



POSUDEK VEDOUCÍHO BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **AJL - SJL**

Název práce: **Politically correct language and its influence on political success**

Autorka práce: **Viktória Onderková**

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Short characteristics of the thesis

The present thesis explores the topic of political correctness, which is an up-to-date and frequently discussed topic not only in Linguistics, but also in the field of other humanities. In her work, the author reflects on the question of whether the use of politically correct language may somehow influence political success. The aim of the thesis is thus to prove the proposed hypothesis stating that the more frequently a politician uses politically correct language, the worse their results in popularity polls get. The research is based on an analysis of three presidential debates between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump that took place during the 2016 United States presidential elections.

Overall assessment

The overall structure of the thesis is clear and logical, which makes it easier to follow even though its topic belongs to more difficult ones. After the Introduction, the author defines the term *political correctness* (Chapter 2) and relates it to other similar terms. The first part of Chapter 3 discusses basic terminology connected with political correctness (PC), such as *political party*, *political ideology*, and the like, the latter part of the chapter is devoted to main political ideologies in the USA because the focus of the research part is on American presidential debates. The last chapter connected with the description of the theoretical background describes the history of political correctness (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 belongs to the research part of the thesis focusing on the analyses of the three presidential debates.

Even though the thesis mostly accomplished its goals, I have certain reservations concerning some of its parts:

1) In the final paragraph of the Introduction, the author proposed a hypothesis, which should be proved (or disproved) by the research findings, stating that "the more a politician uses politically correct language, the lower their popularity with the general public is" (p. 6). According to the author, this hypothesis is "based on our present knowledge"; however, any further explanation concerning this



knowledge is missing. This point should be clarified during the defence of the thesis.

2) The theoretical background described in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 is interesting to read and tightly connected to the topic of the thesis. It is useful to explain the necessary terminology in order to appropriately approach the concept of political correctness. However, it is also important to bear in mind that this thesis should be primarily linguistically-oriented. The theoretical chapters sometimes resemble a thesis from the field of social studies, which is not necessarily bad, but these parts would have benefitted, for example, from a section devoted to linguistic means expressing PC. A linguistic perspective on the concept of political correctness is almost absent in the theoretical chapters of the thesis.

3) The analyses of the three presidential debates, which belong to the empirical part of the thesis, should have been the core of the thesis, but this part is shorter than the description of the theoretical background. More importantly, the analyses could have been deeper with more illustrative examples taken from the debates. For instance, the author states that Hillary Clinton uses "very pro-citizen language" (p. 36), but there are no examples of Clinton's words supporting this statement.

4) The author uses references such as *para. 21*, *para. 23*, etc. throughout Chapters 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5, but there are no explanations what these abbreviations stand for. Furthermore, it is not explicitly stated in the thesis where the reader can find the transcripts of the debates and why they are not appended at the end of the thesis.

5) The Conclusion could have been more elaborate and more related to the findings of the analysis.

6) All figures occurring throughout the thesis are not explicitly referred to in the text itself.

Despite the above-mentioned reservations, it is important to emphasise that the present thesis also has many strong points, one of them being the fact that the author worked not only with the transcripts of the debates but also with video recordings, which is important for the overall analysis and makes it more objective. The author also proved that they are able to notice apparent details in the speech of both presidential candidates, such as Donald Trump's use of the words *Latino* and *Hispanic*. On the formal level, the thesis is written in good English with occasional grammatical mistakes and misprints.

In conclusion, the author proved that they are capable of independent scholarly work, which resulted in an interesting contribution to the topic of political correctness. I do recommend Viktória Onderková's thesis for defence and suggest that it be marked very good.



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Podpis