correct Language among University Undergraduates

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Abstract

Politically Correct Language which is commonly known as PC is among one of the neglected areas in the society. However, Politically Correct Language is vital because it avoids offence of any form, discrimination, judgment, especially concerning ethnicity and gender. Due to several reasons, in present Sri Lanka there are many parties who promote politically incorrect- racist, sexist content to achieve personal agendas. Hence significantly, this research intended to investigate instances where politically incorrect language is used in various domains of society. When concerning media, in the recent past, there were several instances where politically incorrect language, which is offensive to many parties, has been used. Many people are unaware of the language they use being as such. Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate the awareness and perceptions of this issue among fifty undergraduates in Sri Lankan universities. The rationale behind the sample was the assumption that the participants belong to a group which possesses a considerable level of education and therefore possesses the knowledge to detect such language in use. An online survey and face to face interviews were conducted in order to obtain data. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to gather data. The obtained data was analyzed using SPSS and thematic analysis. The study considered (i) whether or not the participant identifies the problem with the content (ii) whether the participants identifies the exact terminology/ meaning of the content (iii) whether or not he/she possesses the knowledge to choose an alternative correct substitute. The findings revealed that most of the undergraduates were able to identify certain politically incorrect terms and content regardless of the categories. They also suggested that politically correct language is important and should be implemented in certain fields. However, it should be noted that some posts were not recognized and those issues need attention. The findings are useful to develop the use of English with political correctness in society, to objectify politically correct language and to promote the importance of politically correct language.

Keywords - Politically correct language, awareness and perceptions of university undergraduates on political correctness, politically incorrect language research, various domains of society, raising awareness on political correctness

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